
**ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE AND
RELIGION
IN KYRGYZSTAN**

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INTRODUCTION

Two powerful, interdependent and often opposed motives animate the peoples of new states. On the one hand, the desire to build a modern state that promotes progress, a rising standard of living, more effective political order, greater social justice, on the other hand, the desire to retain peculiar ethnic, cultural and religious identity. The two motives stem from different sources and respond to different pressures. However, the tension between them is one of the central driving forces in national evolution of the new states and, at the same time, one of the greatest obstacles to such evolution.¹

Kyrgyzstan is a multiethnic and multiconfessional state. The liberalization of the socio-political life in the late 1980s and the announced course towards democratization and observance of human rights stimulated the growth of ethnic self-consciousness of all ethnic communities in Kyrgyzstan and gave rise to national-cultural organizations that directed their efforts at the revival of native language and popularization of own ethnic history and culture. The establishment of different contacts with foreign countries and ethnic diasporas abroad also notably furthered the process of search for own ethnic and cultural identity.

The processes of ethno-cultural and religious revival, provoked by nation and state building in former socialist countries, brought the issue of ethnicity to the fore. Scholars were faced with a difficult task to provide a new concept and meaning of ethnicity as well as to reveal factors that contribute to its actualization. The discussion of origins and forms of conflicting ethnicity became the most popular subject of post-Soviet researchers.

This book presents another attempt to explore the problem of ethnicity. Its main object is to uncover the nature and essence of ethnicity and its particularities in Kyrgyzstan using a new theoretical and methodological approach. To achieve the object, a careful examination of published works of western, Soviet and post-Soviet scholars on the topic was made.

At the same time, this study is not only about ethnicity in Kyrgyzstan, it is a complex approach to ethnicity and its integral elements such as language and religion. Language is an essential marker of ethnic identity, which preserves its

symbolic function even after the decline of a communicative role of language. As to Islam, it is an important element of Kyrgyz ethnic identity. For Kyrgyzs, who obtained their ethnic identity under the Soviet regime, Islamic identity cannot be considered in isolation from ethnic category. Although many scholars investigated the issues of ethnicity, language and Islam in Kyrgyzstan individually, a complex research of these three factors was not undertaken until now. Another distinctive feature of the book is that it covers a broad historical period: from the early stage of formation of multiethnic society in Kyrgyzstan to modern ethno-linguistic situation, from the first years of Islamic colonization to present-day Islamic revival.

The research is based on a wide range of materials, including official statistics, periodicals, books and other publications in both English and Russian. A special source of information is the results of the 2003 ethno-sociological survey, conducted by the author in 2003 to bring to light the actual ethno-cultural situation in Kyrgyzstan.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book consists of three parts. Each part includes three chapters.

Part 1 'Ethnicity', comprised of Chapters 1-3, focuses on theoretical and methodological aspects of ethnicity and nationalism, presents Kyrgyzstani policy on the question of interethnic relations and provides an overview of ethnic and interethnic situation in the republic after the independence.

Chapter 1 through analyzing the publications of Western, Soviet and post-Soviet scholars on the subject of ethnicity proposes a new theoretical approach to the problem. The chapter discusses the issue of nationalism and reveals common and peculiar between both phenomena ethnicity and nationalism. Much attention is devoted to the political concept of ethnic nationalism as well as its origins, conditions and forms. Ethnic nationalism in post-Soviet countries in general and the Central Asian republics in particular are examined.

Chapter 2 is divided into two main sections. The first section presents a historical background of the current national policy in Kyrgyzstan, especially the Bolsheviks policy on the national question and the implementation of the 1924 national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia. The second section addresses the national policy of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan with a special emphasis placed on the

activities of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan. The materials of sociological surveys are used to uncover basic problems in the field of interethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of ethnic situation in the republic prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union and discloses factors that brought to the destabilization of interethnic situation after the independence. The topicality of ethnic problems and the conflict potential of Kyrgyzstani society as well as the mechanisms of self-identification among largest ethnic communities are defined by means of ethno-sociological surveys.

Part 2 'Language', comprised of Chapters 4-6, discusses language as a factor of ethnic identity, presents language policy of sovereign Kyrgyzstan and reviews linguistic situation in Kyrgyzstan after the declaration of independence.

Chapter 4 regards language as important marker of ethnic identity but argues that the decline of language does not bring to the decline of ethnic identity. It distinguishes between two main functions of language: communicative and symbolic.

Chapter 5 consists of two basic sections. The first section presents main phases of the Soviet language policy, including three language reforms of written Kyrgyz, and reveals motives that were behind it. The second section demonstrates how the contradictions of the Soviet language policy affected the policy of Kyrgyzstan after the independence, outlines two different stages in the post-Soviet policy and examines how the process of nation building as well as other factors helped to shape it.

Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of the linguistic situation in Kyrgyzstan during the periods of the Russian Empire and the Soviet regime and through analyzing the data of a sociological survey characterizes the current language situation in the republic and determines the place of Russian, Kyrgyz and Uzbek in different spheres of public and political life of Kyrgyzstani society.

Part 3 'Religion', comprised of Chapters 7-9, addresses the expansion of Islam in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan, outlines distinctive features of 'Islamic revival' in the country and determines the involvement of Islam into the state politics.

Chapter 7 provides a historical review of Islamic spread in Central Asia and its periodization, beginning from the Arab conquest of the region till the initiation of a new law on religion in 1988. The chapter defines peculiarities of Islam in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 8 places Islam in the center of the religious revival in Kyrgyzstan and provides its characteristic parameters. It argues that re-Islamization in the region has to be examined in terms of re-traditionalisation. Islam as a factor of ethnic identity manifesting itself at the traditional-ritual level is examined. The chapter also gives a general overview of other religions and presents the ethno-religious situation in Kyrgyzstan.

Chapter 9 discusses Islam in the contest of Kyrgyzstani politics. Factors that brought to the politicization of Islam in Central Asia and the emergence of Islamist movements in the region are explored. A special emphasis is put on the activities of the Islamic political party 'Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islami' in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

Part 1.

ETHNICITY

1

**ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM:
A THEORETICAL APPROACH**

ETHNICITY IN WESTERN SCIENCE

The English term *ethnicity* appeared in the 1950s. The first usage of the term is attributed to the American sociologist David Reisman in 1953. The term was included in *Webster's Third New International* of 1961. In the 1973 edition of the *American Heritage Dictionary* it was defined as '1. The condition of belonging to a particular ethnic group; 2. Ethnic pride.'²

Meanwhile, the term *ethnicity* is a derivative of much older and more commonly used English adjective *ethnic*, which goes back to the Middle Ages. At that time, it was used as a synonym of the word *gentile* that meant a non-Christian and non-Jewish pagan. The English adjective *ethnic* in turn derived from the ancient Greek word *ethnos*. The ancient Greeks used the word in various ways. What those usages had in common is the idea of a number of people or animals who shared some cultural or biological characteristics. The Greeks used that term towards other peoples who, in their view, were peripheral and barbarian. Greeks tended to refer to themselves as *genos Hellenon*.³

The serious study of ethnicity owes much to the insights of M. Weber, who first gave a definition of ethnic groups as 'those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration'. 'Ethnic membership', in his opinion, 'does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere'.⁴ From then on many scholars have been engaged in the field of ethnic studies, suggesting different concepts and theories.

All approaches to ethnicity can be divided into two broad camps. On the one hand are so-called 'primordialists', who view ethnicity as an objective and essential characteristic of humankind. On the other hand are 'instrumentalists', who regard ethnicity as manipulable, variable, situationally expressed and subjectively defined.

The term 'primordial' was first used by E. Shils in his article 'Primordial, personal, sacred and civil ties', published in *British Journal of Sociology* in 1957. Shils sought to distinguish between different kinds of social bond – personal, primordial, sacred and civil ties - and to show how they persisted in modern societies.⁵

That idea was taken by C. Geertz, an American anthropologist, who is considered to be the founding father of 'primordialism'. Geertz suggests that peoples of new states are stimulated by two 'powerful', 'interdependent' and 'opposed' motives: 'the desire to build an efficient, dynamic modern state' and a search for personal identity, which is based on 'primordial ties'. He believes that primordial ties stems from blood, race, language, region, religion and custom; they are 'the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.'⁶

The sociolinguistic historian J. Fishman recognizes ethnicity as 'a tangible, living reality that makes every human a link in an eternal bond from generation to generation - from past ancestors to those in the future'. He calls it 'being' of ethnicity, which is distinct from 'doing' and 'knowing'. 'Doing' and 'knowing' are changeable but these changes are limited.⁷

For P. van den Berghe ethnicity has even deeper roots. Following the socio-biological paradigm, van den Berghe suggests that ethnicity is 'extended kinship'. Through mechanisms of 'nepotism' ('the propensity to favor kin over nonkin') and 'inclusive fitness' families developed into tribes ('the elemental ethny'), which 'over time grew to thousands and even millions of people'. It is found in 'some notion of shared ancestry, real or at least credibly putative'.⁸

In stark contrast to 'primordialists', A. Cohen and P. Brass treat ethnicity as a resource for achieving political goals. Cohen thinks that 'ethnicity is essentially a political phenomenon, as traditional customs are used only as idioms, and as mechanisms for political alignment'.⁹

The position of Brass is quite similar: 'ethnicity is a sense of ethnic identity', which is used by ethnic groups 'to make demands in political arena for alteration in their status, in their economic well-being, in their civil rights, or in their educational opportunities'.¹⁰

M. Hechter and M. Banton go even further in their 'instrumentalism'. They propose to approach ethnic relations using 'a rational choice theory'. Hechter suggests that 'the members of any ethnic group will engage in collective action

only when they estimate that by doing so they will receive a net individual benefit'.¹¹

Banton also believes that 'to attain their ends individuals may be obliged either to join with others in collective action or to follow a strategy that assumes others will engage in such action'. 'If the cost of attaining one goal increases, an individual may change to pursue another one and align himself or herself with a group that will be more assistance for this purpose'.¹²

In practice few scholars follow either 'primordialism' or 'instrumentalism'. At the same time, there are systematic attempts to synthesize both types of approach, as well as propose alternative theories of ethnicity.

Quite apart among other 'instrumentalist' theories is the approach of the Norwegian anthropologist F. Barth. Barth suggests that 'the focus of investigation' should be shifted 'from internal constitution and history of separate groups to ethnic boundaries and boundary maintenance'.¹³ He assumes that it is 'the ethnic boundary' that 'canalizes social life' and 'entails a frequently quite complex organization of behavior and social relations'. On the other hand, ethnic boundary maintenance depends on 'social contact between persons of different culture: ethnic groups only persist as significant units if they imply marked difference in behaviour'.¹⁴

J. Armstrong applies Barth's general approach to ethnicity, but infuses it with a concern for the cultural forms that Barth had discounted. Armstrong emphasizes symbols ('major indicators of boundaries') and myths ('to arouse an intense awareness among the group members of their 'common fate') as 'critical to an analysis of the slow emergence of nations in premodern period'.¹⁵

A. Smith also employs 'symbolic' analysis for the study of ethnicity but his approach is somewhat different. He believes that 'at the center of every ethnic and its peculiar ethnocentrism... stands a distinctive complex of myths, memories and symbols with peculiar claims about the group's origins and lines of descent'.¹⁶ He defines ethnic as 'named populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity'.¹⁷

Hence, the term ethnicity becomes of different meaning depending on the attachment of its authors to either 'primordialist' or 'instrumentalist' paradigm. So, the adherents of 'primordialism' recognize objective grounds of ethnicity, while 'instrumentalists' examine the problem of subjective ethnicity, thus equating ethnicity to ethnic identity.

ETHNICITY IN SOVIET AND POST-SOVIET SCIENCE

Objective and essentialist interpretation of ethnicity was peculiar to Soviet ethnography. The theory of ethnos, developed in the 1950-1980s within the precincts of the Institute of Ethnography at the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, can also be classified as 'primordialist' with some exceptions. Unlike western 'primordialist' theories, viewing ethnicity in the context of the socio-biological paradigm, the Soviet theory of ethnos was a *socio-historical (historical) concept of ethnicity*, since a special emphasis was placed on the role of socio-historical conditions in the development of ethnic. Therefore, the key term in Soviet ethnography became not ethnicity but *ethnic community* or *ethnos*.

At the initial stage of its development, the ethnic theory was entirely depended on the theory of nation, arisen from the famous Stalin's definition of nation: 'Nation is historically developed stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychic makeup manifested in commonality of culture'.¹⁸ On the other hand, the term ethnos itself was not widespread in Soviet science before the 1970s, even after ethnographers mainly employed it. The European term *nation* was used instead.

The 1960s were marked by a shift, a 'division of labor' in Soviet social science, when ethnographers had been engaged in the theory of ethnos and ethnic processes, and philosophers studied the problems of nation, nationalism and the national question. It was the time when the theory of ethnos started being formed.

The Soviet theory of ethnos can be found in the books of Y. Bromley, who headed the Institute of Ethnography at the Academy of Sciences for many years.¹⁹ According to Bromley, ethnos is 'a historically constituted on a definite territory stable intergenerational community of people having not only common features but also pretty stable distinctive culture (including language) and mentality, as well as the awareness of its unity and distinction from other similar communities (self-consciousness), reflected in self-name (ethnonym)'. Thus, among all ethnic features, Bromley emphasized three most important: culture along with mentality, ethnic self-consciousness and ethnonym, which, in his opinion, formed the nucleolus of ethnic characteristics.²⁰

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and subsequent social events brought to a cardinal change in the development of post-Soviet ethnography. Firstly, post-Soviet ethnology (ethnography)²¹ tends to deny the ideas of Soviet

theorists of ethnicity on the account of their devotion to Marxist ideology. A new concept has been proposed to be built on the basis of western instrumentalist concepts.²² Secondly, the dissemination of western 'instrumentalist' concepts in Soviet ethnology resulted in the substitution of the term *ethnos* for the terms *ethnicity* and *ethnic identity*.²³ Earlier Soviet ethnography was dominated by the popular term ethnic self-consciousness, the meaning of which was somewhat similar to that of ethnicity.

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the newly independent states, the 'instrumentalist' approach became popular not only among scholars but also among politicians. In that way, the President of the Kyrgyz Republic A. Akaev in his book 'Kyrgyz statehood and national epic 'Manas'' announces of his adherence to 'instrumentalism'.²⁴

A NEW THEORETICAL APPROACH TO ETHNICITY

In spite of numerous efforts, made by social and cultural anthropologists, philosophers, psychologists and sociologists, the question of the nature and essence of ethnicity, as well as the methodology of ethnic studies, is still open. To know an answer we would rather refer to both 'primordialist' and 'instrumentalist' theories to find out what can be useful out of them in our search for the ethnic substance.

If we turn to 'primordialist' concepts, including the Soviet theory of *ethnos*, we can observe that all of them emphasize common descent as an important ethnic characteristic. Common descent, along with blood relationship, brings us to the problem of *ethnic endogamy*.²⁵ Ethnic endogamy is an essential condition to secure the existence and stability of ethnic group. From this perspective we have to mention the position of Bromley, who regards ethnic endogamy as an original 'stabilizer' of ethnic, maintaining ethnic homogeneity of families.²⁶ He assumes that modern ethnies are at least 80-85% endogamic.²⁷

The Russian philosopher S. Rybakov suggests that 'the ethnic itself entails endogamy and cannot exist without endogamy'. 'The ethnic substance exists in the human himself as something that needs a population unity to reproduce itself'.²⁸ At the same time, Rybakov stresses that blood relationship is not only biological but also a social instrument of human adaptation to natural habitat. Family, kin and clan, he thinks, are not biological but social institutions.²⁹ The

concept of *ethnie* as a socio-biological phenomenon appears in the theory of the prominent Russian historian and geographer L. Gumilev.³⁰

Now we would rather refer to the theories of 'instrumentalists'. The Russian ethnologist V. Tishkov proposes to examine the micro-level of ethnic identity - the individual. He defines ethnic community as 'a sum of individuals, each of whom reproduces ethnicity for himself'.³¹ Thus, ethnicity is a quality of the individual. 'Everything, which is called 'ethnic' in society, is actually defined by the inner contents of the individual, his personal characteristics, according to which individuals group into *ethnies*'.³² 'It is not *ethnie* that forms ethnicity of individuals, on the contrary, *ethnie* itself is generated by ethnicity as an anthropological quality'.³³

The first who raised the question of *signal inheritance* was L. Gumilev. He defined it as 'a special mechanism of transmission from parents and older members of *ethnie* to posterity of conditioned reflexes aimed at optimal adaptation'.³⁴ In this regard S. Rybakov suggests that 'diachronic intra-ethnic connection assumes not only transmission of cultural tradition through endogamic family, but also intergenerational transmission of information through the channel of signal inheritance based on genetic endogamy'. The recognition of signal inheritance brings us to the problem of the ethnic unconscious.³⁵

Rybakov distinguishes two layers of ethnicity: the conscious and the unconscious. Ethnic identity is a conscious phenomenon (the ethnic self-consciousness in a broad sense), which can exist only if there is the unconscious. At the same time, both levels, the conscious and the unconscious, are not separate but tightly interrelated. Together they produce a complex *unconscious-conscious phenomenon* of ethnicity.³⁶ The upper the level of ethnic conscious, the more actively the conscious 'wakes up' the unconscious and the larger the index of ethnicity. It is evident in the problem of ethnic mobilization, when negative ethnic stereotypes are being formed under unfavorable political-economic and socio-cultural conditions.

Concerning the second level, the conscious, the Russian ethnologist L. Drobizheva writes about 'intellectuals who are appeared to be the leaders, ideologists, organizers of ethnic mobilization'. She lays stress on two subsequent stages in the individual socialization. 'The individual learns primary stereotypes from his immediate social circle, acquiring the notions of his native community and ethnically colored mentality. Only then, during the secondary socialization,

he adopts other views, values and aims through the system of education and mass media'.³⁷ So along with the ethnic consciousness at the ordinary level, there is ethnic ideology, created by intellectuals.

Consequently, we have to agree that 'whatever objective roots of ethnicity, it is finally the product of human (mass) consciousness, a spontaneous form of ideological reflection and development of social environment'.³⁸ Ethnicity is rolled historical memory of mankind, which is opening to us in its concrete local variants.³⁹ Ethnicity is 'a collective tradition that is transmitted from generation to generation and serves as an important ideological instrument of the individual socialization within the group of his origin'.⁴⁰

Hence, the most important task of today is not to lose that positive, worked out by both paradigms. It is necessary to find out new approaches that will allow resolving the dilemma 'primordialism-instrumentalism' and overcoming the modern stage of ethnic studies, where two opinions are strictly opposed.⁴¹

NATION AND NATIONALISM

The problem of ethnicity is tightly intertwined with the problems of *nation* and *nationalism*.

The English word *nation* came from the Latin noun *nationem*, connoting *breed* or *race*. It was derived from the past participle of the verb *nasci* that meant to be born. When the word was introduced into the English language in the late thirteenth century, it had its primary meaning of a blood related group. However, by the early seventeenth century the term was also being used to describe the inhabitants of a country regardless of the ethnic composition of its population, thereby becoming a substitute for such human categories as *the people* or *the citizenry*.⁴²

Despite many books and papers, written on the subject, there is no agreement among scholars about 'subjective' and 'objective' factors in the definition of nation and about the relation of nation to ethnic community on the one hand, and statehood on the other. Three classic statements of nation of E. Renan, M. Weber and J. Stalin can demonstrate that.

Renan rejects the static concept of nation and identifies it as 'a soul, a spiritual principle'. 'The existence of a nation', he declares, 'is an everyday plebiscite'. Two things, in his view, constitute nation. 'One is the possession in

common of a rich legacy of remembrances; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common'.⁴³

According to Weber, 'a nation is a community of sentiment which would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own; hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own'. 'The causal components that lead to the emergence of a national sentiment in this sense may vary greatly'.⁴⁴

Stalin's definition contains a mix of objective and subjective elements: 'nation is historically developed stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychic makeup manifested in commonality of culture'. He argues that nation come into existence only if several elements have come together, and none of the above characteristics, taken separately, is sufficient to define a nation.⁴⁵

Stalin's concept of nation had been formed under the impact of a cultural-psychological (German-Austrian) theory of nation, which viewed nation as 'a community of people, bound together in common character because of common destiny'.⁴⁶ In contrast to it, Western Europe (England, France) was dominated by an 'etatist' concept of nation, which featured state as the most important component of nation.

Stalin's definition of nation laid the foundation for Soviet theory of nation, which for many decades dominated Soviet social science. Even today such an approach has a profound impact on post-Soviet scholars and politicians, thus determining the politics in the new post-Soviet states.

The situation little improves when we turn to the other major concept, that of nationalism. Most scholars agree that nationalism is a peculiarly modern phenomenon. However, their views differ over such things as the causes of nationalism, its relationship to modernization and political power, and whether it is a weak or strong agent of change.⁴⁷

The approach of E. Kedourie is of a historian. 'Nationalism is a doctrine invented in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century'. Arisen from Kantian conceptions of human beings as autonomous, nationalism 'holds that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimated type of government is national self-government'.⁴⁸

According to Gellner, 'nationalism is primarily a political principle which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent'.⁴⁹ He regards state

as 'a sufficient condition of nationalism', 'so the problem of nationalism does not arise when there is no state'.⁵⁰ Nationalism is a modern phenomenon, a product of the transition from 'agro-literate' societies, regulated by structure, to industrial societies, regulated by culture. Gellner asserts that 'it is nationalism that engenders nation, and not the other way round'.⁵¹

E. Hobsbawm and B. Anderson provide an 'instrumentalist' approach to nationalism. Hobsbawm regards nation as one of many traditions 'invented' by political elites in order to legitimize their power in a century of revolution and democratization.⁵²

Anderson proposes the following definition of nationalism: 'it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign'. 'It is imaged because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the mind of each lives the image of their communion'.⁵³

A. Smith identifies the rise of the modern 'scientific state' as a central factor in the genesis of nationalism. Nationalism arises out of a pervasive moral crisis of 'dual legitimation', where divine authority is challenged by secular state power.⁵⁴

In Soviet science the term nationalism was used as a synonym of the words 'chauvinism' and 'racism' having a single negative meaning. It was defined as the ideology and the politics of submission of some nations to others, the propagation of national superiority and uniqueness. 'Bourgeois nationalism' was opposed to 'proletarian internationalism', which meant that the solidarity of workers in the name of their common revolutionary task required their unification into one state.

Hence, *ethnie* and nation are different social phenomena. We have to agree with Y. Borodai, who defines *ethnie* as a community based on anthropological-genetic peculiarities. This community is all-sufficient and does not require state. As for nation, it is the product of state and a political-civil unity, where the internal regulator is not custom but law. The most important characteristic of nation is multiethnicity and supraethnicity.⁵⁵

In view of S. Rybakov, the distinction between two phenomena is caused by their different nature. Ethnicity is of an unconscious-conscious nature, while national identity is localized in the consciousness. Different types of identity determine different social roles of these communities. Whereas *ethnie* is predominantly a socio-cultural community, nation is a socio-political community

connected with state. Nation is the result of a conscious state policy, which is transforming from the idea of intellectual elites into mass ideology.⁵⁶ Thus, classical European nationalism can be described by the concept 'state-nation'.

State building implies the resolution of a contradiction between the political and the ethnic structuring of society in the era of national state, since the formation of nation as a new historical community assumes the loss of historical memory and the replacement of ethnic identity by new civil (national) identity. This process is extremely complicated and polysemantic; it is determined by particular features of state building in different countries. Thus, in a number of European countries de-ethnization was effective on the account of several objective factors. The most successful de-ethnization took place in the states of emigrant capitalism – the USA, Canada, Australia and others, where the indigenous ethnies were basically annihilated. At the same time, in the eastern part of the world, de-ethnization was not so deep and resulted in the rejection of civil identity and transformation of ethnicity into national identity, that is the contradiction between the political and the ethnic structuring was resolved in favor of the latter. This situation took place in a number of Eastern European countries (Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia) and the Soviet Union.

ETHNIC NATIONALISM

Ethnic nationalism took place in the nineteenth century. It contributed to the dissolution of the Tsarist, Habsburg and Ottoman empires into national states as early as the beginning of the twentieth century. Ethnic nationalism and national conflicts accompanied state building in many multiethnic countries during the twentieth century. However, the real burst of ethnic nationalism occurred after the Second World War as a result of the liberation of European countries from fascist occupation and decolonization.

Ethnic nationalism (ethnonationalism) is a complex and many-sided phenomenon. It is a political concept, according to which different ethnic groups are competing for achieving political power and resources. V. Tishkov defines ethnic nationalism as 'the doctrine and political practice, based on the interpretation of nation as a form of ethnic community, having membership on the account of deep historical and other objective characteristics, and arisen from

it the right to statehood, including its institutions, resources and cultural system'.⁵⁷

Thus, hypertrophied ethnicity of de-ethnized members of new nations replaced civil identity, imposed from the above, and gave rise to ethnic nations (ethnonations) - politicized ethnies having state structures or seeking having them. In the view of ethnic nationalists, a multiethnic state, where such new 'nations' emerged, had to be reconstructed in order to fit the key principle of ethnonationalism 'one nation – one state'. In this way, politicized ethnicity poses a threat to public institutions and the state in general, as the activities of ethnonationalists are directed at secession and ethnic conflicts.

It is worthy of note that ethnic nationalism is a new term in post-Soviet science, put into wide use during the last decade of the twentieth century. The interest in ethnic nationalism has been stimulated by recent events in former Communist countries, when social-political processes in the context of deep social transformations and radical reforms took the ethnic form. The issue of conflicting ethnicity, its causes and forms, became a popular subject to be discussed by post-Soviet scholars. At the same time, post-Soviet social science tends to deny the former Soviet theory of nationalism, and view nation and nationalism in the context of western political and socio-economic theories.

It is worthy of note that western researchers regard nation in two distinctive aspects: state (political) and ethnic (cultural). The first aspect is political, signifying political unity of citizens of the state. In the second case, nation is viewed as a socio-cultural community, gradually formed on the basis on pre-existing ethnies and ethnic ties. Thus, there are definite differences between the two meanings of the word, and the term ethnonation is used to specify the nation in its socio-cultural meaning.

Similarly are two forms of nationalism: civil (state) and ethnic (cultural) nationalism. The first form is based on the concept of nation as citizenship. The second considers nation as an ethno-cultural category, a society having deep historical roots of a socio-physiological or even genetic character. It is, of course, arguable that one term signifies two different phenomena, two different processes. At the same time, the term reflects the reality, where objective distinctions between two types of communities, ethnic and state, are taking place.

In this regard, S. Rybakov remarks that despite an apparent opposition of ethnic and civil nationalisms, they are two different sides of the same socio-

political phenomenon. The only difference is that civil nationalism is described by the concept 'state-nation' and ethnic nationalism – 'nation-state'.⁵⁸

The western world reacted with some anxiety to the formation in the 1990s of the new independent states, following the collapse of the socialist system and the former USSR. Conflicts in former Yugoslavia and the post-Soviet space verified a dangerous nature of nationalism. Nationalism of 'the third wave' or so-called ethnic nationalism of the twenty and twenty first centuries, in its radical manifestations, poses a definite threat to the world order, thus creating a strong need to analyze those types and forms of nationalism, which are compatible with the transition to democratic society.

According to the data of ethnologists, there are about 5,000 ethnic groups, which are ready to claim their right to self-determination and own state. Most of these movements are latent and non-violent. At the same time, 260 national minorities demand independence or secession and recognition of the United Nations. From 70 to 90 of these ethno-political conflicts are characterized by the outbursts of violence.⁵⁹

In democratizing society ethnic groups are offered considerable opportunities for political mobilization, although the state usually lacks resources and effective institutional mechanisms to achieve inter-group harmony and tolerance, which exist in democratic countries. Under these conditions, it is highly possible that democratization will be accompanied by ethnic conflicts and violence.

ETHNIC NATIONALISM AND SOVIET NATIONALITIES POLICY

A good example is the Soviet nationalities policy and the practice of the Soviet state building. The Soviet leadership tried to develop two opposed and alternative tendencies at the same time: the integration of the society into one civil nation and the creation of particular nations in the form of union and autonomous republics. The first tendency manifested itself in the realization of an official doctrine of 'peoples friendship' that led to the formation of a new historical community of 'Soviet people' and considerably contributed to a peaceful co-existence of different peoples for seventy years. The second tendency manifested itself in the creation of particular nations, which along with the

development of standard languages and upbringing of national cadres, resulted in the growth of ethnic self-consciousness and emergence of ethnic nationalism. The national question caused the rise and the fall of the multinational Soviet empire.

In the view of the Russian ethnologist V. Tishkov, the former Soviet Union was a unique state, as far as it was built by the ethnic principle. Though the Marxist-Leninist ideology declared itself to be an international doctrine, its integrative part was consisted in the ideas and political practice of ethnic nationalism. The largest ethnic groups were announced socialist nations and granted own statehood.⁶⁰

The coincidence of power structures with four unequal levels of national-administrative division: union republic - autonomous republic - autonomous oblast - autonomous okrug that signifies the hierarchy of ethnic 'majorities' and 'minorities', resulted in the equating of central authority with the power of Russians, republican authorities with the power of titular nationalities and so on, and caused a shift of negative attitudes to the ethnic sphere as early as under the Soviet regime, although at that time they were hidden very deep inside. Strict economic, political and social dependence of 'minorities' excited the feelings of injustice, inferiority and distrust toward 'majorities' and interrupted a natural course of ethnic relations, when national consolidation replaced integration.

However, the main distinctive feature of the Soviet nationalities policy was ambivalence and discrepancy between the idea and the practice. The nation-state building left behind many unsolved problems that showed during the period of *perestroika*. As soon as the control of the center over national elites weakened, the struggle for having real power in formally sovereign national states started. Under these conditions, the national idea became a powerful instrument of mass mobilization. Republican elites, armed with the national slogan, began to struggle against Moscow, then in some republics against the ruling party elites. That struggle was mainly of a vertical and political nature but in some republics it was accompanied by sporadic manifestations of interethnic violence, as well as the appearance of political conflicts at a lower level – between the titular nationalities and republican ethnic minorities. Such were the conflicts against Mesketian Turks in Uzbekistan, Armenians in Azerbaijan, Ossetins and Abkhazians in Georgia, Gagauzs, Ukrainians and Russians in Moldova, Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan. The leaders of the deported peoples: Crimean Tatars, Volga

Germans, northern Caucasians, who lost their political status during the era of Stalinism, started developing programs on the restoration of their statehood.⁶¹

The totalitarian ideology, aimed at a non-conflict socialist future, finally resulted in the implantation of supranational forms and methods of state, socio-economic and cultural development in all republics of the USSR. The academic tradition, in many respects, contributed to the institutionalizing of ethnicity and development of the political program of ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism dominated both science and politics. Ideological monologism, propagated for many decades in Soviet society, caused the estrangement of many generations from their national-cultural values. The cultivation of a peculiar behaviour style, welcoming struggle not compromise, gave rise to interethnic tension. So, despite a number of positive achievements of the Soviet regime, especially those in the fields of education and culture, most of ethnic conflicts, shown in the late 1980-1990s, were laid during the Soviet times.

As historical practice showed, the national-territorial principle of state building and integrationalist nationalities policy became a favorable ground for national and ethnic conflicts. Though the friendship of people became the reality, the totalitarian political system with its anti-democratic elements promoted the appearance of ethnic nationalism. The administrative 'pulling up' of manifestations of nationalism and political repressions toward some ethnics aggravated the situation and intensified anti-Russian sentiments. The attitudes of ethnic exclusivity, revenge, aggression, egoism and parasitism grew. Those negativities of ethnic self-consciousness defined the nature of group behaviour in many federal republics. The hyperinternationalization of the society, the monopoly of the bureaucratic central power, the formalism of federal relations evoked a negative reaction in the shape of national movements and developed into destroying for the state nationalistic forces.

ETHNIC NATIONALISM IN CENTRAL ASIA

After the collapse of the USSR, ethnonationalism in the newly independent states became of more radical forms. The transition to democracy and market economy in Central Asia was accompanied by contradictions and conflicts at a broader regional level. The regional specificity, manifested in the current ethno-

political, ethno-demographic and ethno-cultural processes, exerted a strong influence on interethnic relations between Central Asian states.⁶²

The Central Asian region is located in the center of the Eurasian continent. In view of its geopolitical and geostrategic location, it is extremely important to maintain interethnic stability in the region. A prominent American political scientist, Z. Brzezinski, soundly called Central Asia 'the Eurasian Balkans'.⁶³ He supposed that the situation in the region is characterized by great inconstancy and internal instability.

The analysis of the new political regimes in the Central Asian states makes us conclude that following the principle of power division and the creation of democratic institutes not necessarily leads to the establishment of liberal democratic regimes. In case of a particular Central Asian republic it brought to the consolidation of old slightly modified political institutes.⁶⁴

Firstly, the political development in each of the Central Asian countries is a product of many various factors. Traditional national values, historical particularities, a degree of support of realized reforms by the international community, a stability of such negative factors as nationalism and isolationism, the position of ethnic minorities toward reforms, a degree of their involvement in regional conflicts, aims of independent development and ways to achieve them as it is seen by the leadership of a country cause remarkable differences in the practical implementation of political transformation in each of the Central Asian states. That is why the republics in the region sharply differ from each other by the existing state-political regimes – from the dictatorship in Turkmenistan and a non-alternative presidential regime in Uzbekistan to more liberal regimes in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

Secondly, the struggle between different branches of power is the result of collision of opposed, mainly clan, tribal, regional and interethnic groups. For example, in Kyrgyzstan tribalism was offered a legal opportunity to influence the state building. In view of the famous Kyrgyzstani historians D. Djunushaliev and V. Ploskikh, 'the revival of tribalism can lead to the outburst of regionalism and later separatism that represents the most serious danger to state integrity'.⁶⁵

Thirdly, ethnonationalism and interethnic tension have been stimulated by the growth of separatism among the leaders of ethnic minorities, who direct their efforts at the alteration and revision of existing borders. According to the data of the Institute of Geography at the Russian Academy of Sciences, there are at least 19 problem zones in Central Asia, where interethnic conflicts have already taken

place, in other zones such collisions are very likely to happen.⁶⁶ An artificial nature of state borders contributes to the destabilization of interethnic relations, posing a serious threat to political stability. The most evident are the contradictions between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The problem of water supply is very painful in the region. It aggravates and complicates relations between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Several times the conflicts between Tashkent and Bishkek were nearly to be solved by force. Although by the legislation of both republics such disputes are supposed to be settled on the basis of international treaties, they last for many decades and no solution has been found yet.

The exacerbation of interethnic relations in the region is also provoked by the demographic factor. Since the middle of the twentieth century the Central Asian region has been undergoing the demographic outburst. Natality in Central Asia is the highest among the CIS countries. At the same time, the coefficient of natality in Kazakhstan is the lowest in the region: 11.8 per 1,000 people in Kazakhstan against 27.0 in Turkmenistan, 26.6 in Uzbekistan, 25.6 in Tajikistan and 21.4 in Kyrgyzstan. Out of 53 million people, living in the states of the region, about the half resides in Uzbekistan. The territory of Kazakhstan is twice as much as the territory of the rest Central Asian republics altogether. Only 20% of Tajikistani and Kyrgyzstani territory is livable, mountains occupy the remaining part. The situation in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan is quite the same; most of their territories are deserts. There are much more overpopulated areas in Central Asia than in any other country of the CIS.⁶⁷

Another destabilizing factor is the problem of refugees and migrants. Kyrgyzstan is the only state of Central Asia that accepts Tajik refugees. On the other hand, Kyrgyzstan has favorable conditions for internal and external migration. Internal labor migration is characterized by stable migration of Kyrgyzs from rural areas to cities. Inter-provincial migration is widespread too. Since the early 1990s external migration to Russia and Kazakhstan has become of mass character.

The peculiarity of Central Asia is manifested in the strong interrelation of ethnonationalism with religious extremism. Religious extremism is a serious issue, which tends to break the stability and security in the region and lead to the aggravation of interethnic situation. The recent events in Tashkent and Batken province of Kyrgyzstan have demonstrated that Central Asia is becoming the

scene of activities of Islamic extremist organizations, who look for their supporters and try to manipulate the population separatist sentiments.

Hence, the phenomena of ethnic nationalism and nation building, regionalism and globalization are tightly intertwined and have their particular features in each country.

WHAT CAN BE OPPOSED TO ETHNIC RADICALISM AND HOW TO REDUCE ETHNO-POLITICAL TENSION?

On the assumption of constructivist vision of ethnic problems and the American experience of their resolution, the concept of 'displacement of ethnicity by citizenship', when a new nation-citizenship is built on the basis of de-ethnization, enjoys wide popularity in Russian science and politics. A similar tendency took place in the Kyrgyz Republic, where the concept 'Kyrgyzstan is our common home' is being realized and the mechanism of its implementation is the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan. However, this recipe of displacement of ethnicity by citizenship is a long-term program, signifying a gradual adaptation of non-titular ethnies to a new ethno-political situation. It bars any haste and extrapolation of decisions, which can produce a negative reaction of ethnic minorities. Such a reaction was caused by the removal in 1996 of the item 'nationality' from Kyrgyzstani passports, the action, aimed to stimulate de-ethnization in the country. The leaders of all ethnic diasporas opposed the withdrawal of the item on the grounds that such a measure deprived them of their ethnicity. The authorities had to restore the column in passports as soon as possible.

The next recipe is based on the international experience. It is implemented through the exercise of basic rights of ethnic minorities such as 1) the right to establish and maintain their own educational institutions, 2) the right to disseminate, have access to and exchange information in their mother tongue, 3) the right to establish and maintain organizations or associations within their country, 4) the right to take part in the governing of their country.⁶⁸ If first three rights has been put into practice to some degree in Kyrgyzstan through the establishment of schools, higher education institutes, mass media, books and national-cultural centers, the forth one, the right to take part in the governing of the country, is far from being realized.

The last variant is the settlement of ethno-national problems through the implementation of the concepts of multiculturalism and national-cultural autonomy, which proposes to shift the accent from the national-territorial principle to the national-cultural one. National-cultural autonomy is considered to be one of the most effective form of realization of the rights and interests of ethnic minorities at both the collective and the individual levels.

Hence, harmonization and management of interethnic relations require complex introduction of all mentioned variants, which can finally result in natural and voluntary integration of ethnic groups in multiethnic states.

2

**NATIONAL
POLICY**

SOVIET NATIONALITIES POLICY**BOLSHEVIKS POLICY ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION**

The policy of the Bolsheviks on the national question was subjected to the main ideological doctrine – the creation of socially homogenous socialist nations of workers - which would not have any contradictions between each other. They were expected to draw together in the future and merge into the new supranational community of ‘Soviet people’.

The revolution of 1905 made political parties introduce considerable alterations into their nationalities policies and recognize the necessity of support from national minorities. Rejecting the program of Austrian Social Democrats on the national-cultural autonomies,⁶⁹ Lenin came out in favor of the policy of self-determination of nations. Nationalism was inevitable, he reasoned, but as soon as the world proletariat came to power and unite under the leadership of the Communist party, nationalism and nationalities would disappear, giving place to the new order, which would be rather based on class than nationality. Thus, the policy of self-determination was a tool to forge an alliance among the forces working against Tsarism.⁷⁰

Unlike their political opponents, who spoke of ‘one and indivisible Russia’, the Bolsheviks supported national movements among non-Russian peoples. They outlawed all national and national-religious privileges and restrictions and announced free development of national minorities and ethnic groups, populating Russia. Within the first Soviet government a special body – National Commissariat on Nationalities – was set up. Stalin was put in charge of it.

The declarations of the Bolsheviks met with the approval of national minorities and provided a necessary support for them.⁷¹ Since then a gigantic social experiment of so-called ‘nation-state building’ – the creation of a unique state in the world built on the ethnic principle – took place. For that purpose, the

first Soviet census, which included the question of nationality, or ethnic origin, was carried out in 1920. It was for the first time when ethnic belonging was fixed at the level of state. According to it, each citizen had to define his own nationality on the basis of exceptional identity: by nationality of one of his parents. The system was legalized in 1934 when each citizen of the country had his nationality registered in the passport at the age of sixteen and he could not change it thereafter.

However, as soon as the Bolsheviks strengthened their power, they practically removed the right to secession from their program, announcing the advocates of independent national states as 'bourgeois nationalists'. One of the arguments to justify it was the program on liquidation of actual inequality of nations through purposeful economic and cultural assistance, provided to socially backward peoples by more developed nations. The right to self-determination, then, was understood as the demand of equality of all nations within the framework of the socialist system. Modern nationalism was seen as the result of inequality of nations, produced by imperialist oppression and exploitation. During socialism, when not only formal but also actual equality was achieved, the right to self-determination would be put into practice.⁷²

The implementation of nation-state building faced a big difficulty that consisted in the impossibility to delimit nationalities according to the ethnic criterion. Since the population in many regions was ethnically mixed and ethnic borders were extremely unstable, it was very difficult to determine the nomenclature of Soviet nationalities, not even to delimit territory for each of them. Ethnographers and other specialists had been engaged in the work on national delimitation, hereby laying a powerful tradition of ethnic map-making.

NATIONAL DELIMITATION IN CENTRAL ASIA

The reference point in the realization of nation-state building program in Central Asia is considered to be the 1924 national-territorial delimitation. According to the initial plan of the Bolsheviks, boundaries of national autonomies were to be determined by national and economic conditions. However, the situation in Central Asia was much more complicated. In this region the principle of 'economic expediency' did not work, as economic

development in the region was not equal. Therefore, national and linguistic characteristics had been recognized as the most reliable to delimitate.

Meantime, Central Asia prior to the 1924 national delimitation did not have clear ethnic and linguistic borders. No developed ethnic self-consciousness was peculiar to Central Asian peoples except for a small group of educated intelligentsia. The main criteria of locals' denomination were tribe or place of birth and belonging to Muslim community. The linguistic criterion was also scarcely applicable, as far as groups changed their language easily and bilingualism was widespread.

Evaluating the situation concerning the national-territorial delimitation in Central Asia, a prominent Russian orientalist, the academician V. Bartold, mentioned that the national principle had been generated by western European history of the nineteenth century and was completely alien to local historical traditions.⁷³ Another well-known explorer of Central Asia, A. Bennigsen, distinguished three levels of ethnic self-consciousness among Soviet Muslims: subnational, supranational and national. If subnational and supranational levels had long histories and rooted very deeply in the culture of the region, national consciousness was the result of Soviet policy of 1924, aimed at the division and subjection of Central Asia.⁷⁴

In February-March 1924, the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Bukhara, Khorezm and Turkestan passed resolutions that supported national delimitation. In April 1924, the Central Asian Bureau (*Sredazburo*) of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party approved these resolutions. To facilitate the delimitation the Central Asiatic Bureau created a special Commission on National Delimitation to work out a delimitation scheme.

In 1918, the Kyrgyz were incorporated into the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In 1924, the Kara-Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast (subsequently renamed as the Kyrgyz Autonomous Oblast) was created. In 1926, it was reorganized into the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and in 1936, it received the status of the federal republic of the USSR - the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic.

The Bolsheviks had several reasons deciding in favor of the national delimitation. One of the reasons consisted in the belief that the national delimitation would facilitate organization and planning in Central Asia. Another motive was to make Turkestan a model republic and an advanced post for revolutionizing the East. Furthermore, the Bolsheviks hoped that the formation

of national states would temporarily satisfy the demands for national recognition and quell interethnic animosities. The accentuation of national differences would last until the socialist system eliminate differences between nomads and sedentary peoples and a uniform educational system would suppress tribal differences, bringing into existence a national, eventually socialist, consciousness. It would last until the proletariat of Turkestan realized that it had not country, the class struggle was everything and nationalism nothing.

Critics perceived many contradictions in these arguments. They considered the principle 'divide and rule' as a basic motive of the Bolsheviks political reorganization. According to them, the division of Central Asia was aimed at preventing the consolidation of Turkic peoples on the basis of Pan-Turkism.⁷⁵

Hence, after the Bolshevik revolution the peoples of Central Asia faced the necessity to pass from one historical epoch to the other. At the same time, they lacked the opportunity of gradual transition, when new political institutions would be created evolutionally. Established under the Soviet regime, political institutions in the Central Asian republics did not result from a socio-cultural continuity, but were the borrowings of Russian political institutions with the same mechanisms of power structure.

The political reorganization, carried out in the colonial style, to some extent accelerated the process of ethnic consolidation. At the same time, along with positive, it had negative consequences for the peoples of Central Asia. First of all, it manifested itself in the lowering of the status of Khiva, Bukhara, Samarkand and other cities as political and sociocultural centers, and breaking the whole system of historically developed interrelations in the region. Contradictions of the Soviet cadre policy and other factors, following the creation of national pseudo-republics by the European model, disrupted the natural process of modernization in Central Asia, slowed down the formation of civil society and produced new factors of interethnic tension.

The establishment of the Soviet regime in Central Asia was accompanied by harsh repressions and mass emigration of Central Asian peoples. A few hundreds thousands people fled the region, mainly representatives of local elites and participants of Basmachi movement. They made up a numerous diaspora of Central Asian peoples abroad.⁷⁶

The adoption of European principles of state building seemed to be the result of the party strategic doctrine that the new socialist community was possible to build at any stage of socio-economic development, including feudal and pre-

feudal socio-economic relations. It became the main idea of Communist concept of a non-capitalist way of development. As a consequence of building socialism, socialist nations would arise, and then, the principle of national self-determination would be the pledge of real equality and prosperity of nations. The totalitarian regime, developed later, with its nationalist ideology, in many respects contributed to the deformation of the nationalities policy in the Soviet state, in particular that in Central Asia.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE USSR AND NATION-STATE BUILDING

The creation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the adoption of the first constitution in 1924, however, did not put an end to the nation-state building. The 1930s witnessed the creation of new national-territorial units, as well as the introduction of many alterations in their borders and statuses. The constitutional right to national self-determination encouraged new republics to join the USSR. Thus, the constitution of 1936 fixed 11 union republics, 22 autonomous republics and 8 autonomous oblasts and okrugs. The constitution once again stressed the voluntary nature of the unity of 'equal socialist republics', proclaimed the equality of citizens regardless of their nationality and race and confirmed that any kind of national discrimination would be punished under the law (Article 123). In 1940, the USSR admitted four new republics: Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Moldavia.

The 1977 constitution generally reproduced the regulations of the 1936 constitution. According to it, 'the family of Soviet peoples' was organized as follows: 15 union republics, 20 autonomous republics, 8 autonomous oblasts and 10 autonomous okrugs. Altogether there were 53 national-territorial formations. So, out of 130 nationalities, populating the USSR, about 80 did not receive any national-state formations.⁷⁷ In this way, the latest Soviet constitution reproduced all shortcomings of previous ones. Being formally equal, Soviet nations were ranked according to their level of sovereignty, whether union or autonomous republic. Besides, the 1977 constitution included the thesis on the limited nature of sovereignty of union republics. The right to secession was declared but its conditions were not specified that made any attempt of sovereignization ephemeral.

It is worthy of note that it was not allowed speaking openly about interethnic conflicts until 1986. In the resolutions of the Communist Party a final conclusion was made: the national question in the Soviet Union had been completely and finally resolved. Of course, the totalitarian Soviet regime bared open large-scale interethnic clashes, although in everyday life many interethnic antipathies and frictions, as well as isolated crimes on ethnic ground, were observed.

SOVIET POLICY OF RUSSIFICATION

The nation-state formation took place side by side with intensive russification of non-Russian peoples. Nationalism, brought by Tsarism, was further stimulated by the implementation of the Soviet concept on the leading role of the Russian nation, which to a certain extent implied its domination. Russian nationalism, in its turn, produced and furthered different kinds of anti-Russian nationalism.

Russification manifested itself in the unification of national languages. By the late 1930s the assimilationist conception of 'zonal languages', worked out by Stalin, triumphed. The conception proposed the assimilation of ethnic minorities by larger peoples and the discontinuance of their written languages. As a result, small forms of territorial autonomies had been liquidated and the literacy in some languages had been cut off. As per the official data, the population of the USSR decreased from 200 peoples, mentioned by the 1926 census, to 100 nations and nationalities, as it was officially announced in the 1980s.⁷⁸

In spite of the official critics of Stalinism, the general course toward russification did not change during the later years of the USSR. Thus, the school reform of 1958 allowed parents a free choice of language of instruction for their children. Under existing conditions, when the future status of a child, both in his national republic and in the country as a whole, depended on his knowledge of Russian, that law had a certain assimilationist shade.

Fictive federalism and autonomization of the country with four levels of national-administrative units (union republic, autonomous republic, autonomous oblast and autonomous okrug) on voluntarily cut territories, historically populated by various peoples, placed a delayed-action mine under the national question in the USSR. The subsequent volitional alterations of national borders, the passing of vast territories (for instance, Crimea) from one republic to another

without taking into account historical and ethnic particularities, the deportation of whole peoples from their native lands and their dispersion among other nationalities, numerous migrations bound up with the eviction of people on the political ground and great Soviet constructions such as the development of virgin lands finally contributed to the mixing of peoples of the Soviet Union.

The period of 1960-1980s, the era of so-called 'Brezhnev's stagnation', was a special period in the history of Soviet nationalities. In the 1960s, the building of a 'common national state' (which comes to replace 'the state of the dictatorship of proletariat') and, as a result, 'the creation of the new historical community of people – Soviet people' was declared. That doctrine was grounded on two factors: mass spread of the Russian language and the attachment to common European industrial culture.

CREATION OF NATIONAL ELITES

At the same time, under the Soviet regime, as a result of purposeful efforts of the center, numerous and highly educated national elites had emerged in federal republics and Russian autonomies. The formation of national elites from among non-Russian peoples was the priority direction of the Soviet nationalities policy. There was a system of preferences in the training of national cadres of republics from party members and engineers to humanitarian intelligentsia and scientists of higher level of proficiency. As a result, the reproduction of intellectual and administrative elites in the republics became wide-ranging. For instance, the proportion of graduates of higher educational institutions, candidates and doctorates of sciences among the peoples of Transcaucasia and Central Asia was higher than among the population of the USSR on the whole.⁷⁹

Non-Russian elites were included in the Soviet class of *nomenclature* and realized the nationalities policy at the local level. The replenishment of Soviet nomenclature by non-Russians took place through both the Communist Party membership and administrative channels. But if national nomenclature could be formed 'by high tempo', the training of scientific and technical elites required many long years. The later was one of the reasons why by the late 1980s there were considerable disparities in the proportion of scientific and technical elites between the peoples of the USSR. These disparities were compensated at the expense of purposeful interregional and interrepublican migrations.

People of different nationalities were introduced into the ruling elite of the center, in particular the higher party's machinery and government. Of course, they were unconditionally loyal to the Soviet regime. In the personnel of Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, seats were reserved for the Communist Parties' leaders of the biggest republics. At the level of members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR there was also a nomenclaturally calculated ethnic mosaic. Nevertheless, the Apparatus of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and ministers, prestige representative institutions and institutions of ideological control were dominated by Russians and Muscovites of different ethnic origin (Ukrainians, Armenians, Georgians), deeply acculturated by Russians. Mainly Russians and partly Ukrainians were in the army and diplomatic corpus.

In the 1970s, the ethnic composition of the population in Central Asia and the Caucasus began to change in favor of titular nationalities. The main factor was the emigration of Russians and Ukrainians. As a consequence, titular groups became more competitive to take control over the institutions of power and resources. At the same time, in other republics such as Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Byelorussia, Latvia and Estonia, the proportion of Russians, on the contrary, increased that provoked anxiety of national elites about the loss of their dominating positions and the danger of greater acculturation by the Russian culture and language.

Hence, the Soviet nationalities policy, formulated in Lenin's principle 'the right of nations to self-determination', destroyed the old administrative-territorial system and established the new priorities by recognizing not the individual with its national interests but nations with their particular rights and national-authoritative-territorial claims, often realized at the expense of other peoples and universally recognized human rights.

The disintegration of the USSR was an objective result of social development. The speeding up of modernization and the creation of mobilized society deeply affected all aspects of life, including ethnic relations. The Bolsheviks refused the institution of national-cultural autonomy, accepted in other countries of the world to satisfy national-cultural needs of peoples. At the same time, they encouraged migration of people to newly established industrial centers and unification of the population, including cultural-linguistic assimilation, which was necessary to govern the country with the totalitarian political system. If at

earlier stages of socialism a low level of socio-cultural development justified that model of state policy, afterwards it came in contradiction with the needs of the country and its peoples.

NATIONAL POLICY IN SOVEREIGN KYRGYZSTAN

Unlike other post-Soviet countries, the Central Asian republics did not witness movements for independence prior to the collapse of the USSR. The demand of sovereignty did not mean to secede from the Soviet Union but to eliminate the existing inequality between the center and the periphery and to have greater control over republican economic and political matters. Republican elites and native intelligentsia were not ready to leave the Soviet Union. The results of the referendum, held on 17 March 1991 in Kyrgyzstan, when 95% of the republican population voted for the preservation of the USSR is a good evidence.

Kyrgyzstan declared its independence on 31 August 1991, when the existence of the Soviet Union was clearly approaching the end. The declaration of independence marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Kyrgyz and Kyrgyz state – the era of a national state.

Independent Kyrgyzstan proclaimed the course toward building a civil society, where the rights of the individual would be of priority regardless of his ethnic origin. Following the European experience of national consolidation, the republican leadership bent their efforts to integrate all ethnic groups on the territory of Kyrgyzstan into common civil community of Kyrgyzstanis, loyal to the new state.

Meanwhile, European nations were the product of historical evolution. European political institutions developed over decades of trial and error as societies sought out compromises and balances between the dominant culture and the minority cultures. European states grew spatially as cities typically grew. Concentration in the center led to the establishment of economic and political communities united under the sovereign. The influence of the core cultural community outspread, reinforcing a sense of national identity. Language, religious creed, loyalty to nation, patriotism to the state was the attributes that bound people together into European nations.

In contrast to European, non-European nations emerged as a result of decolonization and independence. Non-European nations did not create themselves gradually, through trial and error, but were invented by external circumstances. The fear of social disorder, the danger of border and territory disputes, as well as the natural desire of local political elites to retain power, were main reasons of the creation of non-European nations. National consolidation there was driven by the urgency of rapid integration into an already established and functioning international order.⁸⁰

Though the post-Soviet development of Kyrgyzstan in many respects resembles the case of non-European countries, national consolidation in Kyrgyzstan has been dictated by a number of other factors. Firstly, it is the multiethnic composition of the country, where according to the 1999 census lived 65% of Kyrgyzs, 14% of Uzbeks, 13% of Russians and about 10 % of others. Secondly, it is the aggravation of interethnic contradictions that manifested itself in the interethnic conflicts of 1989 between Kyrgyzs and Tajiks and of 1990 between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks, as well as the emigration of Russian speakers. Thirdly, it is the lack of intra-ethnic solidarity among Kyrgyzs themselves, whose attachment to the northern or southern region and different tribal groups dominates over common ethnic belonging.⁸¹

The ethnic revival of the Kyrgyz people and the actualization of their culture and language exerted a strong psychological influence upon the people of other ethnicities, thereby contributing to their feeling of discomfort and even infringement of their ethnic interests, which finally gave rise to the escalation of interethnic tension.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE PEOPLE OF KYRGYZSTAN

In response, ethnic groups began to establish their national-cultural centers, aimed to protect their interests and maintain their linguistic and cultural identity. By 1994, more than 20 national-cultural centers have been formed. On 7 December 1993, the leaders of 11 national-cultural centers addressed the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to call *Kurultai* (meeting) of the people of Kyrgyzstan for the purpose of discussing common problems and working out the ways of achieving stability, civil peace and interethnic harmony.

On 22 January 1994, first Kurultai took place. It established *the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan*, an extraparliamentary body under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on the issues of interethnic relations and national policy. The participation of the President A. Akaev in Kurultai meetings⁸² emphasizes great political importance, attached to the problems of interethnic relations.

The establishment and functioning of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan has set a precedent of a fundamentally new approach to the problems of interethnic relations. The Assembly became a new mechanism of social regulation, a state-public form of the state national policy. On the one hand, the state delegates its authority to public structures; on the other, public structures take a responsibility to maintain interethnic peace. Such integration of activities of state and public bodies is perspective and unique in the world practice.

The President and the Government of Kyrgyzstan cooperate with the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan on a permanent basis to promote comprehensive and timely study of ethnic interests and improve the mechanisms regulating interethnic relations. In that way, national policy of the state lies in an actual support, provided to the Assembly by the highest political leadership. The measures, undertaken during the collaboration of power and public structures, help to resolve sharp problems of the day and obviate tension in the society. This working style stimulates the activities of ethnic minorities, including the development of their national-cultural centers, strengthens their confidence and maintains contacts between the people of different nationalities and representatives of power structures. Unfortunately, currently ethnic minorities are not fully engaged in the management of interethnic relations. The Assembly only raises questions, which the state later resolves. It is necessary to seek the situation, when ethnic minorities would directly participate in the settlement of all problems, caused by interethnic interaction.

One of the most important tasks of the Assembly in the near future is to strengthen contacts with all ethnic groups and to achieve interethnic harmony and peace. It is worthy of note that the Assembly works at different levels: the discussion of issues inside diaspora, at interethnic level, at the Presidium of the Assembly and the adoption of working documents, the cooperation with power structures (ministries, state departments, government, the administration of the president), the discussion of issues with the President of the Kyrgyz Republic in the presence of the Council of the Assembly and the leaders of diasporas and, finally, the decision-making at the level of *Jogorku Kenesh* (parliament) and the

Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. An ultimate aim of mentioned activities is to make political decisions on the issues, brought up by the Assembly.

According to the Charter of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan, the Assembly has to be established by Kurultai, which is called by the President of the Kyrgyz Republic not rarer than once in four years. The highest leading body of the Assembly is the plenum of the Council of the Assembly, convened once a year. By the 1997 decree of the president, the Council of the Assembly has been provided the status of a consultative-advisory organ at the President of the Kyrgyz Republic. The latter decision was directed at enhancing the role of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan to represent the interests of all ethnic groups and protect the rights of ethnic minorities. The activities of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan are realized under the Constitution and legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, the Charter of the Assembly, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international treaties.

The Assembly's activities mainly involves: the issues of interethnic relations and the coordination of activities of national-cultural centers on study of history and culture of ethnic groups; the problems of education and training of cadres, healthy life style, upbringing of the individual, the cooperation with organizations of the youth, the employment of the youth, the cooperation of the youth with state bodies; the cooperation with socio-political organizations, unities, mass media, the Society of Friendship, religious confessions; the establishment of international contacts and people's diplomacy, the economic and socio-cultural integration with the CIS countries; remedial activities; the language policy; the financial and economical-technical base of the Assembly.⁸³

Presently, the Assembly consists of 28 national-cultural centers and social organizations, representing basic nationalities of the Kyrgyz Republic. The Assembly has two branch offices: in Osh and Djalal-Abad provinces. Each of provincial braches unites 10-15 national-cultural centers. Branch offices operate on the basis of prospective plans of the Assembly and make efforts to take into account regional particularities. In order to develop and coordinate the activities of national-cultural centers and settle interethnic problems, the House of Friendship was opened in Osh province, where all national-cultural centers were placed. The latter, in many respects, enhanced the prestige of Osh provincial branch and its national-cultural centers. Working under the same roof, they were offered an opportunity to communicate with each other, thereby promoting mutual understanding and finding out effective solution of emerging problems.

The Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan takes an active position in the political life of the state, nominates its representatives for the election in Jogorku Kenesh, the personnel of Central Electoral Commission, local authorities and the like. The Assembly devotes much attention to the development of ethnic cultures and languages, takes an active part in the celebration of national festivals such as the 1000th Anniversary of Kyrgyz heroic epic 'Manas' and others.

Today, Kyrgyzstani community faces the problem of integration, which is possible only through joint efforts of all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic. The integration process means to unify people belonging to various social, ethnic and territorial communities on the grounds of their mutual benefit, common interests, aims and values. The first step in this direction is a socio-cultural integration of Kyrgyzstani society that will stimulate the development and mutual penetration of ethnic cultures, traditions, religions, specificities of various ethnic communities.

It is well known that a normal ethno-political situation in the country is to a certain extent the result of the state national policy, aimed at the establishment of civil peace and ethnic harmony. The following principles should be placed at the foundation of this policy: the recognition of priorities of human rights, a free development of each ethnic community, the acceptance of the fact that in a multiethnic republic a nationality cannot satisfy its ethnic interests at the expense of another nationality, the perception that the people of Kyrgyzstan is an organic unity of the Kyrgyz and other ethnic groups.

The regulations of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic, adopted on basis of international documents of the Organization of United Nations, provided the ground for the development and protection of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan. Thus, Article 15 of Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic stresses basic human rights and freedoms. In particular, Item 3 of the article, which proclaims 'the equality of all citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic before the law and the court. No one may be subjected to any discrimination, the violation of rights and freedoms on the account of his origin, gender, race, nationality, language, and religion'.⁸⁴

The ratification of the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities by the Kyrgyz Republic is another step in this way. In this connection, Item 3 of Article 12 runs that 'international treaties and other norms of international law, ratified by the Kyrgyz Republic, will be a constituent part of the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic'.⁸⁵

The Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities was signed within the bounds of the Council of Europe on 1 February 1995. It has become the first multilateral obligatory legal statement, devoted to the protection of ethnic minorities. The Convention prohibits 'any discrimination based on belonging to a national minority'. At the same time, it endows ethnic minorities with special rights to 'maintain and develop their culture, and to preserve the essential elements of their identity, namely their religion, language, traditions and cultural heritage'.⁸⁶

Much of what the Framework Convention speaks has been put into practice in the Kyrgyz Republic. For other problems such as the participation of ethnic minorities in the state governing of Kyrgyzstan the Convention proposes a legislative basis. According to the Convention, 'the Parties shall create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs'.⁸⁷

On 21 October 1994, in Moscow, within the framework of the treaty of the CIS countries, Kyrgyzstan signed the Convention on Providing the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities, which has to be ratified by Jogorku Kenesh.

On the other hand, the deputies of Jogorku Kenesh, A. Sabirov and V. Dil, took an initiative to draft the law on ethnic minorities of the Kyrgyz Republic, which takes into consideration basic regulations of international treaties and Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic on the protection of constitutional rights of Kyrgyzstani citizens regardless of their ethnic origin. However, the draft was not adopted by Jogorku Kenesh and recalled because the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and national-cultural centers considered that there was no ethnic discrimination in the republic. Instead of it, a new draft law on ethnic development has been initiated, which, in the opinion of ethnic minorities, better fits the situation in Kyrgyzstan. National-cultural centers and a number of public organizations are taking part in the development of the new draft, which will be presented to the parliament in 2004. According to the draft, all nationalities of the republic, including the titular ethnic, the Kyrgyz, need the state mechanisms to maintain their development.

Consequently, we have to recognize that presently the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan is the only effective instrument of management of interethnic relations in the country. In short, the state lacks another state body such as a state committee or a ministry, which deals with the problems of

interethnic relations. It is necessary to create a legislative basis of interethnic interaction and work out legal, social and other instruments to protect the rights of ethnic minorities that will be obligatory for all power bodies and at all levels.

Hence, the management of interethnic relations includes two directions: the policy of state bodies and the activities of the non-governmental sector, represented by public organizations, first of all by the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan. The complexity of interethnic problems requires the cooperation of state bodies and non-governmental organizations in order to build the society, based on interethnic harmony and tolerance.

The Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan won the recognition of the international community. Other CIS countries followed its example. In 1999, the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan and the Assembly of Peoples of Russia signed a treaty on the exchange of operational experience. Recently, the cooperation of the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan with the Assemblies of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan has begun to show. However, the analysis of their activities demonstrated that other Central Asian republics tended to standardize the functions of the Assembly. For instance, in Uzbekistan there is a tendency towards standard functioning of the Assembly as a state institution; in Kazakhstan the Assembly has been directly incorporated into the organization of state bodies.

INTERETHNIC PROBLEMS OF INDEPENDENT KYRGYZSTAN

Following the Kyrgyz-Uzbek interethnic conflict, occurred in Osh province in 1990, the situation in the south has noticeably stabilized. The sovereignty of the republic, the course toward democratization and free market relations, as well as the resolution of many other issues by the state, particularly that of land tenure, contributed to the reduction of interethnic tension in southern Kyrgyzstan.

Nevertheless, there are many problems yet to be settled. One of them is a disproportionate representation of other ethnies, especially Uzbeks, in the republican government and local administration. Another problem, which provokes the discontent of Uzbek and Tajik communities in the south, is the education in their mother tongues.

The switch of neighboring Uzbekistan to the Latin script gave rise to the shortage of Uzbek-language textbooks in Uzbek schools of Kyrgyzstan, which number is estimated at 200. The problem can be only solved jointly with Uzbekistan. At the same time, the Kyrgyz-Uzbek University successfully operates in the south of the republic.

Similar difficulties are with Tajik-language textbooks in Tajik schools, located in the districts of Tajiks compact living. It also requires interrepublican regulation. Thereupon, the concern for socio-cultural and spiritual development of ethnies has to be in the core of Kyrgyzstani national policy.

The results of the sociological survey, conducted by the Center for Social Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyzstan among the delegates of second Kurultai and the leaders of national-cultural centers in 1996 and 1997, proved the presence of some unsettled problems in the interethnic sphere.

The interviewed characterized the interethnic situation in the republic as follows. About the half of respondents regarded interethnic relations in the republic as stable with little tension (44%), particularly the interviewees of Slavic (59.2%) and other nationalities (59.2%). The proportion of Kyrgyzs who viewed interethnic relations as stable with little tension was more than twice smaller (25.5%).

Much less respondents (6.8%) thought that interethnic relations were tense enough. Among them the position of Slavic interviewees is clearly distinguishable (18.3%). In general, an absolute majority (82.6%) pointed to a stable nature of interethnic relations in the republic.

However, the survey data should not be used as the basis for self-satisfaction, as there are considerable differences between the optimistic position of Kyrgyzs on the issue and the pessimistic position of non-Kyrgyzs, especially those in provinces.

Some leaders of national-cultural center considered that the problem of ethnic minorities consisted in the fact that they were removed from economic reforms (privatization, the market of securities). The society cardinally changes, and, though it had been a long time since the people of other nationalities live with Kyrgyzs, they didn't benefit from the distribution of national recourses and privatization.

Another issue of the day is the rehabilitation of illegally repressed during Stalinism the Korean people. There is no information about this process until

today. Lately the leadership of the Korean diaspora sent a letter to Jogorku Kenesh, asking to adopt the law on rehabilitation of Kyrgyzstani Koreans and the restoration of justice toward them.

NATIONAL-CULTURAL AUTONOMY

National-cultural needs of ethnic minorities are also realized through the institution of national-cultural autonomy, which won the recognition of many European countries. The principles of national-cultural autonomy laid the foundation for the whole system of international treaties on the protection of human rights, peoples and ethnic minorities.

In this regard, the experience of Kyrgyzstan is very interesting. Following the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On the formation of German national-cultural districts and national industrial-commercial structures in the Kyrgyz Republic' of March 1992, in the places of Germans compact living Chui and Sokuluk national-cultural districts headed by the committees of self-government had to be formed as well as *Folksrat* (council) of Germans of Kyrgyzstan.

During the period from 1989 to present, the population of Germans dropped from 102,000 to 16,000 as a result of their mass emigration to Germany. Recently the Government of Federal Republic of Germany imposed restrictions on the emigration of Germans from Kyrgyzstan but decided to provide financial and humanitarian assistance to them in the republic.

The main task of Kyrgyzstani Germans is to retain their cultural originality. Presently, the only place of their compact living is Rot-Front village, where people try to maintain their customs, national traditions and language. The leaders of the German diaspora bend every effort to create new places of Germans compact living and prevent German assimilation. The latter is especially topical, as far as the verge between Germans and Slavs is so thin that at any moment Slavs could assimilate Germans. The German leadership assumes that it is easy for Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks to realize the idea of self-organization because their historical motherland is near but it is difficult for Germans because their historical land is faraway. The creation of places of German compact living in Kyrgyzstan requires joint efforts of Kyrgyzstan and Germany.

For the purpose of preservation of national-cultural traditions, especially the German language, the Union of Germans of Kyrgyzstan was established. V. Dil, the Chairman of the union and a parliamentarian deputy, considers the loss of the native language by Germans as a serious crisis.⁸⁸

SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY ON INTERETHNIC SITUATION

In view of topicality of the problems of interethnic relations, the sociological survey was conducted in 2000 by the Academy of Management under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic within the framework of the OSCE project. The survey was devoted to the problems of management of interethnic relations at both the state and the non-governmental levels.⁸⁹ The aim of the survey was to reveal basic problems in the field of interethnic relations and define methods and mechanisms of their management that will promote the resolution of conflict situations.

The survey was carried out in accordance with the following methods: expert's questioning of state officials in various state organizations and filling in the questionnaire by persons belonging to ethnic minorities, including the activists of the non-governmental sector and the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan. The survey was realized in Batken, Osh and Djalal-Abad provinces in the south, and Chui province and Bishkek city in the north.

Totally, 173 state officials, engaged in different spheres of administration and of different level, were interviewed. Among them 4.6% represented the republican level, 7.5% - the provincial level, 31.8% - the rayon level, 38.7% - the city level. At the same time, 37% belonged to the Administration of the President, 35% - law-enforcement bodies, 8.7% - education and health care, 7.5% - taxation and financial services, 4.6% - the social fund and social security, 4% - jurisprudence bodies and courts, 3.5% - water industry, 1.7% - land and road inspection, 1.2% - journalists of local newspapers, 1.2% - non-governmental organizations, 1.2% - others.

361 people filled in the questionnaire. By nationality the sample was the following: 29.1% - Uzbeks, 22.4% - Russians, 13.3% - Kyrgyzs, 4.7% - Tatars, 4.7% - Uighurs, 3.6% - Kazakhs, 3.0% - Tajiks, 2.8% - Dungans, 1.9% - Ukrainians, 1.7% - Germans, 1.7% - Koreans, 9.7% -others.

By occupation: 26.9% - businessmen and merchants, 19.9% - state employees, 11.9% - unemployed, 8.3% - teachers, 5.8% - peasants and farmers, 5.8% - pensioners, 4.7% - workers, 4.4% - medical workers, 3.6% - students, 2.5% - invalids, 2.2% - non-governmental organizations, 0.8% - military men.

The sample of both experts and ethnic minorities corresponded with basic parameters of Kyrgyzstani population in provinces.

The results of the survey showed that every third expert (34.7%) denied the presence of problems, stemming from discrimination on ethnic ground in Kyrgyzstan. Nevertheless, many experts pointed out a number of problems, leading to the aggravation of the interethnic situation in the republic: 22.5% mentioned cadre problems, 13.3% - language problems, 8.1% - border problems, 6.4% - socio-psychological problems, 5.8% met a hostile attitude, 4.6% pointed out political problems, 4% - problems in education and culture, 3.5% - domestic nationalism, 1.7% frequent manifestations of nationalism.

Thus, on the republican scale there are three most significant problems, emphasized by respondents: cadre problems (22.5%), language problems (13.3%) and border problems (8.1%).

According to provinces the data are as follow. In Batken province, 35.9% of respondents mentioned border problems, 7.7% - cadre problems and 7.7% - language problems.

In Osh province, 25.8% pointed out cadre problems and 12.9% - language problems.

In Djalal-Abad province, political problems appeared to be the most important – 20%, then socio-psychological problems – 16.7% and cadre problems – 13.3%.

In Chui province, 43.3% stressed cadre problems, 26.7% – language problems, 16.7% – problems of education and culture.

In Bishkek city, cadre problems were mentioned by 28.6%, language problems by 19%, socio-psychological problems by 7.1%, common nationalism by 7.1%.

In this regard, it is very interesting to make a comparative analysis between the views of state officials and respondents belonging to ethnic minorities. If one third of experts (34.7%) denied the presence of problems in the field of interethnic relations, among ethnic minorities that figure was twice as much (63.7%). While 54.4% of experts did not face interethnic problems and a negative attitude on the ethnic basis, among ethnic minorities 62.3% faced it. Nevertheless,

the figures are comparable and the difference between the opinions of experts and ethnic minorities are not that big that demonstrates high reliability of the survey data.

The analysis of the answers revealed that in southern provinces, where the authority of state bodies and of *aksakals* (community elders) was traditionally high, provincial and local authorities and law-enforcement bodies were seen as influential and most effective.

In Chui province and Bishkek city, along with the republican state bodies and the authority of *aksakals*, the activities of non-governmental organizations and movements were highly valued. At the same time, an authority of the non-governmental sector in the field of interethnic relations was higher than that of local authorities. People predominantly trust the highest republican state officials, authoritative men and non-governmental organizations and only then local administration. Probably, common people think that local authorities could not settle their problems or it is not in their power. Similar answers were received from the respondents of Russian and Uzbek nationalities. Kyrgyzs and other ethnic groups traditionally showed preference for local authorities but put the non-governmental sector in the second place.

A significant number of experts (20.8%) believed that for the purpose of successful solution of interethnic problems it was necessary: to toughen sanctions against manifestations of nationalism, to provide a legislative basis for introduction of ethnic minorities into all state bodies, including the highest level, to adopt the legislation on cadre policy.

Besides, 13.3% of the interviewed experts proposed to give more power to the institutions of local governing, 9.8% - to resolve economic problems, especially the land issue, privatization and crediting, 8.7% - to popularize internationalism and teach a tolerant attitude toward people of other nationalities, 6.4% - to create special state bodies, for example the State Committee on National Issues, which was empowered to solve interethnic problems not only on the republican but also on the international scale.

Main factors of stabilization of interethnic relations could be divided into four groups: political, socio-economic, legal and cultural-linguistic factors. Interviewers stressed measures, which they thought as necessary to stabilize interethnic relations. The following data confirm the results of the above-mentioned survey.⁹⁰

In the field of politics, the most popular were the following factors: 45.7% mentioned equal representation of ethnic groups in all power structures (83.3% of Uzbeks, 63% of other nationalities, 57.9% of Russians and 22.7% of Kyrgyzs), 35.6% - strengthened bilateral and multilateral economic and politic relations with other countries (mostly Kyrgyzs), 35.1% - spoke in favor of raising the responsibility for kindling interethnic dissention and distrust (mostly Kyrgyzs – 36.8%), 15.4% mentioned the problem of dual citizenship (mostly Russians – 28.9%).

In the socio-economic field: 52.9% spoke to eliminate unemployment and create extra jobs (mostly Uzbeks – 83.3%), 36.1% - to reinforce social security (increase of scholarships, pensions, allowances), 33.7% - mentioned growing prices and a decline in standard of living (mostly Russians – 39.5%), 11.1% expressed a necessity to reduce migration from the republic (19.2% of non-titular nationalities).

In the legal field: 54.8% supported toughening criminal and administrative responsibility for manifestations of nationalism and an insult of national feelings (mostly Russians – 57.9% and other nationalities), 21.6% - to provide equal opportunities for having higher education (30% of non-titular nationalities), 17.8% - noted the lack of legal guarantees and mechanisms to protect the rights of ethnic minorities (30.1% of Uzbeks and 23.7% of Russians), 16.3% - the absence of legal guarantees and prospects of professional growth among ethnic minorities (50% of Uzbeks and 28.9 of Russians).

In the cultural-linguistic field: 34.6% stressed the lack of press, books and textbooks in native languages (50% of Uzbeks), 19.2% worried about the switch of the official paper work to the state language (25% of Kyrgyzs), 18.8% - lack of opportunities to be taught in native languages in schools and institutes of higher learning (26% of non-titular ethnies), 8.2% - mentioned the lack of national theaters, artistic collectives (15.8% of Russians and 14.6% of Russian respondents in Chui province).

In view of the majority of experts (state officials), the following state organizations can affect the interethnic situation in the republic: 35.3% - the President, 19.1% - Jogorku Kenesh (as the branch of power and its deputies), 19.1% - joint efforts of the whole society (from an ordinary citizen to the president), 17.9% - the Government and 9.8% - local authorities (if they are authorized and their financing increases).

In general, the survey brought up basic problems, hampering the effective management of ethnic communities in the republic, revealed the ways and authoritative state and non-governmental institutions to settle them.

3

**INTERETHNIC
RELATIONS**

**ETHNIC SITUATION IN THE LATE NINETEENTH - EARLY
TWENTIETH CENTURIES**

In the second half of the nineteenth century various ethnic groups lived on the territory, populated by Kyrgyzs. Uzbeks was the second largest group in the area. Tatars, Dungans, Uighurs and Kazakhs were not numerous.

As a result of immigration, started in the 1960s of the nineteenth century after the annexation of the Kyrgyz territory by the Russian Empire, the ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan experienced radical changes. On the one hand, initiated by the Tsarist government agrarian migration of Russian and Ukrainian peasants from internal provinces of Russia and Siberia and their resettlement in Kyrgyzstan stimulated the formation of multiethnic society there. According to some calculations, the population of Russians and Ukrainians in the area run up to 122,000 people by 1914.⁹¹

On the other hand, the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed the migration of other ethnic groups to Kyrgyzstan. First Tatars appeared in the area before its incorporation into the Russian Empire. Many Tatars came along with Russian troops as soldiers, officers, and interpreters. However, their majority arrived in Kyrgyzstan after the Russian annexation. Most of them were natives of Kazan, Ufa, Orenburg, Tomsk, Tobol provinces, Petropavlovsk district, cities of Vernyi, Aulie-Ata and others.

In the mentioned period 14,000 Dungans moved to Kyrgyzstan. In 1877, those who migrated were the natives of Kashgar. In 1881-1883, Dungans from Kuljin district of China came to Kyrgyzstan. They settled in various regions of Kyrgyzstan: Osh city, near Karakol city, Tokmak city and Pishpek district.

During the period of 1863-1866, more than 10,000 Kalmyks from China moved to the Kyrgyz area. Subsequently many of them went back. The remained settled in the Issyk-Kyl valley, nearby Karakol city.

The Russian colonization of the area was followed by the migration of Germans. First Germans established their settlements at the lower stream of Talas River.

Hence, in the second half of the nineteenth – the early twentieth centuries the ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan underwent serious changes that brought to an increase in number of non- indigenous population. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the territory of Kyrgyzstan was populated by Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Russians, Ukrainians, Dungans, Kalmyks, Uighurs, Germans and 40 other ethnic groups, whose number was negligible.⁹²

ETHNIC SITUATION DURING SOVIET YEARS

The establishment of the Soviet regime in Kyrgyzstan gave rise to the processes of Cultural Revolution, collectivization and industrialization, which stimulated further immigration of Slavic peoples. 8,000 experienced workers and hundreds of engineers and technicians were dispatched to Kyrgyzstan within the first five-year plan for the purpose of illiteracy elimination and education of national cadres for industrial and agricultural enterprises of the republic.⁹³ However, in spite of explicit promotion of national cadres by the Soviet state, the development of machine-building, mining and processing industries were realized at the expense of a manpower export from Russia and Ukraine.

In 1926, Russians and Ukrainians formed 11.7% and 6.4% of the republican population. Ten years later these proportions increased and became 20.8% and 9.4% correspondingly. Slavs mainly occupied the capital, Frunze city (presently Bishkek city), as well as other cities and towns, where plant facilities, mining and coal industries were located.⁹⁴

Thus, the overwhelming majority of Slavs appeared in Kyrgyzstan as a result of purposeful and regulated by the center migrations. Moreover, the inflow of non-native population was furthered by initiated in 1930s Stalin's ethnic deportations. In 1937, Kurds of Armenia and Azerbaijan and Koreans of the Far East were deported to Kyrgyzstan. The Great Patriotic War became the ground for deportation of Volga Germans, the peoples of the newly incorporated territories of Bessarabia, Western Ukraine, Baltic republics as well as Ingush, Karachais, Chechen, Balkars, Kalmyks, Crimean Tatars, Mesketian Turks of

Northern Caucasia.⁹⁵ The 1933 famine in Kazakhstan provoked Kazakh mass migration to Kyrgyzstan.

Table 3.1. The proportion of Kyrgyzs in the urban and rural population of Kyrgyzstan by censuses, (%)

	1959	1970	1979	1989	1999
The Kyrgyz Republic	40,5	43,8	47,9	52,4	64,6
urban population	13,3	17,0	22,9	29,9	51,7
rural population	54,2	59,8	63,4	66,2	71,9
Bishkek city	10,4	12,7	17,0	22,9	52,2
urban population	9,5	12,3	16,9	22,7	52,1
rural population	14,6	33,0	25,1	49,6	69,8
Chui province	21,6	22,5	24,8	29,3	43,8
urban population	7,0	8,4	10,4	16,6	31,2
rural population	25,5	26,9	30,2	34,4	47,3
Issyk-Kul province	50,8	56,7	62,8	67,7	79,4
urban population	20,9	26,8	36,7	46,8	67,0
rural population	61,1	68,6	73,9	77,5	84,9
Talas province	60,4	65,9	71,0	76,9	88,5
urban population	17,9	25,4	30,7	50,6	81,1
rural population	67,3	72,8	77,6	82,0	90,0
Naryn province	86,2	93,8	96,0	97,1	98,7
urban population	54,3	80,5	87,0	92,2	97,0
rural population	94,6	96,3	98,0	98,4	99,1
Osh province	51,4	52,0	57,0	56,7	63,8
urban population	12,6	15,1	26,2	22,6	33,6
rural population	64,1	66,9	70,1	70,3	72,9
Djalal-Abad province	46,6	52,4	57,1	60,9	69,8
urban population	12,6	18,1	26,0	41,1	64,2
rural population	64,0	67,6	70,0	69,3	71,5
Batken province	41,1	53,7	53,2	65,7	74,3
urban population	12,6	25,0	24,8	39,4	59,4
rural population	63,9	69,4	65,7	75,0	77,8

Source: Naselenie Kyrgyzstana: itogi pervoi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 1999 goda v tablitsakh, Book 2, Part 1 (Bishkek, 2000), p 81.

Ethnic migrations became a major factor of a decrease in the population of Kyrgyzs in the republic, especially among city-dwellers. According to the 1959 census, Kyrgyzs formed 40.5% of the republican population and 13.3% of city-dwellers (See Table 3.1).

Meanwhile, a decline in the proportion of Kyrgyzs took place under the Tsarist regime. As a consequence of the 1916 genocide of Kyrgyzs, the population of Kyrgyzs decreased by 120,000 people in 1917, or 41.4%, compared to their number in 1916.⁹⁶

In the 1970s, the ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan began to change in favor of the titular ethnic. The emigration of Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and high fertility of Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Tajiks and others gave rise to a new ethnic situation. Good evidence is the data of the 1979 and the 1989 censuses (See Table 3.2). For instance, during 1979-1989, the population of Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Tatars dropped, while that of Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turks increased during the same period.

At the same time, the period from 1950s to the early 1990s was marked by the internal migration of Kyrgyzs, mainly from countryside to cities. Historically, most of Kyrgyzs lived in rural areas, submontane and mountainous regions, where they were engaged in agricultural industries: distant-pasture animal husbandry and tobacco cultivation. The creation of new jobs at newly opened enterprises and the desire of a new generation of Kyrgyzs to receive higher education made them migrate to cities.⁹⁷

ETHNIC SITUATION AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Presently, the Kyrgyz Republic is a multiethnic country, inhabited by more than 90 ethnic communities, including twelve nationalities with the population of more than 20,000 people.

Between the 1989 and the 1999 censuses the ethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan underwent remarkable changes as a consequence of emigration and high birth rate. In this respect three groups can be distinguished.

The first group consists of peoples, which number increased during the ten years. Within the period of 1989-1999 Kyrgyzs increased by 900,000 people (40%), so that their proportion in the republic rose from 52.4% in 1989 to 64.9% in 1999. Turks increased by 12,000 people (57%), Dungans – by 15,000 people

(40%), Uighurs - by 10,000 people (27%). The population of Uzbeks increased by 115,000 people (21%) and their proportion rose from 12.9% to 13.8%, so that in 1999 they became the second largest ethnic group after Kyrgyzs, leaving behind Russians, who were the second largest group in 1989. The increase in the population of mentioned nationalities resulted from their high fertility. At the same time, the number of Tajiks in Kyrgyzstan during 1989-1999 increased by 9,000 people (27%) mainly at the expense of mass immigration of Tajik refugees (See Table 3.2).

Table 3.2. Changes in the population of some nationalities in the Kyrgyz Republic, (%)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Population</i>			<i>Proportion</i>		
	1979	1989	1999	1979	1989	1999
The Kyrgyz Republic	3522832	4257755	4822938	100	100	100
Kyrgyzs	1687382	2229663	3128144	47.9	52.4	64.9
Uzbeks	426194	550096	664953	12.1	12.9	13.8
Russians	911703	916558	603198	25.9	21.5	12.5
Dungans	26661	36928	51766	0.8	0.9	1.1
Ukrainians	109324	108027	50441	3.1	2.5	1.0
Uighurs	29817	36779	46733	0.8	0.9	1.0
Tatars	71744	70068	45439	2.0	1.6	0.9
Kazakhs	27442	37318	42657	0.8	0.9	0.9
Tajiks	23209	33518	42636	0.7	0.8	0.9
Turks	5160	21294	33327	0.1	0.5	0.7
Germans	101057	101309	21472	2.9	2.4	0.4
Koreans	14481	18355	19764	0.4	0.4	0.4
Others	88658	97842	72408	2.5	2.3	1.5

Source: Osnovnye itogi pervoi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniia Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 1999 goda (Bishkek, 2000), p 26.

The second group includes peoples, whose number noticeably decreased by 1999. On the account of emigration, the population of Russian decreased by

300,000 people, so that their proportion dropped from 21.5% in 1989 to 12.5% in 1999. Germans decreased by 80,000 people, or from 2.4% to 0.4%, Ukrainians - by 57,000 people, or from 2.5% to 1%, Tatars – by almost 25,000, or from 1.6% to 0.9%.⁹⁸

The third group includes peoples, whose number changed slightly or remained the same during 1989-1999. They are Armenians, Moldavians, Georgians, Turkmen, Lithuanians, and Estonians.

There are a number of peculiarities in the geographical distribution of ethnic groups. For example, the residents of Naryn and Talas provinces are predominantly Kyrgyzs (See Table 3.3). Most of Russians and Ukrainians reside in the north: Bishkek city, Chui and Issyk-Kul provinces. Uzbeks mainly inhabit the south of the republic: Osh, Djalal-Abad and Bakten provinces.

Table 3.3. The ethnic composition of the Kyrgyz Republic by provinces in 1999, (%)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>The Kyrgyz Republic</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui prov.</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul prov.</i>	<i>Talas prov.</i>	<i>Naryn prov.</i>	<i>Osh prov.</i>	<i>Djalal-Abad prov.</i>	<i>Batken prov.</i>
Kyrgyzs	64,9	52,2	43,8	79,4	88,5	98,7	63,8	69,8	74,3
Uzbeks	13,8	1,6	1,8	0,8	0,9	0,3	31,1	24,4	14,4
Russians	12,5	33,2	31,9	13,2	4,0	0,3	1,3	2,1	2,2
Dungans	1,1	0,5	5,7	0,7	*	*	*	*	*
Ukrainians	1,0	2,1	3,3	0,6	0,7	*	*	0,3	*
Uighurs	1,0	1,7	1,9	1,0	*	*	0,9	0,4	*
Tatars	0,9	2,1	1,1	0,7	0,2	*	0,6	0,8	1,0
Kazakhs	0,9	1,6	2,3	1,7	1,7	*	*	*	*
Tajiks	0,9	0,2	0,3	*	*	*	0,5	0,6	6,9
Turks	0,7	0,3	1,7	*	0,7	*	0,9	0,6	0,3
Germans	0,4	0,7	1,8	*	0,3	*	*	*	*
Koreans	0,4	1,7	0,7	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kalmyks	*	*	*	1,3	*	*	*	*	*
Azerbaijanis	0,3	0,3	1,0	*	*	*	*	*	*
Kurds	0,2	*	0,5	*	2,3	*	*	0,2	*
Others	1,0	1,8	2,2	0,6	0,7	0,7	0,9	0,8	0,9

Nationalities marked with * are of small proportions and included in 'Others'.

Source: Naselenie Kyrgyzstana: itogi pervoi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniya Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 1999 goda v tablitsakh, Book 2, Part 1, Bishkek, 2000, pp 72-78.

INTERETHNIC SITUATION IN INDEPENDENT KYRGYZSTAN

The liberalization of socio-political life in the late 1980s and the announced course toward democratization and observance of human rights favored the growth of ethnic self-consciousness of all ethnic communities in the republic. At the same time, the introduction of presidency in Kyrgyzstan on 24 October 1990 and the declaration of state sovereignty on 15 December 1990 were accompanied by serious changes in the interethnic situation of the republic.

The politicization of ethnic factor, intensification of political struggle and polarization of Kyrgyzstani society on ethnic ground characterized the new ethno-political situation. In many ways it stemmed from the understanding of sovereignty as the sovereignty of the titular group and creation of preferences for it in all spheres of republican life. Such monoethnic coloration of sovereignty in terms of Kyrgyzstani multiple ethnicity brought to the escalation of interethnic tension. On the account of low political culture opposition of different groups developed into the interethnic violence and became apparent in the tragic events of 1990.⁹⁹

A number of socio-economic, political, cultural and psychological factors contributed to the worsening of the interethnic situation in the republic. The economic crisis of the early 1990s, which caused inflation, unemployment, collapse of consumer market and a sharp decline in the standard of living, was projected on the sphere of interethnic relations. However, the direct factors of the destabilization of interethnic situation were political: the putsch of August 1991 and its consequences such as the breakup of the USSR and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. The switch to Kyrgyz in the official state work and education, prescribed by the 1989 law on state language, also contributed to the escalation of interethnic tension, since the new legislation granted privileges to the citizens of Kyrgyz origin and infringed upon the interests of other ethnic groups in the republic.

All above factors led to the intensification of emigration. For the period of 1989-1999, more than 300,000 Russians, 100,000 Germans, 50,000 Uzbeks, 44,000 Ukrainians, 30,000 Tatars, 10,000 Kazakhs emigrated from Kyrgyzstan (See Table 3.4).

Table 3.4. External migration by nationalities during 1989-1999, (people)

<i>Nationalities</i>	<i>Immigrants</i>	<i>Emigrants</i>	<i>Balance</i>
Total	257922	651439	-393517
Kyrgyzs	48818	30775	18043
Russians	112495	336773	-224278
Germans	10093	96288	-86195
Ukrainians	14232	44231	-29999
Uzbeks	22635	49975	-27340
Tatars	8927	31291	-22364
Jews	408	4578	-4170
Belarus	1156	3486	-2330
Azerbaijans	4681	5930	-1249
Tajiks	3056	4299	-1243
Kazakhs	9476	10587	-1111
Uigurs	2023	2686	-663
Armenians	407	1039	-632
Koreans	3499	3933	-434
Turkmens	143	266	-123
Turks	2955	2412	543
Dungans	2453	1502	948
Others	10465	21385	-10920

Source: Osnovnye itogi pervoi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniia Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 1999 goda, Bishkek, 2000, p 59.

At the same time, since 1992 interethnic tension in the republic began to reduce. Firstly, the 1990 interethnic conflict in Osh province cooled the heat of national patriots and brought to the normalization of interethnic relations. Secondly, as a result of migration, Kyrgyzstani economy suffered irreplaceable damage, since tens of thousands qualified specialists, who worked in various sectors of economy left the republic. These and other factors made Kyrgyz authorities initiate a few measures to keep Russian-speaking people in the republic. In 1992, it was allowed using Russian in the office work in the areas, enterprises and organizations, where Russian speakers formed 70% and more. In autumn 1993, the Kyrgyz-Russian University was opened. In 1995, B. Silaev, Russian by nationality, was elected the mayor of Bishkek city. Another Russian,

A. Moiseev, was appointed to the post of vice prime minister of Kyrgyzstan. The Criminal code of the republic was supplemented with the article about criminal responsibility for discrimination of citizens on the ethnic basis.

Consequently, the period 1994-1998 witnessed a remarkable decrease in emigration. In 1994, 71,197 people, or, half less than in 1993 (143,619 people), emigrated. In 1995, there were 37,302 emigrants, in 1996 – 27,584, in 1997 – 19,538, in 1998 – 15,671, in 1999 - 17,818, in 2000 – 27,887.¹⁰⁰ An increase in the number of migrants during last two years was provoked by Batken events of 1999-2000.

The current stage of Kyrgyzstani development is still marked by contradictions and conflicts, although to a lesser degree. It is possible to conclude that the accents of social tension in Kyrgyzstan have shifted. Socio-economic problems are the most topical now.

The economic crisis of the first years after the independence led to deindustrialization of the country. During 1989-1999 the number of the employed in the industrial sector decreased in 2.6 times. Many workers have been forced to take indefinite unpaid leave. As per the 1999 census, 277,000 people were unemployed, or 14.4% of the economically active population in the republic, including 24.4% in urban areas.¹⁰¹ However, the official figure does not reflect the actual situation in Kyrgyzstan. According to the expert's data, there are more than 500,000 unemployed people at present. Moreover, the number of those having unpaid leave and working short workweek is about the same. Such a large-scale reduction of jobs escalates social tension. Though a decline in the birth rate of republican population is observed during recent few years, the number of the unemployed in the future is, nevertheless, expected to grow. In this respect, the most important task is to create extra jobs and provide full employment.

On the other hand, the economic crisis in Kyrgyzstan gave rise to poverty, which represents one of the most serious dangers to social and political stability, civil peace and harmony. Speedy polarization of the society into the rich and the poor contributes to the escalation of social tension in the republic.

The results of surveys, conducted by the Center for Social Research and aimed at revealing the factors destabilizing social and interethnic situation and a degree of interethnic tension in Kyrgyzstan allow making the following conclusions. Main objective motives of interethnic conflicts are the factors of a socio-economic, political and spiritual nature. However, it should be kept in

mind that socio-economic, political, spiritual and other factors, decisive in the emergence of interethnic conflicts, can be latent for a long time. Situational and subjective circumstances can provoke them to show, since on the account of ethnocentrism and ethnic prejudices people are inclined to find the source of their problems among the people of different ethnic groups.

SELF-PERCEPTION AND CONFLICT POTENTIAL OF KYRGYZSTANI SOCIETY

In order to find out ethno-cultural and ethno-political orientations of Kyrgyzstani people, a sociological survey was conducted in the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, Bishkek city, in 1997. The survey was carried out by the members of the Center for Social Research within the framework of the Macarthur Foundation grant, won by A. Elebaeva, a scientific adviser of the center. The survey was directed at defining the topicality of ethnic problems and conflict potential of the society, as well as mechanisms of self-identification among the largest ethnies in the republic. The sampled population made up 1,200 people. The sample was combined, multistage, simulated main characteristics of the republican population.

Ways of perception of own national belonging¹⁰²

It is a well-known fact that ethnic and national 'We' exists as far as there are other peoples and countries, or 'They', which are different from 'Us' by language, culture, customs and other characteristics. At the same time, the ethnic self-consciousness of each ethnies develops a peculiar hierarchy of different ethnic communities that is historically determined. This complex combination of images of 'Others' is anyhow projected on the perception of own ethnic group and in everyday life is rationalized in the form of common conceptions of 'Us' and 'Them'.

The task of the survey was to know how ethnic belonging was fixed and rationalized in people's consciousness. Respondents were proposed to choose one or more out of seven different opinions (See Table 3.5).

Table 3.5. Answers of respondents to the question ‘Which of opinions listed below fit your concept of nationality?’, (%)

<i>Opinions</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Nationality is the gift of nature or God and cannot be changed	56,1
2. Because of nationality people remember their ancestors, motherland and history	48,4
3. Each person should be proud of his nationality	47,4
4. Nationality is the one that unifies people to achieve their common ends	26,4
5. The concept of nationality is timeworn now not to mention the future	13,5
6. Nationality is the one that divides people and oppose them to each other	13,4
7. Person can choose his nationality by himself	10,0

As we can see, more than the half of respondents (56.1%) understood nationality as the gift of nature or God, or, according to the terminology of E. Durkheim, considered it as sacral. It was the most popular concept among the interviewed of 54 years and older (63.4%). This figure was confirmed by answers of respondents to the control question: ‘Do you agree that adults can change their nationality on legal ground?’. 51.8% of interviewers showed obvious disagreement to do so. Among them was 58.8% of Kyrgyzs and 45.1% of Slavs, including 62.6% of those aged 54 years and upwards.

Slightly less than the half (48.4%) supported the second opinion, which can be characterized as ethno-historical. Third place was taken by so-called patriotic perception of ethnicity (47.4%). The third opinion was followed by the fourth one with a big interval (26.4%). It uncovered the socio-political function of nationality - the unification to achieve common ends. This pragmatic opinion, when ethnic identity was used as the instrument of unification and attaining common goals, had a sufficient number of supporters.

It has to be mentioned that the opposite sixth opinion, or the dividing function of nationality, was pointed out only by 13.5% of respondents, or half less than those who supported the uniting function of nationality. The interviewers of Slavic origin formed the largest proportion of those who chose this option (16.2%), while the corresponding figure of respondents of other

nationalities was 12% and less. 17.8% of them were young people. This answer was provoked by the consequences of interethnic conflicts in the CIS countries, especially those in Central Asia.

At the same time, one eighth of respondents (13.5%) regarded the concept of nationality as timeworn. In the group aged 18-30 years, 17.5% agreed with that opinion. Among those having higher education that figure was 14.7%. The proportion of Slavic respondents was the same (14.3%). So, almost each ninth interviewer considered ethnic belonging as insignificant.

It was interesting to discover that somewhat half of respondents (45%) spoke in support of fixing nationality in passports. One third of them (31.5%) were indifferent and about a quarter (23.1%) opposed it. The latter, in our view, were those who understood nationality in its civil meaning.

In the seventh opinion nationality is mainly civil belonging, which allows making a conscious choice of nationality. It is opposite to the ethnic interpretation of nationality and, therefore, deserves special attention. 17.3% of the interviewed agreed that person could choose his nationality by himself, including 18.8% of those having higher education and 22.2% of Slavs.

The survey question 'Whom do you feel?' had similar results. 8.2% of the questioned refused their belonging to a particular nationality or state and announced themselves as 'citizens of the world'. Nevertheless, an absolute majority of respondents (64.8%) considered themselves as the citizens of Kyrgyzstan, including those of non-Kyrgyz origin.

29% of Russians regarded Kyrgyzstan as their motherland, although they were not born there. At the same time, Russians formed the highest proportion of those who did not attach any importance to this word. Kyrgyzs, on the contrary, had the smallest proportion (4.5%), for whom the word 'motherland' was of no meaning.

A considerable number of respondents could not determine themselves (13.9%, including 12.6% of men and 15.1% of women). It was typical for 17.6% of the old and 17.3% of those having secondary special education. 8.3% of them

were Slavs. Their position can be justified by the socio-economic and political-cultural situation in the CIS republics and alteration in their status roles.

The sociological survey was conducted in 1997 or six years after the breakup of the USSR. During the six years people's consciousness had been gradually adapting to the new political status of Kyrgyzstan as well as other countries of post-Soviet space. Of course, it was a painful and complex process, especially for those people, who spent their lives having a strong belief that the USSR is one of the two leading world powers that would bright a prosperous socialist future. Nevertheless, the results of the survey demonstrated that nostalgia for the Soviet Union was passing into history (12.8%) and the majority of the questioned (64.8%) defined themselves as Kyrgyzstanis.

At the same time, 37.7% of the interviewed claimed to be proud of their nation a lot and 48.7% took a pride in their nation from time to time. Only 12.8% of respondents were not proud of their nation at all. It is interesting that the latter are mostly women (15.3%), the respective proportion of men is 10.3%.

However, the fact that they lived in Kyrgyzstan made people think about the future of this country. 55.4% of the questioned expressed a concern about the future of Kyrgyzstan, pointing out that there is a threat of selling out national resources to foreigners. 22.1% of respondents did not agree with them.

An indirect indicator of love for own country is migratory sentiments. In this connection, the survey was included the question: 'If you had a chance to emigrate, what would you prefer to do?'. 35.1% of interviewers answered that they would prefer to go abroad and make some money (on the account of the economic situation in the republic) and 26.3% preferred to study abroad. At the same time, one fifth (20.4%) mentioned that if they had a chance they would have emigrated forever. The highest proportion of those was among Tatars (29.2%) and Russians (27.3%). Only 10.1% of Kyrgyzs expressed a desire to emigrate for good.

However, some anxiety was revealed concerning two other questions. As we see, Kyrgyzs and non-Kyrgyzs occupied diametrically opposite positions regarding the first question on the role of Kyrgyzs in modern Kyrgyzstan (See

Table 3.6). If 54.4% of Kyrgyzs regarded themselves as the leading group, 66.9% of Slavic respondents considered Kyrgyzs to be the same as others.

Table 3.6. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What do you think about the role of Kyrgyzs in modern Kyrgyzstan?’, (%)

<i>Opinions</i>	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Kazakhs</i>	<i>Others</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Kyrgyzs have to remain the leading ethnic among others in Kyrgyzstan	54.4	13.0	10.3	27.3	18.1	29.3
2. Kyrgyzs are the same as others and they should not play a special role	32.4	66.9	62.1	50.0	59.0	52.6
3. It is difficult to say	9.8	18.3	27.6	22.7	21.7	15.7

The same results had the question ‘Can a non-Kyrgyz be the President of Kyrgyzstan?’, to which 39.1% of respondents answered ‘yes’ (51.4% of Slavs and 20.1% of Kyrgyzs), 36.1% - ‘no’ (62.9% of Kyrgyzs) and 15.6% - ‘it doesn’t matter’.

Hence, the most typical ways of perception of own national belonging in Kyrgyzstani society are sacral, ethno-historical and patriotic.

Indicators of interethnic tension

Interethnic tension is a mass mental condition that develops as a result of reflection by group ethnic consciousness of some unfavorable external circumstances, violation of their interests, destabilization of their existence and obstacles for its development.

The specificity of interethnic tension is produced by three constituents:

- Structure and content of interethnic communication;
- Peculiarities of ethnic culture;
- Event chronicle of relations between ethnies.

An indirect indicator of interethnic tension is interethnic communication, or how people of different nationalities establish their relations. In this connection, the question 'Does ethnic belonging of a person affect your attitude towards him?' was included into the questionnaire.

The survey showed that for 46.2% of respondents (51.9% of Kyrgyzs, 55.2% of Uzbeks, 42.1% of Russians) ethnic belonging was of special importance when they decided to marry. In case of a relative who decided to marry a person of another nationality, 37% agreed with his decision and 37% disagreed. Kyrgyzs formed the largest proportion of those who disagreed with the interethnic marriage of their relative (45.6%).

However, the majority of the interviewed did not raise any objection against having friends (70.9%) and neighbors (55.4%) among people of other nationalities, as well as did not feel discomfort upon the acquaintance with a person of different nationality (74.5%). At the same time, 25.1% of Kyrgyzs, 27.3% of Tatars and 27.6% of Uzbeks spoke in support of monoethnic neighborhood.

The other aspect of interethnic communication is conflictuality of socialized parts. In order to find out conflict potential in Bishkek city, the question 'Have you ever taken part or witnessed insulting, quarreling or other conflicts stemmed from ethnic belonging of people?' was included.

The proportion of those who believed that people talked more about it than it was the reality was very small (12.4%). Among them were 13% of Russians and 16.9% of other nationalities. The remaining pointed out the existence to some degree of conflicts on ethnic ground. 23.2% of the questioned were faced with such situations a lot (17.2% of Uzbeks, 18.2% of Kazakhs, 21.3% of Kyrgyzs, 25.4% of Slavs and 29.2% of Tatars), 37.9% experienced insult on ethnic ground a few times (39.8% of Kyrgyzs, 38% of Russians, 41.7% of Tatars, 41.4% of Uzbeks, 40.9% of Kazakhs and 25.3% of others) and 26.4% were not engaged in such situations but heard a lot about them from other people. Calculating the above figures, it is possible to say that there is a considerable

conflict potential (87.5%) in Kyrgyzstani society that has far-reaching consequences.

Hence, the analysis of the survey results allow concluding that a special attention has to be paid to the resolution of interethnic problems in Kyrgyzstan, especially to the issues of change in the statuses of ethnic minorities.

THE 2003 SURVEY ON MODERN FACTORS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

In order to study factors of shaping linguistic, ethnic and religious identities among the people of different nationalities of Kyrgyzstan and to define the degree of interethnic integration, the ethno-sociological survey 'Language, ethnicity and religion in Kyrgyzstan' was carried out by the author in 2003.¹⁰³

The ethno-sociological survey was carried out in five regions of the Kyrgyz Republic: Chui, Issyk-Kul, Osh, Djalal-Abad provinces and Bishkek city. Two northern, two southern provinces and the capital, Bishkek city, were chosen for conducting the survey. Northern Chui and Issyk-Kul provinces have the largest proportion of Slavic people (Russians, Ukrainians) (See Table 3.3). The overwhelming majority of Uzbeks resides in southern Osh and Djalal-Abad provinces. Bishkek city is the capital of the republic and its political, economic and cultural center.

The survey was based on the sample of 1000 people aged 16 and older with 200 people interviewed in each region. The sample was representative by nationality, age and sex (See Tables 3.7, 3.8, 3.9).

Respondents were personally interviewed by means of developed questionnaire, including 31 questions. In addition to nationality, age and sex, the questioned informed of their marital status, education and occupation (See Tables 3.10, 3.11, 3.12).

Table 3.7. Sample by nationality, (%)

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kyrgyzs	10,5	10,1	15,8	12,9	13,7	63,0
Uzbeks	0,5	0,3		5,9	5,0	11,7
Russians	6,9	8,0	2,7	0,5	0,7	18,8
Germans	0,1	0,4	0,1			0,6
Kazakhs	0,4	0,4	0,1			0,9
Dungans	0,2	0,4	0,3		0,1	1,0
Uighurs	0,2	0,1	0,3		0,2	0,8
Turks	0,2					0,2
Ukrainians	0,1	0,2				0,3
Kurds	0,1				0,1	0,2
Tajiks	0,1					0,1
Koreans	0,7					0,7
Ethiopians		0,1				0,1
Kalmyks			0,4			0,4
Tatars			0,3	0,7	0,2	1,2

Table 3.8. Sample by age, (%)

<i>Age</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
16-19	2,5	1,4	2,7	2,8	2,9	12,3
20-29	6,5	4,5	5,4	5,9	6,0	28,3
30-39	4,9	7,1	5,3	5,1	5,0	27,4
40-49	3,4	4,0	3,8	3,6	3,5	18,3
50-59	1,8	1,3	1,9	1,8	1,7	8,5
60 and older	0,9	1,7	0,9	0,8	0,9	5,2

Table 3.9. Sample by sex, (%)

<i>Sex</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male	10	9,4	9,8	9,6	9,8	48,6
Female	10	10,6	10,2	10,4	10,2	51,4

Table 3.10. Sample by marital status, (%)

<i>Marital status</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Married	11,3	13,5	12,7	12,4	13,6	63,5
Divorced	1,4	1,3	0,6	0,7	0,3	4,3
Widow(-er)	1,0	1,3	0,8	0,7	0,9	4,7
Single	5,8	3,7	5,5	6,1	5,2	26,3
Civil (unregistered) marriage	0,5	0,2	0,3	0,1		1,1

Table 3.11. Sample by education, (%)

<i>Education</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Incomplete secondary	2,0	1,1	1,5	1,9	2,4	8,9
Secondary	5,1	8,2	6,6	7,7	7,4	35,0
Secondary special	4,2	6,7	4,2	4,5	3,5	23,1
Incomplete higher	1,8	0,8	1,9	0,6	0,6	5,7
Higher	6,9	3,2	5,6	5,3	6,1	27,1

Table 3.12. Sample by occupation, (%)

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Working in state establishments, organization, enterprise	6,8	3,5	4,0	4,1	6,6	25,0
Working in non-state organization, enterprise, joint-stock company	2,1	1,2	1,9	1,7	1,2	8,1
Engaged in individual labor activities (commerce, at home)	2,8	4,2	1,7	1,6	1,9	12,2
Businessman		0,3	1,8	0,1	0,6	2,2
Worker	1,6	1,9	1,7	0,3	1,3	6,1
Unemployed, looking for job	0,8	1,0	1,4	1,8	3,4	6,3
Studying at school, Lyceum, college, higher institution	3,4	1,4	4,0	3,7	3,4	15,9
Pensioner	1,2	2,1	1,0	1,1	1,3	6,7
Housewife	1,2	2,0	0,9	1,8	1,4	7,3
Farmer		1,3	1,3	1,2	1,8	5,6

The questionnaire consisted of three parts.

The first part of questions was devoted to various aspects of shaping ethnic identity and ethnic self-consciousness, in particular the extent of family's influence and influence of the nearest social environment on ethnic self-identification, familiarity with own ethnic history, traditions and customs.

The second part of questions concerned mother tongue of respondents, the degree of speaking Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian, the place of various languages in the socio-communicative system of Kyrgyzstani society, as well as language preferences of the interviewed.

The third part of questions aims at defining the degree of religiousness and religious affiliation of respondents.

Ethnic identity and ethnic self-consciousness

The control questions of the survey were the questions of ethnic identity and ethnic self-consciousness. More than 90% of Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Russians and 69.2% of ‘others’¹⁰⁴ affiliated themselves with the people of their nationality (See Table 3.13).

At the same time, among the respondents of ‘other’ nationalities 9.2% regarded themselves as Russians, 3.1% as Kyrgyzs and 3.1% as Uzbeks. 13.8% of ‘other’ nationalities and 5.3% of Russians called themselves ‘cosmopolitans’. 7.7% of Kyrgyzs and 3.1% of Russians regarded themselves as ‘others’.

The interviewees of ‘other’ nationalities, considering themselves as Russians, Kyrgyzs or Uzbeks, mainly belonged to those peoples, who were greatly russified (Ukrainians, Belarus), kyrgyzified (Kalmaks), or uzbekized (Tajiks) over a long period of co-dwelling in Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, those who affiliated themselves with ‘cosmopolitans’ and ‘others’ are mostly children of mixed marriages and those who in view of various reasons could not identify themselves uniquely with one of ethnic groups.

Table 3.13. Answers of respondents to the question ‘Whom do you feel?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	97,6	3,2	0,9	3,1
Russian	0,6	90,4	0,9	9,2
Uzbek	0,2	0	98,3	3,1
Cosmopolitan	0,8	5,3	0	13,8
Other	7,7	3,1	0	69,2

The situation with ethnic self-consciousness of the interviewed is little different. Defining own ethnic self-consciousness, 87.8% of Kyrgyzs, 85.5% of Uzbeks, 74.9% of Russians and 40% of ‘others’ called it Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian and ‘other’ accordingly (See Table 3.14). 47.7% of ‘other’ nationalities, 24.6% of

Russians, 10.3% of Uzbeks and 9.6% of Kyrgyzs defined their ethnic self-consciousness as 'international' and 9.2% of 'others' as Russian.

Table 3.14. Answers of respondents to the question 'How could you define, in general, your national self-consciousness?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	87,8	0,5	2,6	1,5
Russian	1,9	74,9	1,7	9,2
Uzbek	0,5	0	85,5	1,5
International	9,6	24,6	10,3	47,7
Other	0,2	0	0	40,0

Table 3.15. Answers of respondents to the question 'What has the deepest effect upon shaping your ethnic self-consciousness?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
State policy and ideology	21,0	15,4	13,7	7,7
Family	70,0	67,0	78,6	67,7
Books, literature	24,6	11,2	12,0	13,8
Music, songs	10,3	6,9	8,5	9,2
National holidays, significant dates	14,4	18,6	12,8	12,3
Religious ceremonies and rituals	10,2	5,9	12,0	16,9
Other	1,0	2,1	0,9	3,1

The factor that has the most profound effect on shaping ethnic self-consciousness is parents' and family upbringing. 78.9% of Uzbeks, 70% of Kyrgyzs, 67.7% of 'other' nationalities and 67% of Russians mentioned their family as the factor that has the deepest effect on forming their ethnic self-consciousness (See Table 3.15).

Speaking of concrete people, from 46.3% to 60% of respondents pointed to father and mother as exerting the strongest influence upon shaping their ethnic self-consciousness, from 17.6% to 29.8% mentioned grandfather and

grandmother and from 4.3% to 7% (except for respondents of 'other' nationalities) mentioned their friends, colleagues and relatives (See Table 3.16).

Hence, after fifteen years that passed since the independence, the integration of various ethnic communities inside Kyrgyzstani society is still very weak. The majority of respondents unambiguously identifies themselves with own ethnic group and respectively defines ethnic self-consciousness.

Table 3.16. Answers of respondents to the question 'Who has the deepest influence upon shaping your ethnic self-consciousness?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Grandfather/grandmother	29,8	17,6	20,5	27,7
Mother	52,9	46,3	59,8	55,4
Father	55,9	50,5	51,3	60,0
Spouse	5,2	2,1	2,6	4,6
Children	2,5	0,5	1,7	4,6
Other relatives	5,4	4,8	4,3	1,5
Friends, colleagues	7,0	5,3	5,1	1,5
School	0,8	1,6	0,9	1,5
Teachers of boarding school	0,3	0	0	0
Village men	0,6	2,7	1,6	0

Ethnic origin of interviewers

The results of the survey revealed that more than 90% of Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian respondents were born in monoethnic marriages, where father and mother belonged to the same nationality (See Tables 3.17, 3.18).

The situation with the respondents of 'other' nationalities was the following: 96.9% of them had father of 'other' nationality and 87.7% of them had mother of 'other' nationality.

Table 3.17. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What is your father’s nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	98,9	1,6	0,9	0
Russian	0,2	92,6	0	1,5
Uzbek	0,2	0	98,3	0
Other	0,4	4,8	0	96,9

Table 3.18. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What is your mother’s nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	97,5	1,1	2,6	4,6
Russian	0,3	91,0	0	4,6
Uzbek	0,6	0	95,7	1,5
Other	1,7	7,4	0,9	87,7

Ethnic origin of spouse

The choice of spouse is often determined by ethnic self-consciousness of the individual. Children of interethnic marriages marry a person of different nationality much more often than children of monoethnic families. The factor of a great importance is the family upbringing. The house atmosphere, rich in ethnic traditions and culture, affects children of monoethnic families from the very birth, in particular their opinion about the nationality of their future spouse. In mixed families ethnic moments are often displaced into the background of daily life. As a result, children of mixed marriages do not always care about the nationality of their future husband or wife.

According to the outcomes of the survey, almost all respondents of Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Russian nationalities were married to a man (woman), belonging to the same nationality (See Table 3.19).¹⁰⁵

Interviewers of ‘other’ nationalities have the highest percentage of interethnic marriages. More than a half (38.5%) of them are married to a person of ‘other’ nationality, 10.8% are married to a Russian and 6.1% to a Kyrgyz.

Table 3.19. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What is your spouse’s nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	68,6	1,6	3,4	6,1
Russian	0,6	61,2	0	10,8
Uzbek	1,1	0	70,9	1,5
Other	2,1	5,8	0,9	38,5

As a rule, most of respondents, who are married to a person of own nationality, consider monoethnic marriage to be very important. Thus, 77.9% of Uzbeks, 58.1% of Kyrgyzs, 23.4% of Russians and 23.1% of the interviewed of ‘other’ nationalities attached a great importance to the nationality of their spouse (See Table 3.20).

However, 50.3% of Russians, 33.8% of ‘others’, 19.1% of Kyrgyzs and 8% of Uzbeks did not pay any attention to this fact.

Table 3.20. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What importance do you attach to the nationality of your spouse?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Attach a great importance	58,1	23,4	77,9	23,1
Attach a little importance	11,9	12,6	7,1	20,0
Attach no importance	19,1	50,3	8,0	33,8
Difficult to say	10,9	13,8	7,1	12,3

Ethnic values, adopted from parents’ family, often become the basis for upbringing own children. The half of Uzbeks (52.6%), almost a third (30.6%) of Kyrgyzs, 16.9% of ‘other’ respondents and 10.6% of Russians would take a negative attitude about the marriage of their child with man or woman of different nationality. However, more than a half (52.1%) of Russians, 44.6% of ‘other’ interviewers, 38.7% of Kyrgyzs and almost a quarter (24.1%) of Uzbeks would respond positively if their child married a representative of another nationality (See Table 3.21).

Table 3.21. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What attitude will you take about the marriage of your child with man/woman of another nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Positively	38,7	52,1	24,1	44,6
Negatively	30,6	10,6	52,6	16,9
Indifferently	12,8	17,6	6,0	18,5
Difficult to say	18,0	19,6	17,2	18,5

Considering above, it is possible to conclude that children of the families, where both mother and father belong to the same nationality, most likely marry someone, whose ethnic affiliation will be identical. It is especially true for Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities of Kyrgyzstan, where the proportion of mixed marriages is lowest among all ethnic communities.

Ethnic origin of a close friend

Friends, colleagues and relatives are those people, who play a definite role in shaping ethnic self-consciousness (See Table 3.16). The extent of their influence is not as deep as that of parents and grandparents but somewhat stronger than that of spouse.

Answering the question ‘Is it necessary to have friends among the people of own nationality?’, the majority of all respondents (92.5% of Russians, 80% of ‘other’ nationalities, 77.8% of Kyrgyzs and 66.4% of Uzbeks) found it not necessary to attach any importance to the nationality of friends (See Table 3.22).

However, the next question regarding ethnic origin of a close friend demonstrated that 88.7% of Kyrgyzs, 79.5% of Uzbeks, 62.9% of Russians and 21.5% of ‘others’ had a close friend, belonging to the same nationality (See Table 3.23). Comparing two answers, we may resume that the first answer is just an ideological stereotype, which does not affect a real behavior.

Hence, the heartiest friendly relations form in ethnically homogeneous environment. That is why such kind of communication plays an extremely important role in the formation of ethnic identity, especially for the youth.

Table 3.22. Answers of respondents to the question ‘Is it necessary to have friends among the people of own nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Necessary	22,2	7,5	33,6	20,0
Not necessary	77,8	92,5	66,4	80,0

Table 3.23. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What is your close friend’s nationality?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	88,7	21,0	17,1	33,8
Russian	6,2	62,9	2,6	35,4
Uzbek	3,2	3,8	79,5	4,6
Other	2,2	12,3	0,9	21,5

Ethnic traditions and history

The adherence to own cultural traditions and customs has a considerable effect on the individual ethnic self-identification. Moreover, cultural traditions and customs are those ethnic values that are inherited from one generation by another.

The outcomes of the survey have confirmed that children of the families followed ethnic traditions know them better than the families that didn't. Reading of books addressing the issues of ethnic customs and history and participating in national and religious holidays become complimentary factors that contribute to the familiarity of respondents with own culture and promote their ethnic identity and ethnic self-consciousness (See Table 3.15).

As per the survey, 75.9% of Uzbeks, 61.5% of ‘others’, 53.2% of Kyrgyzs and 41% of Russians were raised in families, which followed ethnic holidays, traditions and customs to a great extent (See Table 3.24).

At the same time, families of 41.5% of Russians, 39.6% of Kyrgyzs, 30.8% of ‘other’ respondents and 19.8% of Uzbeks practiced ethnic traditions to a lesser degree.

And 11.2% of Russians, 3.7% of Kyrgyzs and 1.7% of Uzbeks did not practically follow own ethnic traditions and customs in their families.

Table 3.24. Answers of respondents to the question ‘To what extent the family, where you were raised, followed national holidays, traditions, customs?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Followed to a great extent	53,2	41,0	75,9	61,5
Followed but not that much	39,6	41,5	19,8	30,8
Practically did not follow	3,7	11,2	1,7	0
Difficult to say	3,5	6,4	2,6	4,6

The situation with those who know own ethnic traditions and history is similar. So, 84.6% of Uzbeks, 63.5% of Kyrgyzs, 50.8% of respondents of ‘other’ nationalities and 38.3% of Russians claimed to know their ethnic traditions and history well (See Table 3.25).

Table 3.25. Answers of respondents to the question ‘How well do you know own ethnic traditions and history?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Well	63,5	38,3	84,6	50,8
Not very well	32,3	46,8	13,7	38,5
Badly	1,9	9,6	0,9	4,6
Difficult to say	2,2	5,3	0,9	6,1

46.8% of Russians, 38.5% of ‘others’, 32.3% of Kyrgyzs and 13.7% of Uzbeks knew own ethnic traditions and history not very well.

And 0.9% of Uzbeks, 2.2% of Kyrgyzs, 5.3% of Russians and 6.1% of ‘other’ nationalities knew them badly.

Analyzing the above given figures, we may observe that the majority of Kyrgyzstani people are familiar with own ethnic history and culture. It happens because the families that raised them follow ethnic traditions and customs to some extent in their practical life.

Part 2.
LANGUAGE

4

**LANGUAGE AS A FACTOR OF ETHNIC
IDENTITY**

Language is often seen as having the most distinct ethnic functions.¹⁰⁶ Language is an indispensable element of any ethnic group; native language is widely used by all classes and social groups. In human society, the transmission of ethno-cultural information takes different forms. However, the main form is speech, or word information (oral or written).

At the same time, language is not only the system of symbols, providing communication between members of the group. There is another aspect of language that is not immediately self-evident. Language is the symbol of groupness. In this regard, communicative and symbolic functions should be distinguished within language.¹⁰⁷

Because of its powerful and visible symbolism skillful politicians use language as a banner to find mass support and gain political power. At the same time, linguistic nationalists usually emphasize the communicative aspect of language when mounting their campaigns to revive and preserve their original languages.

Language is as a mouthpiece of ethnicity. It is the cement that binds together the members of an ethnic group and a cultural boundary that differentiate one ethnic from another. The first contact with different ethnicity occurs when the individual hears a different language. It is the time when he makes a distinction between 'Us' and 'Them', between 'Our' community and 'Their'. Exceeding the bounds of own ethnicity requires learning a different language.

Every language is unique, because a concrete human thought, international in content, is expressed differently in different languages. Ethnic features are peculiar to phonetics, grammar, vocabulary and syntax.

The development of language is inseparably linked with the history of the group. The group is the creator and speaker of the language. Quite often language is the only source of historical evolution of ethnic, its migration and ethnic ties with other countries. The role of language increases if its people do not have any other historical documents, chronicles or written sources.

Language is a specific element of original ethnic culture. Particularities of history, economy, politics, culture, geographical habitat, features of psychology and domestic life are reflected in language. 'Languages do not just symbolize its associated culture, and they are not just indexically better suited for its related culture than are any other languages', 'in huge areas of real life the language is the culture and neither law nor education nor religion nor government nor politics nor social organization would be possible without it'.¹⁰⁸ Concrete languages are created by concrete ethnies and the latter has the historical right to their languages.

Presently, the censuses of many countries such as Austria, Belgium, Greece, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, Canada, India and others have the question of language but not of ethnic origin.

Language is an important marker of ethnic identity. Learnt from childhood, language becomes an integral part of personality. Individual usually identifies with his language and has a strong sense of loyalty to it. This feeling increases and particularly shows when the ethnic group grows into the nation and its language becomes the means of science, literature and art. The values and ideals of the people, invested in concrete linguistic forms, maintain national feelings and develop national features of psychology.

Even among the most urbanized peoples language remains to be the basis of ethnic identity. The decline of language, as well as the narrowing of its functions, is perceived painfully by self-consciousness. According to the data of the 1970-1980 social surveys, language was the basis of ethnic identity for 80-90% of Moldavians, Uzbeks, Estonians, Georgians.¹⁰⁹

During national consolidation the role of language grows because of increasing economic concentration and political centralization of ethnic group. That is why the ethnic function of language is most completely manifested in the language of nation. National language is the language spread in both written and spoken forms.

Skillful manipulation of languages allows affecting national consciousness. The graphic example can be cited from the Soviet history. The national delimitation of Turkestan in 1924 served the following purposes: to blockade the tendency towards natural consolidation of Turkic-speaking peoples, to prevent their integration on common religious ground, and, finally, to protect them from growing influence of Turkey. These aims were achieved through the language reforms of 1920-1940s, which resulted in the disconnection of cultural tradition

and created a danger of loss of historical memory. Historically, the Arabic script was used in Turkestan. In 1924, the modified Arabic script was adopted for Kyrgyz, in 1927 the Kyrgyz language was switched from Arabic to Latin and in 1941 the Cyrillic alphabet replaced Latin. Similar reforms took place in other Central Asian republics.

If the first reform brought to the simplification of the Arabic script, the second reform broke down the resistance of Central Asian elites and cut the roots of Islamic tradition in the region. According to A. Toynbee, the replacement of alphabet is less radical but more effective means than the burning of books. It was assumed that Latin would shatter the basis of Muslim community. Serious attempts were undertaken to purify local languages of Arabic and Persian words. However, in reality the replacement of the Arabic alphabet took the shape of repressions against local educated people; any literature on the basis of Arabic was banned.

After the introduction of the Latin alphabet, the task to prevent the consolidation of Turkic-speaking peoples appeared. In this connection, the third stage of language reform - the switch from Latin to Russian - was put into practice. The third reform not only averted Turkic peoples from consolidation and growing ethno-political and socio-cultural influence of Turkey but also laid the foundation for their further russification. In this connection, the raising of the question of language reform was quite natural after the declaration of independence in the newly states of Central Asia.

At the same time, many scholars oppose to view language as an essential component of ethnic identity, as far as there is much evidence in the world when ethnic groups survive their ethnic languages but do not assimilate. Language is fully realized in compact environment but under conditions of dispersed living can lose its communicative role. Nevertheless, the decline of language does not always bring to the decline of ethnicity. The Irish case is a good example. Although the Irish switched to English two centuries ago, Irish remained to be the symbol of the Irish ethnic identity. Yet revivalists argue that because of the loss of the Irish language the existing Irish identity is less than it may be.¹¹⁰ Another example is the Armenian community, living in Lvov city of Ukraine from the eleventh century. It lost its language by the seventh century and switched to Polish and Turkic. Nevertheless, they preserved a strong sense of Armenian identity and did not assimilate among other peoples.¹¹¹

Consequently, the preservation of native language is not always decisive for the maintenance of ethnic identity. However, its gradual decline is an evidence of assimilation. Close cultural distance between the titular and the diaspora ethnics can aggravate the situation. The fewer the characteristic features of ethnic community, the sooner the decay of ethnics.

The next stage of the individual socialization, after mastering his native language, is also invested in the ethnic form and means to be familiar with important symbols of ethnic culture. Under conditions of daily contacts with close social circle, the individual learns the norms of behavior and gets the ability to distinguish important and substantial from secondary and less important. Along with the adoption of cultural values, the individual realizes his belonging to own ethnic group. The consciousness of each of community members creates the main mechanism of self-identification – the images of ‘We’ and ‘They’. At the same time, ‘We’ is the community, to which ‘I’ belong and which is unified by commonality of language, space of communication and community of daily life. ‘They’ are all others, who can pose a threat to ‘Our’ existence.

As it was noted above, each individual differentiates himself as a member of some community while comparing himself with others. At that, the maintenance of ethnic culture: components of material, spiritual and socio-normative (the system of values, the norms of behavior, customs, rituals) activities, signify the preservation of important differentiating characteristics by members of community. However, most obviously ethnic culture is manifested in literature, art, ethnic symbolism, traditions, material culture (food, cloths), folklore.

The difficulty of preserving ethnic culture in cities, where standardized etalons of material and spiritual culture are spread, lies in the fact that modern material culture contains much less ethnic specificities and appears ‘basic’ for ethnic self-consciousness only when its elements become of an ethno-symbolic meaning (silk with specific ornamental pattern, Uzbek skull-caps, Kyrgyz caps and the like). In these circumstances, the orientation toward spiritual culture intensifies and expresses itself in the preferences for folk music, dances, customs (the desire to follow traditions in family and daily life), and rituals (wedding, funeral). In this case, variations depend on the degree of urbanization of ethnic group and its historical-cultural past.

In response to the reduction of ethno-cultural specificities, the declining traditional culture starts being compensated and replaced by the values and achievements of professional culture. In this respect, modern professional culture

becomes the subject of national pride. Reanimated forms of traditional culture, operating on the professional basis, more frequently, than folk or simply professional culture, become of an ethno-symbolic meaning and an element of ethnic self-consciousness. The maintenance of ethnic culture in many respects depends on cultural distances between contacting ethnies, state tolerance and the desire of a group to maintain its own culture.

5

LANGUAGE POLICY

SOVIET LANGUAGE POLICY

Two phases can be distinguished in the language policy of the Soviet authorities. At the initial phase of the policy, which took place till the late 1930s, all languages were proclaimed equal and everyone had the right to a free choice of language. That period was characterized by the creation of more than seventy Latin alphabets for the peoples of the USSR.¹¹² At the second phase, lasted from the late 1930s to the late 1980s, the Soviet leadership pursued the policy of russification. As a result of the switch from Latin to the Cyrillic alphabet, eleven ethnic groups lost their written languages.¹¹³

LANGUAGE POLICY FROM 1917 TO 1930S

Shortly after the Bolsheviks came into power, they undertook the new language policy, which opposed the introduction of an obligatory state language and aimed at the development of mother tongues and literatures of ethnic minorities. This phase of the language policy was also called *language building*, as during that period a large-scale work on the creation of new alphabets, the development of orthography and terminology, and the education of local specialists was carried out.

Many reasons justified the policy of the Bolsheviks. Firstly, the new policy was a reaction against the russification policy of Tsarism. Secondly, it resulted from the popular idea of building a new society that would take into account the interests of common people. Thirdly, it met the expectations of the world revolution, so state borders were considered temporary and the issue of state language seemed to be no longer relevant. Fourthly, it coincided with the opinion of democratic intelligentsia of ethnic minorities, whose ethnic self-consciousness had remarkably developed during the years of the revolution and civil war.¹¹⁴

REFORMS OF THE KYRGYZ WRITING SYSTEM

Since only few languages in the Soviet state had their written forms, the first step in this direction was the creation of writing systems. Out of a hundred and thirty languages, spoken by the country's population, only twenty had more or less developed written systems, including five Turkic languages.¹¹⁵ Only Russians, Georgians and Armenians used their own alphabets. The remaining majority of languages dominated oral communication.

In pre-revolutionary Kyrgyzstan, literacy was the property of higher social groups, mainly the Muslim clergy. At reading and writing the Arabic alphabet was used. The use of the Arabic alphabet resulted from the dissemination of Islam among the Kyrgyz. Students studied the Arabic alphabet in private *mektebs* (elementary Muslim schools) for the purpose of reading religious books, written in Arabic and Persian. After being trained in such schools *moldo* or *mollo* (the one who can read and write) applied the Arabic alphabet to write and read in the native Kyrgyz language.

At the same time, the Arabic alphabet, perfectly suited for Arabic, was poorly adapted for Turkic languages. It has only 3 letters to indicate vowel sounds, while in Kyrgyz there are 14 vowels: 8 are short and 6 are long. Moreover, the Arabic alphabet had extra symbols, which were useless for Kyrgyz. Following the standardization of the language, a modified Arabic script was adopted for Kyrgyz in 1924.

The tenth congress of the Bolsheviks Party, held in 1921, adopted a special program to further cultural advancement of backward peoples of Russia and promote their languages. In this respect, the following measures were initiated: to develop press, school, theater, club and other cultural-educational institutions in the native languages; to establish the system of courses and schools of both general education and vocational training in native language (first of all for Kyrgyzs, Bashkirs, Turkmen, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Dagestanis).¹¹⁶

In accordance with the party's program, the course toward the creation of conditions for the development of national cultures on the basis of their native languages was pursued. The following factors were taken into consideration: 1) mother tongue is the most important and comprehensible means of expression of native culture; 2) the most effective way of learning is through mother tongue, excluding the case when the people widely apply another language; 3) if an

illiterate people do not master a developed literary language as their second language, the only way to eliminate their illiteracy is through their mother tongue.

In 1924, the first national Kyrgyz newspaper 'Erkin Too' was brought out in the modified Arabic script. It gave rise to the publication of first Kyrgyz books and magazines. The reformed Arabic became the language of instruction in first national schools as well as the tool to stamp out widespread illiteracy.

However, very soon an official standpoint changed in favor of the Latin alphabet. In 1927, Latin was announced the state alphabet of the Kyrgyz Autonomous Republic (Kyrgyz ASSR). And in 1930, the modified Arabic alphabet was withdrawn from the use on the territory of the Kyrgyz ASSR. From then on any writing made in the Arabic script was considered reactionary.

Political and linguistic motives caused the second reform. The Arabic alphabet, even in its modified version, was difficult to learn. Besides, it did not allow compiling the code of stable rules of Kyrgyz orthography. And what is more, the Arabic script contributed to the insularity of Soviet Muslims and came in contradiction with the idea of the world revolution and internationalism.

In contrast to Arabic, Latin was seen as more politically neutral and compromising. It was a universal alphabet, which could be, and actually was, more effective in combating illiteracy. Latin would facilitate the learning of Central Asian languages and speed up the translation of foreign books into these languages. Moscow also assumed that by adopting the Latin alphabet it could more easily control publications printed in local languages and create a barrier between the new national literatures of Central Asian republics and its common Chagatai source. On the other hand, the introduction of Latin was profoundly affected by Turkey, which at that time also switched from Arabic to Latin.

The third reform - the switch to the Cyrillic alphabet - began in 1935 but made no serious progress until 1939. In January 1941, the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz Soviet Republic passed the law to introduce the new alphabet on the basis of Russian, which is in use until today. The last language reform was caused by solely political considerations. It was assumed that Cyrillic would facilitate both the penetration of national tongues by Russian as well as the study of Russian by local nationalities.¹¹⁷

The Latin alphabet complicated the study of Russian as Kyrgyz students had to study two different alphabets: Latin for Kyrgyz and Cyrillic for Russian. Besides, both alphabets had a number of letters, which were similar in writing

but different in pronunciation. The latter created confusion and put many obstacles on the way of learning Russian.

KYRGYZ LITERARY LANGUAGE

Meanwhile, the creation of the Kyrgyz written language was a step towards the formation of the Kyrgyz literary language. 'The problem of working out a unified and supradialectal literary norm, operative both in the written and the oral varieties of language' was the most important task of the new language policy.¹¹⁸ The literary Kyrgyz language had been formed on the basis of Northern Kyrgyz dialects, which were the dialects of Kyrgyz political and economic center.

On the other hand, the formation of the Kyrgyz literary language demanded building a new vocabulary, which would include both Soviet and international terms and concepts. There were three main sources of new terms: 1) the internal resources of national literary languages (by use of old words, replication, descriptive way, word-formation); 2) the vocabularies of dialects; 3) the adoption of Russian and international words.¹¹⁹

On May 1926, by a special resolution of the government, the Terminology Commission was set up in Kyrgyzstan. At the beginning, the Commission proceeded in its activities from the principle of maximum use of internal resources of the Kyrgyz language. Attempts were made to develop new words on the basis of original Kyrgyz language, which did not always bring adequate meaning, as well as to utilize the terms of other Turkic languages though their replication. At the same time, under a special paragraph, the use of Arab-Persian terms was restricted, since those words were associated with alien Arab-Persian culture.¹²⁰

At the later period of the Soviet policy, Russian became the major source of the new Kyrgyz terminology. By the 1960s, 60-70% of new scientific and socio-political terms in Central Asian languages have been formed of Russian words. With the introduction of Russian and Soviet international terms, new kinds of syllables appeared in the Kyrgyz language, stress shifted (along with a fixed stress on the last syllable, a free stress appeared), word-formative patterns modified and syntactical constructions became more complicated, which was typical for the Russian literary language. Uzbeks, Kyrgyzs, Kazakhs, Azerbaijanis and other

Turkic nationalities had mastered a number of Russian vowels and consonants, which were missing in their languages before.¹²¹

Russian considerably affected the formation of functional styles, especially the scientific and the official styles of Kyrgyz. A prominent researcher of the Kyrgyz language, B. Yunusaliev, noted that the peculiarities of language styles in scientific-technical books and official documents had emerged and were developing under an immediate influence of the Russian literary language.¹²²

The role of Russian did not confine itself to the adoption of scientific terminology; along with new concepts, Kyrgyz was introduced their system relations. The development of the Kyrgyz official style was also stimulated by the standardization and unification of administrative-managerial documentation, vocabulary, phraseology and grammar.

LANGUAGE POLICY FROM 1930S TO 1980S

The subsequent socio-economic and political situation brought to the centralization of the Soviet state. The intensification of interethnic contacts between more than one hundred peoples of the USSR displayed a growing tendency towards the establishment of the state language. The third language reform and the unification of written systems on the basis of Cyrillic was an important step in this direction. However, a great part in this process was played by the introduction of Russian into all spheres of language life through the system of education. The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party 'On obligatory study of Russian in the schools of national republics and districts', issued on 13 March 1938, marked the beginning of the new phase in the language policy, the basic tendency of which was the spread of Russian.

Despite the official declarations of the Soviet authorities on the uselessness of an obligatory state language, the situation was contrary. The need of mutual understanding, as well as a number of other objective factors, required a single state language, which could be only Russian. Mass expectations of the world socialist revolution, when all national languages would disappear and the common world language would come instead, gave place to the doctrine of building socialism in one particular country. Internationalism in the state policy was superseded by nationalism.

The switch to Russian resulted in the infringement of the right and need of ethnic minorities to satisfy own ethnic identity. However, like in all complicated matters, the introduction of the Russian script, along with negative, had positive consequences. Firstly, the command of Russian offered great opportunities to its speakers such as quick and smooth adaptation in different socio-professional groups, especially those of industrial centers, better opportunities of education and professional growth. Secondly, Russian was important to get acquainted with the achievements of both the Russian and the world cultures. The new linguistic situation was extremely favorable for the Russian and Russian-speaking population in the republic. They rarely made an attempt to learn Kyrgyz.

It is worthy of note that the teaching of Russian in national schools of the Kyrgyz SSR occurred earlier, but the above mentioned resolution of 1938 set a task of unified and centralized policy of teaching Russian. From then on students had to study Russian from the second or third grade of secondary school with following introduction of Russian from the first grade. The number of hours assigned to Russian, the training of Russian-language teachers, the publication of Russian textbooks and methodic materials drastically increased.¹²³

The 1938 resolution meant a cardinal shift in the development of the state language policy. If during the previous phase the essence of the USSR policy was the development of national languages, which were the basis of school instruction, education and cultural development of national minorities, after the course toward the domination of Russian in all spheres of public life was followed. Stalin's national and linguistic policy survived its originator and with slight modifications existed up to the late 1980s.

The next step of russification was the policy aimed at turning Russian into the second native tongue of Soviet citizens. The most intense period of the policy fell on the late 1960-1970s under the leadership of Brezhnev. The most significant event during that time was the school reform of 1958, when parents was provided the right to choose the language of instruction for their children. The reform produced a sharp decrease in the number of national schools and especially their students, since many chose to study in Russian. No doubt, that situation was caused by the aspiration of parents who sought to educate their children in the language, which would be useful in their future carrier.

However, in spite of all measures on the promotion of Russian and its official declaration in the 1960s as 'the second native language' of non-Russian

citizens, the command of Russian in the republic did not become universal. In reality, only the residents of cities, the part of national intelligentsia and state and administrative employees demonstrated a good skill of Russian. As per the data of the 1970 and 1979 censuses, only 19.1% and 29.4% of Kyrgyzs respectively claimed to know Russian.¹²⁴ As Western scholars point out, the census results have to be approached carefully, since many Central Asians were inclined to exaggerate their command of Russian. In this relation, the first Secretary of the Kyrgyz Communist Party, T. Usubaliev, in his report at the All-Union conference of Russian-language teachers of 1978, mentioned that a considerable number of Kyrgyz universities graduates had insufficient knowledge of Russian.¹²⁵

A weak command of Russian among Kyrgyzs in the republic resulted not only from the shortcomings of the school system but also from socio-demographic factors. Kyrgyzs mainly populated villages and formed the majority of provinces. According to the 1979 census, Kyrgyzs formed 63.4% of the rural population and the majority of Issyk-Kul, Naryn, Talas, Osh, Djalal-Abad and Batken provinces. The exception was Chui province and the capital of the republic, Frunze city, where by the 1979 census 24.8% and 17% of Kyrgyzs lived.¹²⁶ On the account of mentioned factors, Kyrgyzs did not need to learn Russian.

The issues on further improvement of teaching Russian in the Kyrgyz SSR were reflected in the 1973 Resolution of the Central Committee of the Kyrgyz Communist Party 'On condition and measures of improvement of teaching Russian in secondary schools of the republic with Kyrgyz as the language of instruction'. To put the resolution into effect, for the first time in the Soviet Union, the system of teaching Russian and special preparatory classes for the children of preschool age was organized. In the late 1970s, 16,000 students were taught at such preparatory courses. The schools with parallel classes in Russian and Kyrgyz became widespread. Having common teaching staff, these schools were more successful in mastering Russian than monolingual national schools, as they favored the formation of Russian-speaking environment. In 1979, about 200,000 students studied in 253 schools with parallel Kyrgyz and Russian.

At the same time, the republic witnessed the expansion of scientific-methodic activities in the field of teaching and learning Russian by national audience and an increase in the number of textbooks and manuals for national schools. Only in 1979, 12 textbooks and methodic manuals for Kyrgyz schools

and 650,000 copies of adapted Russian-language fiction were published. An effective role was played by the periodical 'The Russian language and literature in the Kyrgyz school', which popularized the experience of most progressive teachers of Russian and published methodic materials to help the others. All philological faculties of the republic were engaged in the preparation and training of Russian teachers for secondary schools. In 1979, the new *Pedagogical Institute of the Russian Language and Literature* was opened. Consequently, all vocational schools and colleges, or practically all educational institutions of language profile had Russian as the language of instruction.¹²⁷

DEVELOPMENT OF THE KYRGYZ LANGUAGE

At the same time, the Kyrgyz language experienced a tremendous development under the Soviet regime. A special Resolution of the Central Committee of the Kyrgyz Communist Party 'On condition and measures on improvement of teaching Kyrgyz', adopted in November 1975, mentioned that during the Soviet years Kyrgyz turned from the language of oral communication into the developed literary language. The resolution also proposed concrete measures on further improvement of instruction in the Kyrgyz language and pointed out that Kyrgyz successfully served as the instrument of propaganda of Soviet and world achievements, the language of science and technology, state and public affairs. Numerous books, magazines and newspapers were published in Kyrgyz.

Within sixty years, 44 various dictionaries and 73 manuals on Kyrgyz with the total edition of 80,000 copies were issued. More than 70 terminological dictionaries in 44 fields of knowledge and Kyrgyz Soviet Encyclopedia were published. The Kyrgyz Academy of Sciences launched an enormous job on the collection and study of the famous Kyrgyz epic 'Manas'.

A rapid expansion of Kyrgyz continued in various spheres of life. Among 25 basic spheres, Kyrgyz functioned in 18 spheres: Kyrgyz was the language of the republican majority, the means of interethnic communication in both the Kyrgyz SSR and the Central Asian region, the language of the official paper work, mass media, school instruction, secondary special and higher educational establishments, science, fiction, art and so on.¹²⁸

However, from 1959 to 1989 Kyrgyz was not taught in non-Kyrgyz secondary schools. The capital of the republic, Frunze city, had only one school having Kyrgyz as the language of instruction. 42% of Kyrgyz schoolchildren did not study Kyrgyz and knew it only at the level of spoken language.¹²⁹ The functioning of Kyrgyz was reduced to secondary and higher humanitarian education. In 1981, only 7 out of 34 scientific papers on humanitarian sciences and not a single one out of 68 on natural and technical sciences were written in Kyrgyz.¹³⁰

Hence, by the 1980s, a contradictory linguistic situation took place in Kyrgyzstan, which on the one hand was characterized by the structural-functional development of Kyrgyz and, on the other, the strengthening of the position of Russian. A gradual domination of Russian in the socio-political and cultural life of the republic brought to narrowing the functions of Kyrgyz and lowering its socio-political status.

The first phase of the language policy caused the disconnection of Muslim tradition that fed religion and culture of the Kyrgyz. The second phase pushed the peoples of Central Asia aside from the growing ethno-political and socio-cultural influence of Turkey and intensified cultural unification and acculturation within the Soviet Union.

At the same time, the Soviet language policy, especially during its second phase, did not bring to diminishing the role of native languages as the factor of ethnic identity. According to the 1979 census, 93.1% of the population in the republic regarded the language of their nationality as their mother tongue. Among the nationalities having union republics that proportion was even higher and constituted 95% with a small exception of Armenians, Ukrainians and Belarus.¹³¹

LANGUAGE POLICY IN 1980S

The contradictions of the Soviet language policy, which for a long time existed implicitly, surfaced during Gorbachev's perestroika. Growing ethnic consciousness gave rise to the actualization of the language issue, which was in the core of the Kyrgyz ethnic and cultural revival of the late 1980-early 1990s and played a decisive role in the formation of national movements. During this period the language policy ceased being centralized and decided by Moscow.

In the second half of the 1980s, union republics initiated a number of measures to broaden the functions of their titular languages. The first was Moldova, which in 1987 adopted the law to extend the functioning of the Moldavian language and officially switched to the Latin alphabet in 1989. Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union it was the only case of replacement of the Cyrillic alphabet by Latin. The legislations on titular languages came next. By May 1990, all union republics except for the Russian Federation passed the laws on state languages. It is worthy of note that prior to the 1980s, neither the Soviet Union nor its component republics had any comprehensive language laws of such kind, except for corresponding paragraphs in the constitutions of the republics.¹³²

In the second half of the 1980s, linguistic russification, carried out by the Soviet state, met a strong resistance from national intelligentsia of Kyrgyzstan. Public demands of granting Kyrgyz a higher status brought to the adoption of the 1989 Law 'On the state language of the Kirgiz SSR', recognizing Kyrgyz as the only state language of the republic. The acknowledgement of Kyrgyz as the state language aimed at the elimination of a great disparity between the use of Russian and Kyrgyz and the promotion of Kyrgyz at the expense of Russian, which had a higher social status during the Soviet time.

It has to be mentioned that aside from de-russification, the adoption of the 1989 law on the Kyrgyz language pursued other goals. On the one hand, the announcement of Kyrgyz as the only state language was of political meaning, as far as it signified decentralization of power and the establishment of Kyrgyz sovereignty over the territory of Kyrgyzstan. On the other hand, the new status of Kyrgyz furthered the development of Kyrgyz ethnic and cultural revival and became an essential condition of nation-state building.

The adoption of the 1989 law was accompanied by the Resolution of the Supreme Council of the Kyrgyz SSR 'On the order to put in force the Law of the Kirgiz SSR 'On the state language of the Kirgiz SSR', according to which beginning from January 1999 the official correspondence in state bodies, enterprises and organizations was to be switched to Kyrgyz.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF KYRGYZ

Presently, Kyrgyz is spoken by approximately 3 million people in the Kyrgyz

Republic, where it is the state language.¹³³ There are also 150,000 Kyrgyz speakers in China (Sinkiang-Uighur Autonomous Region) and smaller communities of speakers in western Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, Russia, Ukraine.

Kyrgyz is a member of Central Turkic, which also includes Kazakh and other less-known languages. Central Turkic is a subgroup of Common Turkic group of languages, which also includes Turkish, Azerbaijani, Tatar, Uighur, Uzbek, and others. The Turkic languages and the Mongolian-Tungus languages of Siberia and northeastern China are major divisions of the Altaic language family. Some linguists also consider Japanese and Korean as part of this family.

There are a number of Kyrgyz dialects. Nevertheless, the most considerable differences are between Northern and Southern dialects. Standard Kyrgyz is based on the northern variety, which has a large number of word borrowings from Mongolian languages, but the least number of Persian words that are often in Southern Kyrgyz. Presently, Kazakh influences the development of the Northern dialect, while Southern (linguists distinguish Southeastern and Southwestern dialects) is affected by Uzbek.

LANGUAGE POLICY OF INDEPENDENT KYRGYZSTAN

In 1991, Kyrgyzstan declared its political independence and embarked on the course of nation building. The nation building in Kyrgyzstan has been severely complicated by language diversity. Kyrgyzstan is a multiethnic republic, where more than 90 ethnic communities reside. Such ethnic multiformity caused the functioning of more than a few tens of languages in the republic. At the same time, by the population served and practical functions fulfilled, not more than ten languages can be distinguished. They are Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek, German, Ukrainian, Tatar, Uighur, Kazakh, Dungan and Tajik.¹³⁴

It is worthy of note that mentioned languages are not equivalent in the functional aspect. Among the most widespread are three languages: Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek. The functioning of the remaining languages does not overstep the limits of family and intra-ethnic communication. Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Germans, Koreans, Kazakhs, Kalmyks, Tatars, Uighurs, Turks frequently use Russian or Kyrgyz as their mother tongue.

MONOLINGUALISM OR BILINGUALISM

During the first years of sovereignty, the language policy in Kyrgyzstan was shaped on the basis of general tendencies of nation building. The main point of the policy was the introduction of the titular language into all spheres of state and public life. The Law 'On the state language of the Kirgiz SSR', adopted in 1989, brought the policy into effect.

De-Russification of geographical names of cities, villages and streets, when original Kyrgyz names were returned or Kyrgyz equivalents replaced non-Kyrgyz names, marked the beginning of the new language policy. For example, *Kirgizia* became *Kyrgyzstan* and its capital, *Frunze* city, was officially renamed as *Bishkek* city. The main city of Issyk-Kul province, *Przhevalsk*, named in honor of the well-known Russian traveler Przhevalskiy, was returned its historical name, *Karakol*, while the name of another city in the same province, *Rybachye*, was simply translated into Kyrgyz as *Balykchy*.

During that period, the circulation of Kyrgyz-language newspapers, magazines and books, radio broadcasting and telecasting in Kyrgyz, drastically grew. Kyrgyz-language secondary schools and faculties in higher educational institutions of the republic sharply increased in their number.

At the same time, the shift in the language policy of Kyrgyzstan generated a negative reaction of ethnic minorities and mass emigration of Russian-speaking population. From 1989 to 1991, 145,000 Russian speakers, predominantly of Slavic origin, left the republic. As a result of emigration, the republican economy suffered irreplaceable damage, since tens of thousands qualified workers left the republic. These and a number of other factors forced Kyrgyz leadership to introduce several changes into the initial language policy and the implementation of the 1989 law.

In 1992, in the settlements, enterprises and organizations, where Russian speakers formed 70% and more, it was allowed keeping the official paper work in the Russian language. The Criminal code of the republic was supplemented with the article about criminal responsibility for discrimination of citizens on the ethnic basis. In the Kyrgyz parliament and other state bodies, the question of Russian as the language of interethnic communication was brought up.

In response to a large-scale emigration, the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On measures of regulation of migration processes in the Kyrgyz Republic' appeared in 1994. The decree prescribed that 'in territorial and

work collectives, where the majority are Russian speaking citizens, as well as in those spheres, where the achievements are bound up with the use of Russian', Russian, along with Kyrgyz, is regarded as the official language. The decree charged the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic with the reassessment of the term of switching to Russian in the official paper work. By the 1994 Resolution of the Government, the deadline for the introduction of Kyrgyz into the official correspondence was postponed to January 2005.

As the above-mentioned events showed, the adoption of the 1989 law did not lean on any serious research of a linguistic situation in the republic but was dictated by the political reality of the late 1980s. It was the period, when the ideas of preservation of cultural heritage, extension of the Kyrgyz language functions and its social prestige were dominating Kyrgyzstan, as well as other republics of the Soviet Union. As for Kyrgyz, it was not ready to perform the functions of the state language on the account of weak development of the language of official correspondence, language of science and conceptual-terminological apparatus of Kyrgyz.

With the creation of a new constitution in 1993, many, and not only Russian speakers, felt necessary to raise the language issue again. Some of them proposed to add some form of definition of Russian as 'an official language' or 'means of interethnic communication'. Others demanded to make Russian the second state language of Kyrgyzstan, arguing that only this status of Russian would prevent mass emigration of country's Russian-speaking population. However, finally adopted the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic maintained the status of Kyrgyz as the state language but did not grant any special status to Russian. At the same time, it stressed 'equal and free development and functioning of Russian and all other languages' and outlawed 'the infringement of rights and freedoms of citizens on the grounds of not speaking the state language' (Article 5).

It is worthy of note that the language issue in Kyrgyzstan cannot be reduced to the problem of Russian. The question of the Uzbek language is another burning issue. Activists of Uzbek national-cultural centers, as well as parliamentary deputies of Uzbek origin, introduced a proposal to recognize Uzbek as an official language of the republic. Uzbek is the second spoken language (after Kyrgyz) in three southern provinces and the third language in the republic (after Kyrgyz and Russian) according to the number of speakers. Nevertheless, the proposal was refused on the ground of potential Uzbek

separatism in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan.

As the international experience shows, debates over regional languages are never just debates over language. Language rights are often part of a larger program of sub-state nationalism. The recognition of minority's language is seen as a symbol of acknowledgement of the minority's nationhood and opening up the door to broader nationalist claims for territorial autonomy and secession.¹³⁵

At the same time, under the 1998 Presidential Decree 'On further development of the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic', *the Conception of Development of the State Language* was approved and *the National Commission on the State Language* was created. The Conception recognized the impracticability of many provisions of the 1989 language law and initiated a new strategy of development of Kyrgyz, the main task of which was 'the establishment of conditions for its formation as a full-fledged, state and multinational literary (written-printed) language'.

Created and approved by the 1998 decree, the National Commission became a collective body coordinating the activities of all state organizations and institutions on the development and use of Kyrgyz. Along with this, the National Commission was charged with the elaboration of programs of the Kyrgyz language development.

Meantime, the question of the status of Russian in Kyrgyzstan was actively discussed in mass media. In 2000, the Decree of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On extra measures on regulation of migration processes' was issued. Apart from measures on the stabilization of migration, it demanded 'to take actions on the creation of favorable conditions for study and development of Russian and its historiography in Kyrgyzstan, as well as immortalizing the names of prominent Russian-speaking figures of science and industry, culture and art, who made a great contribution to the establishment and development of the Kyrgyz Republic'.

Soon the new language course towards Russian took the shape of the Law 'On the official language of the Kyrgyz Republic' adopted on 29 May 2000. The law recognized Russian as the official language of the Kyrgyz Republic and provided its protection and maintenance at the state level. 'The statistic, financial and technical documentation in state bodies, local administration and organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic' was allowed in two languages: the state and the official (Article 11). Following it, in December 2001, President A. Akaev signed the Law 'On introduction of amendments to Article 5 of the Constitution

of the Kyrgyz Republic', which constitutionally secured the new status of Russian. The latter in fact put Russian on a par with Kyrgyz.

It is worthy of note that the 2000 law was not first to grant the official status to Russian. The first attempt took place in 1996, when the initiative of parliamentary deputies concerning Russian ended in failure. This time the initiative was taken by President A. Akaev, who personally signed the 2000 Law 'On the official language of the Kyrgyz Republic'.

Corresponding changes were introduced into Article 5 of the Law 'On education' of 1992. The 2002 redaction of the law reads that 'basic languages of instruction are the state and the official languages' and that 'in all educational establishments the study of Kyrgyz, Russian and one of foreign languages are compulsory and regulated by educational standards'.

The adoption of the 2000 law on official language signified the collapse of the 1989 law and the recognition of the status quo. At the same time, as Western researchers pointed out, the 2000 law pursued two different objects of a political nature. The first one lied in the necessity to receive the votes of Russian speakers in the forthcoming presidential elections of 2000, and the other was to meet the support of Moscow.¹³⁶

In that way, the language policy of Kyrgyzstan was double-faced and contradictory. On the one hand, the contradiction stemmed from the process of nation building, which assumed the introduction of a single state language in Kyrgyzstan. On the other, attempts were made to acknowledge the role of Russian and to meet the linguistic demands of Russians and Russian speakers of the republic.

It is worthy of mention that such ambivalence in the language policy is not typical only for developing countries, which is experiencing the process of nation building and the formation of civil society. Disputes over language policy are a persistent feature of the political life in many European states. Multilingual countries of the West such as Belgium, Spain, Switzerland and Canada have long histories of conflict over language rights. Even in the United States, where English is widely accepted as the language of public life, the linguistic rights of Spanish speakers are hotly contested.¹³⁷

MONOLINGUALISM

If in the earlier period of the language policy the struggle between two tendencies, monolingualism and bilingualism, took place, in the later period, the tendency toward monolingualism triumphed.

In September 2002, *the Program of Development of the State Language of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2000-2010*, developed by the National Commission on the State Language, was approved under the Presidential Decree of 20 September 2000. The program laid the foundation of a stepwise switch to Kyrgyz. The major object of the program was 'to raise the state language to the level to implement its direct functions'. To attain the object, 'ten major directions in the development of the state language, grouped in two stages' were defined.

At the first stage (2000-2005), 'strengthening of the basis of development and the use of the state language', 'the creation of a new generation of textbooks and methods of teaching', 'the unification of terminology and the official correspondence in Kyrgyz, the improvement of translation and interpretation' were to take place. At the same stage, 'the switch to the state language in the official documentation of all provinces and Bishkek city was planned'.

The second stage of the program (2005-2010) included the measures of 'further development of priority directions of the first stage – the spread of advanced technologies in the teaching of Kyrgyz, the improvement of textbooks, working out the terminology according to the fields of science, the advancement of official translation and interpretation to the professional level, the unification of official documentation, the speeding-up of learning Kyrgyz by people of different nationalities'.

The appearance of the program in many respects were motivated by the reasons that caused the 1989 law on state language. The introduction of a number of measures to support Russian and, finally, the passing of the 2000 law on official language contributed to the weakening of Kyrgyz and the lowering of its role in the socio-political life of the country. The upsurge in the study, spread and use of Kyrgyz, which marked the beginning of the 1990s, later remarkably declined. The appearance of the 2000 program, as that of the 1989 law, provoked social and interethnic tension in the community.

The Program of Development of the State Language of 2000 was accompanied by the *Measures of Realization of the Program of Development of the State Language of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2000-2010*, which are of special interest, as far as

they prescribes 'the development of a program of teaching the Latin script' in schools, secondary special and higher educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan. In 1993, it was announced to switch Kyrgyz from Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. However, the intention has not been realized for economic and psychological considerations. On the one hand, the introduction of the new alphabet required great financial expenses of the state, and on the other, the adult population of the republic did not want to learn the new alphabet again.¹³⁸

Political grounds stimulated the refusal of the Cyrillic script. The Cyrillic was associated with the traditions of the Soviet time, which had to be turned down, while Latin was identified with going away from Russia and outside to the international arena. In this respect, Turkey exerted a deep influence upon Kyrgyzstan. The elaboration of cultural-historical and linguistic contacts with Turkic peoples of Central Asia was the priority direction of Turkish foreign policy.

Beginning from 1992, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey signed a number of treaties in the fields of culture, education and science, prescribing a free study of Kyrgyz students in higher and secondary educational institutions of Turkey, the establishment of the Kyrgyz-Turkish University 'Manas' and a number of private schools and lyceums in Bishkek city. In July 1993, the Turkish Ministry of Culture in collaboration with the ministries of the Central Asian republics developed the project on joint management of Turk culture and art. The project assumed the switch of the Central Asian written languages to the Unified Turkic Latin alphabet. Nevertheless, it did not bring any effect and was postponed to better times.¹³⁹

The trend toward monolingualism clearly manifested itself in the new law on state language. In November 2003, two projects of the new law on state language were discussed at the meeting of the Legislative Assembly of Jogorku Kenesh. The first project was proposed by President A. Akaev, while the second was developed by the group of deputies under the leadership by B. Asanov. Two projects had many differences in both volume and contents. According to mass media, the presidential project was stricter and consisted of 38 articles but the deputies' was more liberal and had only 28 articles.¹⁴⁰ However, the main point of both was to turn the state language into the leading language of public-political and cultural life in the republic.

In the course of debates, the deputies recalled their project, and then the Legislative Assembly started working with the presidential one. The discussion

was stormy and took a few months. Though parliamentarians unanimously stressed the need to adopt the new law, they disagreed on a number of articles, especially Article 10, which made the command of Kyrgyz an obligatory condition for the employment in state organizations of any level.

The following articles can provide a clear idea of the new law on state language. So, Article 7 determines that the work in state bodies, local self-government and other organizations and institutions is implemented in the state language. Article 12 of the law says that during the official intercourse with foreign states (receptions and meetings, the development and ratification of documents) the Kyrgyz party applies the state language. The official language is used during official contacts with the CIS countries. Article 14 prescribes that the official documentation in state bodies and provincial authorities is carried out in the state language. The official language can be used in some provinces, cities and villages, decided by the Government. Under Article 16 of the law, accounting and financial documentation is conducted in the state or official language. Article 18 states that the state language is the basic language of education and training in pre-school institutions, secondary and higher educational establishments and organizations of professional advancement, financed from the republican or local budgets. Written end-of-year and final examinations on Kyrgyz are introduced in secondary schools as well as entrance and final exams on Kyrgyz are organized in elementary, secondary and higher educational establishments. Legal proceedings are held in the state and the official languages (Article 21). The state language is obligatory in army forces, frontier troops and other military formations (Article 22). Notarial registration is realized in the state language; the official language is used in the case of need (Article 23). Signboards, advertisements, price lists and other visual information are first written in the state language, then in the official language (Article 27). Post and mail service on the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic is carried out in the state language (Article 28). Labels, marking of commodities, users' instructions are made in the state language (Article 29). The heads of all state bodies, organizations and establishments take responsibility for the implementation and violation of the law on state language (Article 33).¹⁴¹

During the discussion of the project, the political elite of the country split up into two camps: Kyrgyz-speaking and Russian-speaking Kyrgyzs. In view of many, the law was aimed to force out the Russian-speaking political elite and

replace it by Kyrgyz-speaking politicians. Skeptics even predicted the aggravation of relations with Russia.

However, against all expectations of the Russian-speaking population, President A. Akaev signed the Law 'On the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic' on 2 April 2004, although the final reduction of the law underwent many amendments. In particular, the most disputed Article 10 made the state language obligatory for those state employees who would enter the list, defined by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The president accompanied the law with the Decree 'On further improvement of state policy on development of bilingualism and measures on the creation of necessary conditions for effective functioning of the state and official languages of the Kyrgyz Republic'.

The presidential decree charged the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic to develop and accept the program of measures on the realization of two laws of the Kyrgyz Republic 'On the state language of the Kyrgyz Republic' and 'On the official language of the Kyrgyz Republic', providing among others the corresponding measures on the implementation of following tasks: on budget financing of the law, on the creation of necessary organizational, material and technical conditions to learn the state language, first of all, by those who occupy higher state positions, on providing the proper level of teaching the state language in the system of education, on the improvement of the system of training and retraining of cadres, translators and interpreters, on the publication of textbooks, terminological dictionaries, phrase-books and manuals for self-tuition. In addition, the decree enacts the creation of necessary organizational, material and technical conditions for functioning and development of the official language, ensuring the proper level of teaching the official language in pre-school, school, secondary special and higher educational establishments. Furthermore, the decree prescribes a stepwise switch of the official paper work in the bodies of state and local governing to the Kyrgyz language before January 2015 as well as to define the areas, cities and settlements, where the official correspondence can be also implemented in the official language, to prepare the list of state employees who are obliged to know the state language, to develop the requirements of the promotion test on the state language, to increase the edition of books, newspapers and magazines in Kyrgyz, to provide material and moral stimulation of the authors of Kyrgyz-language educational programs and textbooks, teachers and lecturers of the Kyrgyz and Russian languages and

literature. Along with the above, it guarantees fair representation of Russian-speaking citizens in all state and local bodies.¹⁴²

In his statement at the ceremony of signing the law on state language, A. Akaev stressed that the first law, which was adopted after the declaration of independence, was the Law on the Russian language. At the same time, 'thinking about the stability and common national unity, we cannot and should not forget to maintain and develop the language, spoken by more than two third of the country's population, the language of the people, who gave their name to the republic'. A. Akaev pointed out that the 1989 law on state language failed to perform its task; the new law on state language is based on the principle of bilingualism and a free use of both the state and the official languages in all spheres of life.¹⁴³

Despite repeated accentuation by the president of the new language strategy aimed at state bilingualism, analytics and oppositionist mass media consider that the new legislation on state language significantly belittles the constitutional status of Russian as the official language. In particular, Article 1 of the 2000 law on official language, defining Russian as the one 'being used along with the state language in state management, legislation and legal proceedings of the Kyrgyz Republic' collides with Articles 7, 10 and 21 of the new 2004 law on state language, according to which the work in state bodies, local administration and other organizations, the adoption of official documents and legal proceedings are held in the state language. Though the 2000 law on official language defines Russian as 'the language of interethnic communication, which promotes the integration of the republic into the world community', Article 3 of the 2004 law, prescribing Kyrgyz to be the language of interethnic communication in the Kyrgyz Republic, practically revokes that function of Russian.

6

ETHNO-LINGUISTIC SITUATION

LINGUISTIC SITUATION AND EDUCATION
IN PRE-REVOLUTIONARY KYRGYZSTAN

Before the annexation by Russia, Kyrgyzstan had only confessional schools (mektebs and medreses). *Mekteb* was elementary Muslim school, where the Arabic language and Koran was taught. The main purpose of mektebs was to disseminate Islamic teaching among the Kyrgyz population. *Medrese* was secondary Muslim institution, where Koran, as well as the fundamentals of mathematics, geography, history and literature, was studied. In December 1910, 29 mektebs and 1 medrese having 1,208 students were in operation on the territory of Pishpek and Przhevalsk uezds, while in more Islamized Osh uezd, 183 mektebs and 6 medreses with 2,686 students functioned.

With the incorporation of Kyrgyzstan into the Russian Empire, first secular schools emerged. Though those schools were established for the children of Russian and Ukrainian migrants, a few Kyrgyzs attended them. At the same time, Russian was the only language of instruction in that type of schools.

In 1870, an elementary Russian school opened in Tokmak city, in 1874 – in Karakol city, in 1879 – in Pishpek city, in 1880 – in Belovodsk village, in 1888 – in Dmitrievka village (presently Talas city). In 1899, there was only one two-grade boys' school for 160 students and one elementary school for 60 girls in Pishpek city. In the south of Kyrgyzstan a two-grade school for boys and a two-grade school for girls were established in 1878. In 1898-1899, there were only 15 Kyrgyz students out of 58 in Sokuluk school, 22 Kyrgyzs out of 172 students in Pishpek two-grade school and 9 Kyrgyz students out of 168 in Przhvalsk two-grade school.

Along with elementary, the schools of advanced learning appeared. In 1911, first women's college opened in Przhevalsk city. In 1912, the only pre-revolutionary secondary educational establishment was a men's college in Pishpek.¹⁴⁴

Social and economic relations, emerging between locals and Russian and Ukrainian migrants, stimulated mutual communication. On the one hand, the

indigenous population learnt Russian. In this regard, the establishment of Russian-Kyrgyz schools played an important part.

First Russian-Kyrgyz school opened in Tokmak city in 1884. In 1886, a similar school opened in Osh city. Later on, Russian-Kyrgyz schools were established for girls. Prior to the Bolshevik revolution, 16 Russian-Kyrgyz schools operated in Kyrgyzstan. Out of 750 students studied in these schools 670 were natives.

On the other hand, Russians and Ukrainians sought to master Kyrgyz. Gradually, the majority of pre-revolutionary Slavic migrants became bilingual.

In 1914-1915, Kyrgyzstan had one secondary school with 100 students, 3 incomplete secondary schools with 442 students and 130 elementary schools with 6,510 students.¹⁴⁵

LINGUISTIC SITUATION AND EDUCATION IN SOVIET KYRGYZSTAN

After the establishment of the Soviet rule in the region, the situation in the educational sphere drastically changed. Under the Soviets, the system of elementary, secondary and higher education with Kyrgyz as the language of instruction was created. If prior to 1917 revolution 3% of the Kyrgyz population was literate,¹⁴⁶ in 1959 the literacy rate reached nearly 100%.¹⁴⁷

During the earlier years of the new regime, universal elementary schooling was introduced. Later on it was replaced by seven-grade and eight-grade secondary educational system. Instead of Russian and Russian-Kyrgyz schools, schools of primary and secondary learning were established. Primary schools were attended by children of 8-13 years old, while secondary schools taught teenagers aged 13-17 years old.

In 1923, 327 schools with more than 20,000 students operated in the republic; 251 of them had Kyrgyz as the language of instruction. At the same time, short-term courses opened to train teachers for Kyrgyz-language schools. Evening schools were organized to teach the adult population to read and write.

In 1925, first specialized educational establishment, the Institute of People's Enlightenment, later reorganized into the *Pedagogical Technical School*, opened. In 1932, first institute of higher learning, *the Kyrgyz State Pedagogical Institute*, was established. In 1933 *the Kyrgyz Veterinary Institute*, in 1939 *the Kyrgyz State Medical*

Institute, in 1951 *the Kyrgyz State University*, in 1952 *the Kyrgyz Women's Pedagogical Institute*, in 1954, *Frunze's Polytechnic Institute*, in 1955 *the Institute of Physical Culture and Sport*, and in 1967 *the Kyrgyz State Institute of Art* opened.¹⁴⁸

MODERN LINGUISTIC SITUATION AND EDUCATION

After the declaration of the independence, large-scale reforms were carried out in the field of education. In 1992, the Law 'On education' passed. According to the law, 'the basic languages of instruction are the state and the official languages, as well as the teaching can be provided in any other language' (Article 5).

By the beginning of the academic year of 2002-2003, there were 2,056 schools in the republic, where 1,168,100 students were taught.¹⁴⁹ The majority of schools (more than 80%) instructed in Kyrgyz. Russian schools were predominantly concentrated in cities. Besides, there were more than 200 Uzbek schools and 8 Tajik schools. In the areas having high proportion of ethnic minorities, schools with parallel Kyrgyz, Russian and other ethnic languages were established. The Kyrgyz language as a school subject was introduced in all secondary schools of Kyrgyzstan in 1989.

Presently, all republican secondary schools are faced with serious problems: the shortage and a low quality of textbooks, especially in schools with the instruction in Kyrgyz and other ethnic languages, the lack of qualified teachers. Moreover, in comparison with 1990 the quality of education notably deteriorated. In order to improve the situation, *the National educational program 'Bilim'* was adopted in 1996 and the year of 1996 was announced the Year of education.

During the years of independence, the number of higher educational establishments increased by 3.8 times and reached 26, including 15 non-state institutions. As of the 2002-2003 academic year, 66 special secondary schools with 26,000 students were in operation.¹⁵⁰ Both Kyrgyz and Russian were applied as the language of instruction.

Presently, there are many joint higher educational establishments, financed on the intergovernmental basis: the Kyrgyz-Turkish University 'Manas', the Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University, the Kyrgyz-Uzbek University, the Kyrgyz-American University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan, the Kyrgyz-

European Faculty at the Kyrgyz National University, Bishkek International School of Business and Management, funded by the UNDP.

Kyrgyzstani mass media sources can be divided into three groups: those in Kyrgyz, in Russian and other ethnic languages. The latter had just a few programs. Most of radio and television stations broadcast in Russian. The only Kyrgyz-language TV channel is the state channel. In the south there are Uzbek TV programs, transmitted from Uzbekistan.

In 2002, 183 newspapers and 83 magazines were issued. Out of them 96 newspaper and 9 journals were in Kyrgyz. Among 672 books and printed materials, 247 were in the Kyrgyz language.¹⁵¹

THE 2003 SURVEY ON MODERN ETHNO-LINGUISTIC SITUATION

The language policy of Kyrgyzstan, aimed at turning Kyrgyz into a basic and, hereafter, a sole language of political and intellectual life of the republic, does not often take into account the real linguistic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Despite Kyrgyz is the most popular language among Kyrgyzstani citizens, especially those living in the countryside and provinces, the position of Russian in many spheres of the republican life is still considerable and in some of them is even dominating. Besides, the functional weakness of the Kyrgyz language prevents it from replacing Russian in higher education, science, mass media and the field of new technology. Another important factor is the presence of a significant number of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan, which by the 1999 census forms more than 30% of Kyrgyzstani population and Russian-speaking in their majority. And finally, the cultural orientation of Kyrgyzstani citizens toward Russian remains, since today Russian is a channel of entering the world informative space and the means of international communication.

For the purpose of revealing the real linguistic situation, the role and the place of Kyrgyz and other languages in the socio-communicative system of Kyrgyzstani society, the degree of speaking Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek, as well as language preferences of respondents, the author conducted the ethno-social survey. The survey provided the following data about the place and the role of Kyrgyz, Russian, Uzbek and other republican languages in different spheres of public and political life of the republic.

Mother tongue

The results on the question regarding mother tongue of interviewers revealed that 63% of the interviewed considered Kyrgyz as their mother tongue (See Table 6.1).

The percentage of those who mentioned Russian as their mother tongue is somewhat more (20%) than those of Russian nationality. Those who regard Russian as their native language are mainly respondents of Slavic nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarus) and representatives of some others (Germans, Koreans, Dungans), who were considerably russified during the 70 years of the Soviet rule.

Regarding the Uzbek language, 11.7% of all respondents consider Uzbek as their native language.

The rest respondents (5.3%) mentioned other languages as their native tongue.

Table 6.1. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What is your mother tongue?’ by provinces, (%)

	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Adab province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Kyrgyz	10,4	10,1	15,8	12,9	13,8	63,0
Uzbek	0,5	0,3		5,9	5,0	11,7
Russian	7,3	8,5	3,1	0,5	0,6	20,0
German		0,1				0,1
Kazakh	0,5	0,4	0,1			1,0
Dungan	0,1	0,4	0,3		0,1	0,9
Uighur	0,2	0,1	0,3		0,2	0,8
Turkish	0,2					0,2
Kurdish	0,1				0,1	0,2
Tajik	0,1					0,1
Korean	0,6					0,6
Amhar		0,1				0,1
Kalmyk			0,1			0,1
Tatar			0,3	0,7	0,2	1,2

According to nationalities, 98.9% of Kyrgyzs, 98.9% of Russians, 99.1% of Uzbeks and 88.9% of ‘others’ claimed that they had the language of their nationality as their native tongue. The figures confirm the thesis that for the

majority of Kyrgyzs, Russians, Uzbeks and other nationalities native tongue serves as the basis of ethnic identity. Speaking the language of own nationality, in this case, symbolizes belonging to their ethnic group.

At the same time, 6.5% of 'others' and 0.5% of Kyrgyzs mentioned Russian and as their native language (See Table 6.2).

7.7% of 'other' respondents and 0.9% of Uzbeks pointed to Kyrgyz as their mother tongue.

Table 6.2. Answers of respondents to the question 'What is your mother tongue?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	98,9	0,5	0,9	7,7
Russian	0,6	98,9		6,5
Uzbek		0,5	99,1	
Other	0,3			88,9

Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek

One of the main indicators, characterizing the language situation in a country, is a degree of speaking this or another language by a country population. According to the 1999 census, the proportion of those freely speaking Kyrgyz forms 70% of the republican population.¹⁵² As per the survey, Kyrgyz is freely spoken by 70.2% of the questioned. Perfect coincidence between both figures demonstrates a high reliability of the survey data.

In the context of provinces, the lowest figures of those speaking Kyrgyz are in Bishkek city (11.3%) and Chui province (10.4%). Kyrgyz is widely applied in three other provinces: Issyk-Kul province (16.6%), Dajlal-Abad province (16.3%) and Osh province (15.6%), which have the highest proportion of Kyrgyz speakers. This situation is caused by a low proportion of ethnic Kyrgyzs and a considerable number of Russians, Ukrainians and other Russian speakers (Germans, Dungans, Koreans) in Bishkek city and Chui province (See Table 0.1). In contrast to them, in three other regions Kyrgyzs are numerically dominating.

An opposite picture is observed with respect to the Russian language. The majority of all nationalities respondents (65.4%) freely speak Russian with the highest figures in Bishkek city (17.9%) and Chui province (16.2%). Russian is less

employed in Issyk-Kul province (14.8%). The lowest indices of freely speaking Russian are in Djalal-Abad (8.5%) and Osh (8%) provinces.

Although in southern Osh and Djalal-Abad provinces the number of Russian speakers is small, these provinces have a high proportion of those freely speaking Uzbek: 9.5% in Djalal-Abad province and 8.1% in Osh province. High figures of Uzbek speakers in the south are caused by a great concentration of ethnic Uzbeks there (See Table 3.3). Totally, the Uzbek-speaking population in the republic achieves 20.5%.

As for speaking Kyrgyz by ethnic Kyrgyzs, almost all Kyrgyz interviewers (97.6%) freely speak Kyrgyz, 2.2% speak Kyrgyz with difficulty and 0.2% does not speak at all (See Table 6.3).

Table 6.3. Answers of respondents to the question 'How do you speak Kyrgyz?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Freely	97,6	1,6	44,4	49,2
With difficulty	2,2	22,9	46,2	23,1
Do not speak	0,2	75,5	9,4	27,7

Among 'other' respondents almost a half (49.2%) freely speaks Kyrgyz, about a quarter (23.1%) speaks with difficulty and little more (27.7%) does not speak at all.

The figures of Kyrgyz speakers among Uzbeks are little different: about a half (44.4%) speaks Kyrgyz freely, almost as many (46.2%) speak with difficulty and 9.4% does not speak at all.

The group of least speaking Kyrgyz are Russians. Among them only 1.6% speak Kyrgyz freely, less than a quarter (22.9%) speaks with difficulty, and the overwhelming majority (75.5%) does not speak Kyrgyz.

The second largest group of Russian speakers is consisted of interviewers of 'other' nationalities. Among them an absolute majority (86.1%) freely speaks Russian, 10.8% with difficulty, and only 3.1% do not speak at all (See Table 6.4).

Among Kyrgyzs more than a half (56.5%) speaks Russian freely, more than a third (35.7%) with difficulty and 7.8% do not speak Russian.

Among Uzbeks the proportion of freely speaking Russian is somewhat lower (47%) than among Kyrgyzs, a little more (41.9%) speaks with difficulty and 11.1% do not speak Russian.

Table 6.4. Answers of respondents to the question ‘How do you speak Russian?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Freely	56,5	99,5	47,0	86,1
With difficulty	35,7	0	41,9	10,8
Do not speak	7,8	0,5	11,1	3,1

Absolutely all Uzbeks (100%) speak Uzbek freely.

At the same time, almost Russian respondents do not speak Uzbek (98.9%) and only 1.1% speaks Uzbek with difficulty (See Table 6.5).

Among ethnic Kyrgyzs 12.7% freely speak Uzbek, a quarter (25.6%) speaks with difficulty and the majority (61.7%) does not speak Uzbek at all.

Almost same figures have representatives of ‘other’ nationalities, of which 12.3% speak freely, 18.5% speak with difficulty and 72.3% do not speak Uzbek.

Table 6.5. Answers of respondents to the question ‘How do you speak Uzbek?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Freely	12,7	0	100,0	12,3
With difficulty	25,6	1,1	0	18,5
Do not speak	61,7	98,9	0	72,3

Hence, speaking Kyrgyz, Russian and Uzbek by Kyrgyzstani population depends on two factors: a region and a nationality of speakers. The most widely employed language in the republic is Kyrgyz. The exception is Bishkek city and Chui province, which is caused by a relatively low percentage of ethnic Kyrgyzs and a high percentage of Russian speakers in these regions.

In contrast to the situation in Bishkek city and Chui province, among the population of other provinces ethnic Kyrgyzs are numerically prevailing. Aside

from Kyrgyzs, those who speak Kyrgyz are representatives of other Turkic languages: Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tatars, Uighurs, Turks, Kalmyks.

As for the Uzbek-speaking group, here should be included Tajiks, demonstrating a high ability to speak Uzbek, as well as other dwellers of the republican southern regions.

At the same time, the outcomes of the survey have showed that Russian is the most popular language among people of various nationalities. Historically, Russian was the language of administration, science and higher education. For many representatives of non-indigenous peoples: Ukrainians, Germans, Belarus, Koreans, Jewish and others, Russian appears to be the major language of communication.

Language of education

It is well known that a degree of speaking this or another language greatly depends on through what language an individual was educated. In this respect social institutions like family, school and higher educational institutions occupy an important place.

The materials of the survey demonstrated that somewhat more than a half (57.3%) of the questioned were raised in Kyrgyz in their families, more than a quarter (28.0%) was raised in Russian, 11.8% - in Uzbek and less than 3% - in other languages.

The highest percentage of respondents, brought up in Kyrgyz in their families, is observed in Issyk-Kul province (14.9%). The lowest percentage of those brought up in Kyrgyz is in Bishkek city (8.8%).

On the other hand, Bishkek has the highest proportion of those who were raised in Russian (10.3%). The least number of them is in two southern Osh (1.3%) and Djalal-Abad (1.6%) provinces. In these two provinces the highest proportion of those who were raised in Uzbek: 5.2% and 5.3% accordingly.

In the light of nationalities, the following data were received: 96.3% of Russians, 90.6% of Uzbeks, 87.9% of Kyrgyzs and 40% of 'other' interviewers were brought up in the language of their nationality in their families (Table 6.6).

Table 6.6. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What language was the language of upbringing in your family?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	87,9	1,6	4,3	16,9
Uzbek	1,1	1,6	90,6	3,1
Russian	9,5	96,3	4,3	52,3
Other	0,2	0	0,9	40

At the same time, among the respondents of ‘other’ nationalities more than a half (52.3%) was brought up in Russian.

Among Kyrgyzs the number of those raised in Russian reached 9.5%. These respondents are mostly the inhabitants of Bishkek capital and Chui province, where Russian has a high prestige not only in interethnic, but also in intra-ethnic and intra-family communication.

Although the language of upbringing often determines the language of school education, in the Soviet period many parents tended to place their children in Russian schools. In most cases such a behavior was justified by a high social prestige of Russian and a more qualitative education provided by schools with Russian as the language of instruction.

By the results of the implemented survey, more than a half (53.7%) of the questioned was taught at school in Kyrgyz, more than a third (35.4%) in Russian, 11.4% in Uzbek and only 1.5% in other languages.

At that, the majority (83%) of Kyrgyzs, 9.2% of ‘other’ respondents, 3.4% of Uzbeks and only 2.1% of Russians studied in Kyrgyz schools (See Table 6.7).

Almost all Russian respondents (96.3%), more than a half (69.2%) of children of ‘other’ nationalities, 17.8% of Kyrgyzs and 13.7% of Uzbeks were taught in Russian schools.

6.1% of ‘other’ respondents, 2.7% of Russians, 1.3% of Kyrgyzs studied in Uzbek schools.

In schools with a different language of instruction 6.1% of the interviewees of ‘other’ nationalities studied.

Table 6.7. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What language was the language of instruction in your school?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	83,0	2,1	3,4	9,2
Uzbek	1,3	2,7	82,9	6,1
Russian	17,8	96,3	13,7	69,2
Other	0,2	3,2	0,9	6,1

After the declaration of Kyrgyzstani independence the status of Kyrgyz and its role in educational life increased. As a result, the number of Kyrgyzs and non-Kyrgyzs, who preferred to educate their children in Kyrgyz schools, has grown. So, the majority (64.6%) of Kyrgyzs, a quarter (24.6%) of ‘other’ respondents, 20.5% of Uzbeks and 15.4% of Russians showed preference to instruct their children in Kyrgyz schools.

However, in the system of higher and secondary special education Russian remains to be a basic language of instruction. A factor of no small importance, which also contributes to that situation, is a weak development of Kyrgyz, especially in the field of natural and technical sciences.

The majority (33.1%) of the questioned having higher and secondary special education diploma were educated in Russian.¹⁵³ The highest figure of those is in Bishkek city (11.2%) and the lowest is in Osh province (3.1%). It is worthy of note that the majority of institutes of higher education is concentrated in Bishkek capital, where aside from Bishkek city-dwellers natives of other provinces come to study.

As for the Kyrgyz language, 17.7% of respondents had Kyrgyz as the language of instruction in institutes of higher and secondary special education with the highest proportion in Bishkek city (18%) and the lowest in Chui province (1.5%).

Only 2.9% studied in Uzbek in institutes of higher and secondary special learning. The maximum number of those is in Djalal-Abad province (1.7%) and the minimum is in Issyk-Kul province (0.1%).

Among Kyrgyz interviewers with higher and secondary special education, slightly more than a half (27.8%) studied in Russian and almost the same number (26.5%) studied in Kyrgyz (See Table 6.8).¹⁵⁴

Table 6.8. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What language was the language of instruction in your institute?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	26,5	0,5	7,7	0
Uzbek	0,8	0	18,8	1,5
Russian	27,8	51,1	18,8	58,5
Other	0,5	2,1	0	3,1

As for ethnic Uzbeks having higher and secondary special education, 18.8% studied in Uzbek, the same figure (18.8%) in Russian and 7.7% in Kyrgyz.

Practically all respondents of Russian (51.1%) and ‘other’ nationalities (58.5%) had Russian as the language of instruction in higher and secondary special educational institutions.

So, the results of the survey demonstrated that in most cases language of family upbringing is determined by ethnic origin of family members. The exception is the respondents of ‘other’ nationalities and Kyrgyzs, living in Bishkek city and Chui province.

At the same time, the parents of interviewers of ‘other’ nationalities and Kyrgyzs of Bishkek city and Chui province give a priority to the schools, where Russian is the language of instruction. In this respect, a high figure of interviewers, studying in Kyrgyz schools, is explained by the fact that the majority of secondary schools (82.5%)¹⁵⁵ are located in the countryside, where Kyrgyzs are prevailing and the teaching is realized in Kyrgyz.

As for the higher and secondary special learning, the main language there is Russian.

Language of communication

Language of communication is, first of all, the language of daily contacts with parents, spouse, children, as well as friends and colleagues at work.

Ethnic languages are most stable in the family sphere. Almost all Kyrgyzs (95.1%), Uzbeks (98.3%) and Russians (95.7%) prefer to speak the language of their nationality with their parents except for the respondents of ‘other’ nationalities, among which more than a half (56.9%) prefer to communicate with

their parents in their native tongue, 46.1% prefer to speak Russian and 18.5% prefer to speak Kyrgyz (Table 6.9).

However, there are other preferences too. So, among Kyrgyzs 8.4% show preferences to communicate with their parents in Russian. Among Uzbeks 7.7% prefer to speak Russian and 6% prefer to speak Kyrgyz.

Table 6.9. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What languages do you prefer to speak with your parents?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	95,1	0,5	6,0	18,5
Russian	8,4	95,7	7,7	46,1
Uzbek	0,8	0,5	98,3	1,5
Other	0,5	1,1	0	56,9

Almost same results are concerning the question of communication with spouse. 71.9% of Kyrgyzs, 69.2% of Uzbeks, 69% of Russians and 35.4% of ‘other’ nationalities prefer to speak their mother tongue with their husband or wife (See Table 6.10).¹⁵⁶

At the same time, 40% of respondents of ‘other’ nationalities, 11.3% of Kyrgyzs and 6% of Uzbeks prefer to communicate in Russian with their spouse. 10.8% of ‘other’ nationalities prefer to speak Kyrgyz with their husband or wife.

Table 6.10. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What languages do you prefer to speak with your spouse?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	71,9	1,1	2,6	10,8
Russian	11,3	69,0	6,0	40,0
Uzbek	2,1	1,1	69,2	1,5
Other	0,3	0	0,9	35,4

The situation with children is very close to the above-mentioned. 70.7% of Russians, 69.7% of Kyrgyzs, 68.4% of Uzbeks and 27.7% of ‘other’ nationalities

respondents prefer to speak the language of their nationality with their children (See Table 6.11).¹⁵⁷ The exception is interviewees of ‘other’ nationalities, among which are somewhat more people (44.6%) than in the case of spouse prefer to speak Russian with their children and somewhat less (7.7%) prefer to speak Kyrgyz.

Table 6.11. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What languages do you prefer to speak with your children?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	69,7	1,1	2,6	7,7
Russian	11,9	70,7	6,0	44,6
Uzbek	0,5	2,1	68,4	0
Other	0	0	0,9	27,7

Interesting data have been discovered regarding the language of communication with friends. 98.9% of Russians, 87.2% of Uzbeks, 87% of Kyrgyzs and 35.4% of ‘other’ nationalities prefer to speak their native tongue with their friends (See Table 6.12). Probably, it stems from the fact that most Kyrgyzs (88.7%), Uzbeks (79.5%), Russians (62.9%), and about a quarter of ‘other’ nationalities’ respondents (21.5%) have a close friend belonging to the same nationality.

Table 6.12. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What languages do you prefer to speak with your friends?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	87,0	2,1	21,4	35,4
Russian	30,8	98,9	24,8	73,8
Uzbek	3,3	0,5	87,2	9,2
Other	0,4	2,1	0,9	35,4

Meanwhile, Russian is the preferred language of communication with friends among the majority of ‘other’ nationalities (73.8%), almost a third of Kyrgyzs (30.8%) and a quarter of Uzbeks (24.8%).

Kyrgyz is preferred as the language of communication with friends by 35.4% of respondents of ‘other’ nationalities, 21.4% of Uzbeks and 2.1% of Russians. The communication between the people of relative Turk-speaking nationalities in Kyrgyzstan often takes place in Kyrgyz.

The proportion of those preferring to speak Kyrgyz with their friends is 60%. 45.7% prefer to speak Russian and 13% prefer to speak Uzbek with their friends.

Completely different results regarding the language of communication in work collectives. At work Russian is used a little less than Kyrgyz. 45.4% of the questioned prefer to speak Kyrgyz at work, 37.2% prefer to speak Russian and 9.2% prefer to speak Uzbek.

During the communication with colleagues, the majority (65.6%) of Kyrgyzs, more than a quarter (27.7%) of ‘others’ and 16.2% of Uzbeks prefer to speak Kyrgyz (See Table 6.13).

Table 6.13. Answers of respondents to the question ‘What languages do you prefer to speak at work?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	65,6	2,1	16,2	27,7
Russian	25,6	78,7	19,7	61,5
Uzbek	2,4	0	60,7	9,2
Other	0,2	0,5	0	26,1

Russian is preferred by 78.7% of Russians, 61.5% of ‘others’, 25.6% of Kyrgyzs and 19.7% of Uzbeks.

Uzbek is preferred by 60.7% of Uzbeks, 9.2% of ‘others’ and 2.4% of Kyrgyzs.

Hence, the results of the survey allow drawing a conclusion that the overwhelming majority of the interviewed prefer to speak the language of their nationality in intra-family and intra-ethnic communication. A different situation takes place at work, where a considerable number of the questioned prefers to speak Russian. Inside work collectives traditions of Soviet times, when Russian

was the language of office work and communication in state institutions, organizations and enterprises, are pretty stable. Moreover, work collectives are more often multiethnic unlike the members of a family and friends, who usually belong to the same nationality.

Language of printed materials and mass media

The survey showed that interviewers prefer to receive information in both mother tongue and Russian.

An absolute majority of Uzbek (90.6%), Russian (84.6%), Kyrgyz (79.4%) respondents and 23.1% of interviewers of 'other' nationalities prefer to read fiction in their native languages (See Table 6.14).

Table 6.14. Answers of respondents to the question 'In what language do you prefer to read fiction?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	79,4	0,5	11,1	12,3
Russian	42,4	84,6	26,5	84,6
Uzbek	2,2	0	90,6	1,5
Other	0,5	2,7	0,9	23,1

At the same time, 84.6% of 'other' nationalities, 42.4% of Kyrgyzs, 26.5% of Uzbeks prefer to read it in Russian.

12.3% of 'other' respondents and 11.1% of Uzbeks prefer read fiction in Kyrgyz.

The situation with newspapers and magazines language preferences is similar to that of fiction language preferences. 98.9% of Russians, 80.3% of Uzbeks, 78.4% of Kyrgyzs and 10.8% of 'others' prefer to read newspapers and magazines in their mother tongue (See Table 6.15).

Russian is preferred by 87.6% of 'other' nationalities, 55.6% of Kyrgyzs and 41.9% of Uzbeks.

Kyrgyz is preferred by 16.9% of 'others' and 16.2% of Uzbeks.

Table 6.15. Answers of respondents to the question ‘In what language do you prefer to read newspapers and magazines?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	78,4	0,5	16,2	16,9
Russian	55,6	98,9	41,9	87,6
Uzbek	2,1	0	80,3	4,6
Other	0,4	2,1	0,9	10,8

An interesting picture is observed with preferences of respondents regarding the language of TV and radio programs. The overwhelming majority of interviewers prefer to watch TV in Russian (89.1%), more than a half (63.3%) prefer to watch TV in Kyrgyz and 18.7% in Uzbek.

Among ethnic Kyrgyzs those who prefer to watch TV programs in Russian is somewhat more (88.4%) than those who prefer to watch in Kyrgyz (85.6%) (See Table 6.16). The percentage of Kyrgyzs, preferring to watch TV in Uzbek, is 11.9%.

Among Russians 98.4% prefer to watch TV in Russian and only 7% in Kyrgyz.

Among Uzbeks 91.5% prefer to watch in Uzbek, 72.5% in Russian and 48.7% in Kyrgyz.

As for respondents of ‘other’ nationalities, 93.8% prefer to watch TV programs in Russian, 36.9% in Kyrgyz, 13.8% in other language and 7.7% in Uzbek.

Table 6.16. Answers of respondents to the question ‘In what language do you prefer to watch TV programs?’ by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	85,6	7,0	48,7	36,9
Russian	88,4	98,4	72,5	93,8
Uzbek	11,9	0	91,5	7,7
Other	4,6	4,9	4,4	13,8

The survey discloses that the percentage of respondents, preferring to listen to radio in Russian, is a little lower than of those preferring to watch TV in Russian (79.2%). The figures for those who prefer to listen to radio in Kyrgyz and Uzbek are 60.2% and 16.9% correspondingly.

Among the questioned of Kyrgyz nationality 84.4% prefer to listen to radio in Kyrgyz, 76.7% in Russian and 9.2 in Uzbek (See Table 6.17).

Among Uzbeks 89.7% prefer to listen to Uzbek radio broadcasting, 55.6% to Russian and 34.2% to Kyrgyz.

Table 6.17. Answers of respondents to the question 'In what language do you prefer to watch TV programs?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Kyrgyz	84,4	4,3	34,2	33,8
Russian	76,7	97,3	55,6	93,8
Uzbek	9,2	0	89,7	9,2
Other	3,2	7,9	2,6	15,4

Among 'other' nationalities 93.8% prefer to listen to radio in Russian, 33.8% in Kyrgyz, 15.4% in other language and 9.2% in Uzbek.

High proportions of TV viewers and radio listeners of Russian-language programs can be explained by the habit remained since the Soviet period, when most of information was realized through Russian and Russian-language channels. Besides, a low quality of TV and radio programs in Kyrgyz and Uzbek, as well as practical absence of programs in other languages, made many people watch TV and listen to radio in Russian.

Hence, along with Kyrgyz, Russian remains the main language of printed materials. As to mass media, the number of respondents, preferring Russian-language newspapers, magazines, TV and radio, are much more than those who prefer them in Kyrgyz, Uzbek and other languages.

Part 3.
RELIGION

7

**ISLAMIZATION OF CENTRAL ASIA AND
KYRGYZSTAN**

ISLAMIZATION OF CENTRAL ASIA

The Islamization of Central Asia was not a one-time process but lasted for many centuries. A. Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush marked out five periods in the expansion of Islam among Muslims of the Soviet Union: the period of the Arab conquest (600-800), peaceful penetration along trade routes (800-1200), the era of the Mongol Empire (1200-1300), the Russian expansion (1500-1900) and the Soviet takeover (1905-1928).¹⁵⁸ Applying the above periodization, we can distinguish five stages in the Islamization of Central Asia. The events that exerted a deep influence on the religious situation in Central Asia can serve as the criteria for our periodization.

THE FIRST STAGE: THE ARAB CONQUEST

The first stage of the Islamization of Central Asia was bound up with the Arab conquest of the region. The conquest began in the third quarter of the seventh century with the territory between the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya Rivers, called by the Arabs *Ma Wara al-Nahr* ('what beyond the river'). Khorasan was conquered in 644 and served as a bridgehead for campaigns across the Amu Darya. In 676, the Arabs laid siege to Bukhara. In 712, Samarkand was subdued. In 716, the Arab army crossed the Amu Darya and reached Fergana and Shash (Tashkent).¹⁵⁹

Consequently, in less than a century Islam had become the only religion on the territory of Central Asia. The Arab invasion met a strong resistance of local people, but political and religious fragmentation of the region, the conflicts between Western Turk Khaganate and China over Central Asian territories, constant internecine wars among local rulers favored the Arabs' victory.¹⁶⁰

THE SECOND STAGE: PEACEFUL ISLAMIZATION

The second stage of the Central Asian Islamization commenced in the tenth century under the rule of the Samanids (875-999). The Samanids were a Central Asian dynasty that established the first centralized and independent from the Arab Caliphate state and adopted Islam as the official religion. Under the Samanids new mosques and mausoleums were built and Muslim clergy were appointed to various governmental posts.

In the late tenth century, a Turk dynasty, the Karakhanids (972-1212), which ruled Eastern Turkestan, Jetysu ('seven rivers') and the area south of the Tien Shan Mountains, started rivaling the Samanid state of Ma Wara al-Nahr. In 999, the Karakhanids captured Bukhara, the capital of the Samanid state, and established their domination over the region. Like the Samanids, the Karakhanids proclaimed Islam the state religion.

Hence, from the ninth to the thirteenth century Islam expanded peacefully. Firstly, Islam was favored by local dynasties, which regarded Islam as the instrument of centralization and consolidation of Central Asian peoples as well as particular ethnic groups in the region. Secondly, Islamic religion was popularized by Arab merchants, who moved to the Arab Caliphate's newly acquired territories for the purpose of trade. Islam extended along important trade routes: the north-south route along the Volga River, known as the 'Fur Road', and the west-east route from the Black Sea to China, the famous 'Silk Road'.¹⁶¹ Thirdly, from the twelfth century the history of Central Asia has been strongly affected by the activities of *Sufi* brotherhoods, which greatly contributed to the dissemination of the new faith.

SUFISM

In the twelfth century, when for the first time in the history of the Muslim world Islam was threatened by infidel invaders - the Qara Khitai in the East and Crusaders in the West - Sufis assumed the role of defenders of Islam. Sufism, a corpus of techniques concerning the 'journeying' of a mystic adept toward God, swelled into a popular mass movement of organized brotherhoods of adepts, who were grouped around the master and bound by compulsory rules.¹⁶²

Central Asia, a borderland of the Islamic world, which faced infidels from nearly all sides, became one of the most active areas of Sufi expansion. Three of the most important brotherhoods were founded there: the *Kubrawiya* and *Yasawiya* brotherhoods in the twelfth century and the *Naqshbandiya* in the fourteenth century. In contrast to the situation in other parts of the Muslim world, where official Islam was opposed to Sufi activities, in Central Asia both tendencies were often in harmony.

The Kubrawiya brotherhood was established in the twelfth century in Khiva. It played an important part in the Islamization of the Mongol leaders who conquered Central Asia in the thirteenth century. By 1873, the Kubrawiya was almost completely absorbed by the Naqshbandiya brotherhood and survived today only among peasants. The tomb of the founder, Najmuddin Kubra, is one of the most popular places of pilgrimage.

The Yasawiya order was founded in the twelfth century by the poet Ahmed Yasawi, a native of Turkestan city. He developed a teaching that combined the traditions of settled Iranians and nomadic Turks. The Yasawiya played a crucial role in the Islamization of nomadic tribes, in particular Kazakh and Kyrgyz nomads. After the establishment of the Naqshbandiya, the the Yasawiya order declined and became marginal. However, its offshoot, the *tarikat* (order) of 'Hairy Ishans' is one of the most dynamic and radical brotherhoods in Central Asia. The center of 'Hairy Ishans' is located in southern Kyrgyzstan.

The most important and prestigious in Central Asia is the Naqshbandiya *tarikat*. It was founded in the fourteenth century by the sheikh Mohammed Bahautdin Naqshband, born in a village near Bukhara. Its adepts played a central role during the Timurid and Shaybanid empires and in the defense of Central Asia against the Buddhist invasions of the seventieth-eighteenth centuries. It is largely because of the Naqshbandiya that Sufism has been institutionalized and become an integral part of the political, social and cultural life of Central Asia. In Central Asia its influence is strong in the eastern and southern regions of Turkmenistan, in the Fergana Valley, especially its Kyrgyz areas, in the Khorezm oasis of northern Turkmenistan and the Karakalpak republic.¹⁶³

THE THIRD STAGE: MONGOL CONQUEST

The third stage of Islamization began with the Mongol conquest in the early thirteenth century and lasted until the middle of the sixteenth century. At the beginning of that period the Mongol rule had a strong anti-Islamic character, since there were many Buddhists and Nestorian Christians among the Mongol leaders.

However, since the late thirteenth century, the religious situation in Central Asia started changing. The Mongol rulers directed their efforts to establish peace on the territories, devastated by wars. For this purpose they sought the support of Sufi sheikhs and Muslim clergy. By the early fourteenth century, Mongol rulers of the Golden Horde and those of the Chagatai Khanate¹⁶⁴ became Muslims and announced Islam the state religion.

In the period of the Mongol invasion, all three Sufi orders played a profound role in the preservation and spread of Islam among Central Asian peoples. After the conversion of Mongol rulers to Islam, Sufism continued to be an important political and social factor, representing the popular side of Islam against the official hierarchy of Muslim clergy. It was during this period that Islam ceased to be the religion of rulers and became a popular mass ideology.

THE FORTH STAGE: RUSSIAN COLONIZATION

The forth stage of Islamization took place from the annexation of Central Asia by the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century to the 1917 Bolsheviks revolution and the establishment of the Soviet regime in the region.

The Russians embarked on the conquest of Central Asia in 1855, immediately after the end of the Caucasian wars. They took Chimkent in 1855, Tashkent in 1865 and forced their protectorates on Bukhara and Khiva Khanates in 1873. In 1875, they invaded the Khanate of Kokand and abolished it the following year. In 1873-1884, they captured the Turkmen territory and, around 1900, occupied the Pamirs.¹⁶⁵ As a result, by the beginning of the twentieth century the territory of Central Asia had been incorporated into the Russian Empire.

The Tsarist policy towards Islam was ambivalent in the course of their rule. Though the authorities tried not to interfere in the religious life of the local Muslim community, they took several measures to decentralize and dismantle the structure of highest religious authority.

By the *Regulations for the Management of Religious Affairs*, adopted by Turkestan administration, Central Asian Muslims preserved their juridical status based on *Shariat* (Islamic law) and *Adat* (the code of pre-Islamic rules), the clergy enjoyed a number of privileges such as tax exemption and allowances for business trips. Besides, the Tsarist authorities subsidized the building of mosques, mekebs and medreses, organized and funded Muslim pilgrimages, printed Koran and other Islamic books.

On the other hand, Islam was not any more the leading official religion but was subordinated to the Russian administration. Central Asian Muslim clergy also became dependent on the official authorities. The Russian administration liquidated the position of grand *kazi*, although it preserved local *Shariat* courts, which along with Russian secular courts functioned until 1917. Without closing mosques and religious schools, the Russians abolished the institution of *Sheikh al-Islam*, the highest Muslim authority on religious affairs. The law of 1886 transferred *waqfs* (lands of mosques and medreses) to the ownership of those who cultivated them and imposed taxes on them. New mosques, mektebs and medreses could not be built without the permission of the local administration. And finally, no Muslim board was set up for Central Asian Muslims; they were placed under the supervision of the Muslim Spiritual Assembly of Orenburg.¹⁶⁶ In 1911, there were 6,000 traditional elementary schools (mektebs) and 328 secondary schools (medreses) with a total student enrollment of more than 100,000 people.¹⁶⁷

Determined to spread the Russian cultural influence in the region, Tsarist authorities made attempts to establish schools that would enroll both Russian and indigenous students. The aim was twofold: one was to expose the population to the Russian culture, and the other was to train the indigenous people for employment in various low-level positions of the Russian local administration. By 1909, 89 Russian-native schools with 2,552 Muslim students had been established in Central Asia.¹⁶⁸

In order to win the confidence of Central Asian Muslims, the government of Catherine II dispatched the Volga Tatars to the region. Volga Tatars, especially their merchants and mullahs, acted as missionaries, building mosques and

schools. They often served as the middlemen between Russian officials and locals, as they were familiar with local languages and customs and knew Russian. Tatars became more successful in the propagation of Islam among the locals than Uzbek mullahs, as they were not so strict in the performance of Islamic rituals and did not collect taxes.

The official government did not encourage the migration of Russian and Ukrainian peasants to Central Asia at the earlier stage of colonization. The first wave of Russian migration to the region took place in the 1890s. The new stimulus was given by Stolypin's reform in 1910. Since that time, the number of Russian and Ukrainian settlements grew rapidly, especially those on the territory of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The new migrants brought the Orthodox faith. Christian churches were built and Russian Orthodox clergymen came to the area.

In the late nineteenth century, a new Islamic reformist trend made its appearance among Russian Tatars and Crimean Turks. Started by Sihabeddin Mergani, Kayyum Nasiri, Huseyin Feizkhani, the teaching was developed by Islamil Bey Gaspirali, who became the real leader of the *Jadid* movement. Avoiding any direct contact with politics and concentrating his efforts in the cultural field, Gaspirali promoted his slogan: 'unity in language and in spirit'.

Gaspirali supplied the movement with a concrete program, under his guidance the Islamic reform was transformed into broad cultural and political movement that aimed at the development of the popular modernized education, unification of the language and general cultural progress. Emerged in Crimea and Kazan, the idea of Turkic national revival penetrated into the Caucasus and Central Asia.¹⁶⁹

Understanding the hidden nationalist intentions of the movement leaders towards Turkic political unity, the Russian government of Alexander II abandoned Catherine's policy and restricted the migration of Tatars to the Central Asian region.

ISLAMIZATION OF THE KYRGYZ

The Islamization of the Kyrgyz cannot be taken out of the general context of Central Asian Islamization. Nevertheless, there are a number of particular features that characterizes that process among the Kyrgyz.

First Muslim missionaries appeared on the territory of present-day Kyrgyzstan in the early eighth century. Archeological finds of 1998 in Osh city evidences it.¹⁷⁰ The 751 battle on the Talas River between the Arab and Chinese troops was of great historical importance. The victory of the Arabs over the Chinese army favored the spread of Islam in Central Asia and particularly in Kyrgyzstan. However, the Arabs could not retain their positions and went back to Shash. As for the Chinese, they did not show up in the region for a thousand years.¹⁷¹

The Kyrgyz became acquainted with Islam in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The Arab historian of the twelfth century Al-Marwazi wrote about them: 'The Kyrgyzs have a custom to burn their dead; they insist that a fire cleanses and make them clean. It was their custom from ancient times, but as soon as they happened to be the neighbors of Muslims, they started burying the dead'.¹⁷² Scholars assumed that they were the Kyrgyzs, emigrated from the Yenisei River to Eastern Turkestan, which was under control of the Karakhanids.

After the Mongol conquest in the early thirteenth century the position of Islam gained strength. Some Mongol rulers adopted Islam and made it the official religion, although they favored Christianity and Judaism.

As a result of internecine strifes in the middle of the fifteenth century, the state of Mogholistan emerged in the eastern part of the Chagatai Khanate. One of its rulers, Tugluk-Timur, who adopted Islam in 1354 and made it the state religion, forced Islam upon his people. By the report of Muhammed Khaider and Abu al-Gazi, 160,000 people converted to Islam within one day.¹⁷³ Another ruler of Mogholistan, Muhammed-khan, who also had the reputation of a zealous Muslim, constrained people to wear turbans; the disobedient were hammered nails into their heads.¹⁷⁴

In spite of Moghol khans' efforts, the majority of Kyrgyzs remained pagans. The Ottoman historian of the sixteenth century Seifi Chelebi noted that they were 'neither kafirs (pagans) nor Muslims'. 'They do not bury their dead but put them in coffin, which they hang on trees: bones remain in there until they decay and disperse'.¹⁷⁵

The situation began to change in the second half of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The event that had a strong impact on it was the migration of a significant number of Kyrgyzs, driven out by the Oirats, to the Fergana Valley. In Fergana, Kyrgyzs found themselves under the influence of the Uzbek Muslim clergy, who directed their efforts to convert them to Islam. During that period the Kyrgyz became the object of Sufis' expansion. Sufism predetermined

the domination of unofficial popular Islam, which promoted the combination of the Islamic religion with traditional local pre-Islamic believes.

An important role in the dissemination of Islam among Kyrgyzs was played by Kyrgyz noblemen *manaps* and *biys*, who adopted Islam and then furthered it among their people. For this purpose, they invited Uzbek mullahs, who instructed ordinary nomads in basic Muslim rituals and praying.¹⁷⁶

After the Russian annexation of the Kyrgyz territories, the position of Islam strengthened. Seeking the support of Kyrgyz noblemen, the Russian authorities took a tolerant attitude towards Islam. They did not interfere with the nomadic life style based on a mixed use of Shariat and Adat, but quite the contrary, encouraged the spread of Islam among Kyrgyz nomads. If in 1876, there was not a single mosque in northern Kyrgyzstan, in 1885, there were 16 mosques in Pishpek uezd, 3 mosques in Karakol city and 1 mosque in Issyk-Kul uezd. During the period of 1883-1914 the number of mosques in Osh volost increased from 102 to 154 mosques.¹⁷⁷

Hence, the Islamization of the Kyrgyz that began under the Karakhanids, continued during the Mongol domination and intensified after the Russian colonization, was not logically complete before the establishment of the Soviet regime in the area and the initiation of atheistic propaganda by the Soviet authorities.

THE FIFTH STAGE: BOLSHEVIKS REVOLUTION AND SOVIET REGIME

Following the Bolsheviks revolution of 1917, Central Asia entered its final stage of Islamization. In the course of their rule, the Bolsheviks treated Islam very pragmatically, using it as an instrument to achieve their ends. Nevertheless, six distinct periods can be distinguished in the relations between the Soviet authorities and Islam. It is worthy of note that the official policy towards Islam was an integral part of a general Soviet policy towards religion. Moreover, all decisions, made by the Soviet government in Moscow, were duplicated by the local authorities of the republics.

The first period, lasted from the 1917 October Revolution to 1928, was the time of the establishment and consolidation of the Soviet rule in the region. During that period the attitude of the Soviet authorities towards Islam was

inconsistent. On the one hand, it was characterized by a search of compromise with Islam, on the other hand, various administrative steps were taken by local Bolsheviks against Islam.

Fully aware of the necessity of having the support from non-Russian nationalities, the Bolsheviks published the address 'To all working Muslims of Russian and the East', which said that 'from now on your beliefs and customs, your national and cultural institutions are declared free and inviolable. Know that your rights, as those of all peoples of Russia, are under the mighty protection of the revolution and its organs, the Soviet of workers, soldiers and peasants'.

At the same time, in 1918-1920 the antireligious campaign took place. By the Decree 'On civil marriage, children and registration of civil statuses' of 1917, civil marriage became obligatory; marriage and divorce, contracted according to Shariat, was announced invalid. Following the Decree 'On separation of church from state and school from church' of 1918, the teaching of Islamic disciplines were banned in state, public and even private schools.¹⁷⁸ The adoption of the Resolution 'On local courts of *kazis* and *beys*' was directed towards the reorganization and replacement of traditional Muslim courts by a uniform people's court. Waqfs, the lands of Muslim clergy, were confiscated.

In 1918, the Bolsheviks military actions met with armed resistance of Central Asians, so-called 'the Basmachi revolt'. The Basmachi revolt, started as banditry, developed into a genuine national-liberation movement of Turkestan, which lasted till the beginning of collectivization in 1933. The Basmachi movement was participated by prominent Muslim clergy and sheikhs, large feudals and manufacturers, a considerable number of local peasants. In 1921, the number of Basmachis run up to 20,000 people.¹⁷⁹ However, it was mainly defeated by 1924 and since then did not pose any serious threat to the Soviet domination.

In view of the above events, the authorities decided to postpone the implementation of the decrees of 1918-1920. In 1922, the Decree 'On Turkestan-Bukhara Affaires' was adopted. The decree prescribed the return of confiscated lands to their former owners, the restoration of kadi courts and the legalization of religious schools. Friday was announced a day off. Muslim clergy were admitted to the local bodies of government and the Communist Party.

As a result, the number of Muslim officials greatly increased. Most of them, however, remained partial to Islam and continued with performing the duties prescribed by their religion. According to the documentary evidence, during the

first years of the Soviet regime the meetings of the Central Asian party were interrupted at prayer time.

The dominating trend of the second period, which lasted from 1928 to 1941, was a frontal assault on Islam in the Soviet state and intense anti-Islamic propaganda. During that period a totalitarian system was finally established in the USSR and the collectivization was imposed on peasants. The persecution of Islam resulted in the destroying and closing of thousands of mosques and the liquidation of most educated Muslim clerics. The number of mosques and religious schools in Central Asia was reduced by 14,000 during the period.¹⁸⁰

The beginning of atheist campaign was marked by a 1929 amendment to the Constitution and the 1929 Law 'On religious associations'. The first one abolished the right to religious propaganda, leaving intact the right to antireligious indoctrination. According to the second, religious associations were required to obtain official registration to operate and their activities were restricted to the spiritual needs of believers that had to be conducted within the scope of a prayer house only.

Between 1928 and 1938 the Communist Party was purged of all Muslim nationalist leaders. They were accused of being nationalists, spies, counter-revolutionaries and executed. The clergymen, too, were arrested and imprisoned on the account of collaboration with nationalist leaders. The activities of Sufi orders were banned. Since that time Islam went underground.

A period of more tolerant attitude towards Islam followed and lasted from 1941 to 1959. The main stimulus for the reorientation of the Soviet policy was the Second World War. The shift was motivated by the need for military manpower in order to support the Soviet war efforts.

In 1941, Stalin made a decision to create Central Asian Spiritual Board of Muslims (SADUM), an official Islamic body that would assume a centralized control of the religious situation in the region. Despite the incorporation of SADUM into the state bureaucratic machine, it furthered the integration of Central Asian Muslims and promoted more close contacts of Muslim clerics and the faithful. In 1946, it was permitted to publish a quarterly *Journal of the Religious Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan*.

In 1944, Muslims were officially allowed to perform pilgrimage to Mecca. In 1945, the *Miri-l-Arab Madrasa* in Bukhara was reopened. It provided Islamic training to 100 students enrolled in a five-year program. A number of previously

banned Islamic rituals were allowed to be practiced. As for mosques, their number gradually increased to approximately 3,000.¹⁸¹

The victory over Germany gave the Soviet Union a chance to increase its political influence among the Third World countries. The official Muslim clergy was sent abroad for the purpose of communist propaganda and received Muslim officials from foreign countries. The best students of Miri-l-Arab Madrasa were dispatched to Muslim universities abroad, primarily to Al-Azhar in Egypt.

A new offensive against Islam was launched in 1959 by Khrushchev and lasted till he was ousted from power in 1964. In contrast to previous periods, Khrushchev did not introduce new legislation or constitutional reforms to reorient the antireligious drive, but focused on the law enforcement aspects of the Soviet antireligious campaign. In 1961, the Council of Ministers issued the Decree 'On strict observance of the laws on religious cults', which prescribed the thorough implementation of the existing laws on religion and more severe penalties for religious offences.

The number of operating mosques sharply reduced from approximately 1500 in 1958 to less than 500 in 1968.¹⁸² The internal pilgrimage of Muslims to various holy places and the performance of Islamic rituals were prohibited.

With the demotion of Khrushchev in 1964 and the appointment of Brezhnev, the relations between church and state became relatively normal. Although Brezhnev also concentrated on the law enforcement aspects of the antireligious drive, the accent was placed on atheistic education, rather than attacking religion directly. In 1977, he introduced amendments to the Soviet Constitution that reflected a less hostile attitude towards religion. For example, in Article 52 the phrase 'freedom of antireligious propaganda' was replaced with 'freedom of atheistic propaganda'. Several new mosques were opened during the period.

The sixth period lasted from 1979 to 1989. During this period a new anti-Islamic campaign was initiated, a reversal, based on justifiable fears of the Soviet leadership that the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan of 1979 were infecting Soviet Muslim territories. The draft of the new law on freedom of conscience, launched by Gorbachev in 1988, marked the end of 70 years of the atheistic policy, followed by the Soviet government.

PECULIARITIES OF ISLAM IN CENTRAL ASIA

The Islam in Central Asia had its distinctive features that stemmed from a number of factors.

First of all, the population of Central Asian was not homogenous but consisted of settled people and nomads. They differed from each other in their way of life, economic activities, cultural values and language. In contrast to the Samanids, who represented the settled people of Central Asia and were Iranians by ethnic origin, the Karakhanids were Turk nomads, who led a nomadic life style and populated Jetysu and adjacent territories. Turks started adopting Islam in the late tenth century, when they came to Central Asia. So, Islam was the catalyst, which provided the interaction and synthesis of two different cultures: those of settled Iranians and nomadic Turks. That synthesis began earlier and intensified in the tenth and eleventh centuries. But even after the adoption of Islam, the differences between two peoples, two cultures and two life styles remained in Central Asian society up to present.

Secondly, Central Asia was a crossroad, where various cultural-ideological systems came together. Before Islam penetrated into the region, a great variety of religious creeds were widespread there. Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism and Nestorianism co-existed with traditional Central Asian beliefs such as *Tengrianism* (the worship of heaven), shamanism, the cult of ancestors, fetishism, totemism. Islam did not only oppose itself to other religious systems but also absorbed many elements of Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism and traditional local beliefs and customs. At a time, when Central Asia was incorporated into the Arab Caliphate, the establishment of Islam as a religion was not complete. The Central Asian Muslim clergy greatly contributed to the development of the Islamic religion. The interpenetration and adaptation of Islam and other cultural systems brought to the formation of a syncretistic culture of Central Asian peoples.

Thirdly, Central Asia was dominated by Sunni Islam of the Hanafi school (*mazhab*). The Hanafi school of law is one of the four legal schools of Islam, noted for its liberal and tolerant theological orientation. Abu-Hanifah al-Numan ibn Thabit ibn Zuta (699-767), the founder of the school, placed heavy emphasis on analogy (*qiyas*), public consensus (*jima*) and private opinion (*ra'y*)

teaching, along with Sufism, played a great part in the formation of Central Asian Islam.

PECULIARITIES OF ISLAM AMONG THE KYRGYZ

The specificities of Islam among the Kyrgyz were caused by several factors.

Firstly, it is the nomadic way of life, which did not allow placing people under control and establishing religious institutions, necessary for practicing Islamic religion. The lack of stationary settlements and permanent seasonal movements did not favor the construction of mosques and religious houses to conduct Muslim ceremonies.

The territory of the Kyrgyz was a borderland of Islamic civilization. So, the Kyrgyz did not have close contacts with important Muslim centers. The Kyrgyz themselves lived in tribes, at a long distance from one another, as well as their number was small. They remained nomads until the annexation of Kyrgyz territory by the Russian Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. Southern Kyrgyzs had already settled, while northern Kyrgyz tribes began settling under the Soviet power in the 1930s of the twentieth century.

Tribalism hampered the spread of Islam among the Kyrgyz. The fear of assimilation among other tribes and peoples made them follow the principles, rules and values of a tribalist society. The history of many nomadic peoples demonstrated that only those of them retained their ethnic independence and integrity that followed the principles of tribalism most consistently. Others like Huns, Saks, Usuns had assimilated with other ethnic formations or became known under different names.¹⁸⁴

It is a well-known fact that Islam did not take deep roots among other nomads such as Kazakhs and Turkmen. Even in Arabia, the cradle of Islamic religion, by the middle of the eighteenth century, the norms of Shariat were of little importance for Arab nomads. Pre-Islamic customs and beliefs were widespread and strongly affected them. Moreover, the Islamization among the Kyrgyz was secondary, since first Muslim missionaries among them were Uzbeks and Tatars but not Arabs and Persians.

Secondly, it is the absence of political elites, interested in the establishment of Islam on the territory of Kyrgyzstan. Various ethnies and states appeared and replaced one another. Some rulers announced Islam the official religion; others

were indifferent or hostile to it. In that way, the Islamization in Kyrgyzstan took a sporadic form. For the lack of their own state and, consequently, common national idea, the Kyrgyz inclined to the Chinese and the Kalmyks, Kokand and Kashgar, the Russian and the Kazakhs. Their intermediate position between the largest participants of international politics of Central Asia helped them to preserve independence and originality.

8

ISLAMIC REVIVAL

The Islamic revival in Central Asia, preceded by the revival of the Russian Orthodox Church, was to a great extent stipulated by the 'ethnic renaissance' of the late 1980-1990s. The growth of nationalism and ethnic self-consciousness brought to the restoration of Muslim traditions that manifested itself in the desire of Central Asians to be not only full-fledged nations but also a full-fledged confessional community.

Speaking about Islam in Central Asia, specialists and politicians usually use the term *Islamic revival*. Some scholars consider the term incorrect and not reflecting the real process. They assume that the term *re-Islamization* would be more appropriate, as far as the process that started in the late 1980s and received a new stimulus after the establishment of the new independent states was not the revival but the reconstruction of full value of Islam and the legitimization of its underground religious and public structures.¹⁸⁵

In spite of the Soviet persecution, Islam in Central Asia 'remained alive'. Even under the Soviet rule it continued to be the regulator of social relations and deeply affected public consciousness. However, that was so-called 'domestic Islam' – sanctioned by Shariat the norms of domestic behaviour and family relations.

At the same time, 'high' dogmatic Islam was annihilated. Muslim community was bereaved of mosques, the system of Islamic education was destroyed, and the higher Muslim clergy was liquidated. Moreover, Islam of Central Asia was deprived of the right to take part in the political life of the republics. As a consequence, Central Asian Islam became 'defective' in comparison with Islam of the Middle East, to which it was organically connected.

The following factors can characterize re-Islamization in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia:

- A sharp increase in number of Muslims;
- A sizable rise in number of mosques;
- A substantial increase in number of Islamic theological institutions and their students;
- Official recognition of Muslim festivals as public holidays;

- Dissemination of Islamic books and publications;
- Establishment of contacts with Muslim states and joining international Muslim organizations;
- A rise of Islamic political movements.

The period from the late 1980s witnessed the growth of religious self-consciousness of Kyrgyzstani population and steady increase in the number of those considering themselves Muslims. According to the data of the State Commission on Religious Affairs under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, from 80 to 84% of the republican population practice Islam.¹⁸⁶

Re-Islamization in Kyrgyzstan was also marked by the return of mosques to Muslim community: the reopening of old and building of new mosques. If in 1991, 39 mosques functioned in Kyrgyzstan, in 2003, the number of mosques were estimated at 1600 mosques.¹⁸⁷ More than 1000 of them were located in the south of Kyrgyzstan: Osh, Djalal-Abad and Batken provinces.

If in the early 1990s there was not a single Muslim institution in the republic, presently there are 8 higher Islamic institutions, including joint establishments such as the Kyrgyz-Iranian and the Kyrgyz-Kuwait Universities. In 1993, the Turkish fund 'Dianet Vakfi' subsidized the establishment of theological faculty in Osh State University. A similar faculty was opened in the Kyrgyz-Turkish University 'Manas'. In addition, there are 38 medreses in operation. In 2001-2002, 284 Kyrgyzstani citizens were taught in foreign Islamic centers, including 155 students in Cairo's Al-Azhar University, 84 students in Turkey, 22 students in Pakistan, 24 students in Syria, 5 students in Kuwait, 4 students in Saudi Arabia, 3 students in Jordan and 1 student in Libya.¹⁸⁸

Re-Islamization brought serious changes to the religious policy of the Kyrgyz Republic. In 1991, the Law 'On freedom of religion and religious organizations' passed. The law guaranteed the freedom of conscience and declared the right to practice any religion and disseminate one's religious convictions. Recently, the new draft of the law on religion has been developed. In the opinion of international experts, it is more adapted to the religious situation in the republic and meets the requirements of human rights and tolerance. The new law imposes some restrictions on the rights of religious minorities and denies non-registered groups to carry out their religious activities.¹⁸⁹

Prior to 1993, Muslims of Kyrgyzstan did not have own religious authorities and submitted to the Muslim Spiritual Board of Central Asia and Kazakhstan

with the headquarters located in Tashkent. However, gradually the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan (*Muftiyat*) became independent. Presently it has 9 subdivisions (*kazyiats*) in the regions of the republic. Muftiyat is also engaged in publishing activity and issues its own periodical 'Islam Madaniyaty'.

After the declaration of independence two Muslim festivals *Orozo ait* and *Kurman ait* were turned into public holidays. Among common people these festivals are associated with pagan beliefs. For instance, *Orozo ait*, which marks the end of the fast during the month of Ramadan, is associated with the cult of ancestors. This day women fry *boorsook* (pieces of dough) and offer them to others. Men go to graves of their dead parents and pray.

Muslim holiday *Kurman ait* is seen by Kyrgyzs as the day of the living. That day family has to slaughter an animal and share meal with their neighbors and relatives.

A pre-Islamic festival *Nooruz* was also announced an official day off in Kyrgyzstan. *Nooruz* welcomes spring on the 21st of March, the day of Vernal Equinox and marks the beginning of a new year. *Nooruz* is the result of strong impact of a pre-Islamic religion, Zoroastrianism, on the cultures of Central Asian peoples.

ISLAM AND TRADITIONS

Re-Islamization in Kyrgyzstan has to be examined in terms of re-traditionalisation, since the latter is leading. It is re-traditionalisation that paves the way for re-Islamization. The predominance of re-traditionalisation over re-Islamization was noted by M. Esenov at the conference 'Tendencies of Islamic development in Central Asia'.¹⁹⁰

As a country of rich historical heritage that dates to many thousands years back, Soviet and present-day Kyrgyzstan remains a traditional society, where traditions prescribe to perform some acts and desist from others, respect certain freedoms and demonstrate devotion to spiritual values. Like in other developing countries, the traditional and the modern, the old and the new in Kyrgyzstan is tightly interlaced, so that sometimes it is hard to say where one begins and the other ends. People seem to live in two worlds, the past and the present. The society is based on the group, to which the individual subordinates. The

dependence on clan and community cultivates collective orientations and the wish to maintain the existing social relations.

Re-Islamization and re-traditionalisation in Kyrgyzstan took place side by side with the denial of the Marxist ideology, the introduction of democratic institutions, the liberalization of economy and a drastic decline in standard of living among the majority of population. Under these conditions, Islam became a powerful source to overcome mass estrangement and social inequality, a psychological anchor during unstable times of social transformations. It was an attempt to contrast Western individualism with own cultural-religious traditions, maintain national originality and restore own dignity. On the account of high vitality of traditional concepts and institutions, people continue to evaluate the new using old and customary things, they turn to the past to find out the solutions of current problems, which do not require painful changes. Therefore, the modern co-exists with the traditional in their consciousness, changing its forms and contents.

Islam is the defining feature of Kyrgyzstani society. It is not just a creed or a system of theological beliefs but a way of life. Islam is not a religion that exists in the hearts of the believers; it is also the fabric of civilization. Islam is contemporary life and the direction of the future. In large urban areas and cities Islam is a shared commitment to the past. In mountains of Kyrgyzstan it is tradition and heritage, a mode of life rather than a set of laws. Despite the evolution of material life, Islam in Kyrgyzstan preserves its spiritual and value orientations that define people's conduct, worldview and their way of life.

The experience of many other Asian and African countries demonstrated the necessity of taking into account the existing ethnic, confessional, clan, tribal, caste and other patriarchal relations of 'natural sociality', which in the East dominates over other ties, determined by economic and political interests.¹⁹¹

ISLAM AS A FACTOR OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

Islam is an important element of Kyrgyz ethnic identity. However, the strength of the Islamic component of ethnic identity in Central Asia does not always bring with it a strong sense of belonging to a broader, supranational Islamic community. For Central Asian Muslims, who obtained their ethnic

identity under the Soviet regime, Islamic identity should be considered in its relation with ethnic category.

The authentication of ethnic and religious principles is typical for the Kyrgyz society. As a result of the Soviet pursuit, many Islamic customs entered traditional Kyrgyz culture. Therefore, present-day Kyrgyzs perceive national traditions as Islamic and Islamic traditions as national. Today even those who do not place themselves among Muslims consider following Islamic customs and rituals as their duty.

The growing role of Islam is manifested at two main levels.¹⁹² The first level is that of the individual. It signifies a change in the individual worldview. So, the appeal to Islam means to go away from the Soviet ideology and become religious. To a lesser degree, it is concerned with the opposing of the individual to the followers of different religious confessions.

The second level is the traditional-ritual level. At this level, the degree of practicing Islam depends on the regularity of performing Islamic rituals and following Islamic norms of behaviour and conduct. At this level of group identity, Islam becomes one of the factors of Kyrgyz identity, along with language, tribal affiliation, historical destiny and territory.

Concretizing both levels, we have to note that the first level is the manifestation of religious consciousness in the true sense, while the second level is so-called secularized religiousness that assumes the role of an ethno-cultural symbol.

Islam is of great importance in family. It is the family, which brings the ethnic and the religious together and serves as the instrument to pass cultural traditions, historical memory and life style from one generation to another.

Islam in Kyrgyzstan, as in the rest of Central Asia, is concentrated in family and domestic life. Despite the high level of literacy and education, the majority of Muslims in Central Asia do not know the basic duties of Islam: *ash-shahadah* (the declaration of faith), *salah* (prayer five times a day), *sawm* (the fast during the month of Ramadan), *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving to the needy) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). The observance of the five pillars of Islam reflects the religiousness of people at the individual level and the number of those who follows them is not more than one out of one hundred adults of Central Asia. That is much less than the number of those considering themselves Muslims. The overwhelming majority of Central Asians adheres to the ritual side of Islam, where Islamic and pre-Islamic customs are tightly interrelated. It is so-called

'domestic' or 'people's Islam', the norms of behaviour, prescribed by Shariat and Adat, which are to be followed from a man's birth to his death. In mass consciousness, Muslim is the one who live according to this scenario.

All Kyrgyz rituals can be divided into 'family' and 'calendar' rituals. Family rites are included in three large ceremonial cycles: children's, marital and funeral. One cycle replaces another and fixes the most important social events in the life of a man. Rituals have a broad social meaning, addressed not only to the initiator of event but also to all those people who live around. To perform a ritual is the way to demonstrate a new social status to the community. Not to celebrate the occasion is a shame and the family prefers to run into debts but observe a custom. Traditions are as strong as none can keep from following them at the risk of his good name.

Another distinctive feature of these rituals is incredible Kyrgyz generosity, which is justified by the adherence to Muslim traditions. Cattle is slaughtered and much money is spent. But speaking about expenses, researchers usually forget to mention incomes. In reality, each such occasion includes definite losses and profits. As a rule, guests bring fixed amounts of money or valuable gifts to compensate expenditures of the family. Afterwards, the family has to return the money or make equivalent presents to the guest when he will celebrate his own occasion.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ISLAM

The influence of Islam in Kyrgyzstan is not uniform. It depends on the ethnic composition of population in different regions. According to the degree of Islamic influence, three geographical zones can be distinguished in Kyrgyzstan.

The first zone covers the Bishkek capital and Chui province. In this zone, the Kyrgyz forms somewhat 50% of the population (44% in Chui province and 52% in Bishkek), while Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and other Europeans – 37%. Historically, the European population lived in cities of the Chui valley, which were the centers of culture and industry. The high level of urbanization and education and multiethnic composition of the population caused a moderate character of Islam in this zone.

The second zone includes the other northern provinces of the republic: Issyk-Kul, Talas and Naryn provinces, which are predominantly occupied by residents

of Kyrgyz origin. Historically, it was the area of Kyrgyz nomads, who converted to Islam in the eighteenth century. This fact determined a superficial form of Islam in this zone, the domination of 'domestic Islam' with elements of shamanism and pagan cults.

The majority of Muslim population is concentrated in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan: Osh, Djalal-Abad and Batken provinces, situated in the Fergana Valley. This zone is the most Islamized on the account of numerical superiority of ethnic Uzbeks and Kyrgyzs over non-Muslims. Moreover, originally sedentary Uzbeks have been 'better' Muslims than nomadic Kyrgyzs.

The Fergana Valley, surrounded by high mountains from all sides, is geographically isolated from the rest of Kyrgyzstan. Thus, the dwellers of Fergana since long time ago had much firmer relations with the Uzbeks of neighboring Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, living in the valley, than with their Kyrgyz compatriots. This conditioned more religious south of Kyrgyzstan and less religious north.

ETHNIC-RELIGIOUS SITUATION IN KYRGYZSTAN AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Thought Muslims represent the largest confessional community of Kyrgyzstan, about 14% of the republican population is formed of Slavs, who traditionally belong to Christianity. According to the data of the State Commission on Religious Affaires, 14-15% of Kyrgyzstani citizens practice Christianity. Among 44 churches and parishes, representing the Russian Orthodox Church, 20 are located in Chui province and 11 are in Issyk-Kul province. The concentration of most churches in the north of the republic is caused by the peculiarities of Slavic settlement in the republic.

Under the Soviet regime and earlier, Islam and Orthodoxy were seen as traditional ethnic religions. Kyrgyzs, Uzbeks, Uighurs, Dungans and Tajiks were considered Muslims, while Russian, Ukrainians and Belarus were regarded as Orthodox. Since the middle of the 1990s the country witnessed the appearance of many non-traditional religious communities, which predominantly attract young people and recruit on a multi-ethnic basis.

There are 3 Catholic, 2 Judaic and 2 Buddhist communities in the Kyrgyz Republic. However, the most serious alternative to Orthodoxy is Protestantism.

There are 218 protestant prayer houses in the republic. Among them are *Jehovah's Witnesses* with 7,000 members, *Baptists* with 3,000 members, *Pentecosts* with 1,500 members as well as *Adventists*, *Presbyterians*, *Lutherans*.¹⁹³

By 1995-1996, the core of Protestantism was formed of Germans. As a result of German mass emigration (70%), more Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks started converting to Protestantism. By the data of the State Commission on Religious Affairs, 20,000 Kyrgyzs-protestants were registered in 2003. The dissemination of protestant teachings mainly takes place in the north and in the capital of the republic, while in the south the activities of radical Islamic groups intensify.

In the second half of the 1990s, the republic was penetrated by a great number of new non-traditional religious missions from abroad such as *the Scientologist* and *Universal Churches*, *the Community of Christians-Presbyterians 'Emmanuel'*, *the Presbyterian Church 'Saran'*, *the Unification Church of Moon*, *Baha'is*, *the Hare Krishnas*. Financed by foreign religious organizations of the USA, Germany and South Korea, these missions established their centers in Kyrgyzstan and began to disseminate their doctrines among the local population. Many of them were engaged in charitable activities such as the participation in the construction of schools and hospitals, distributing humanitarian aid and the like. Some of them opened religious schools, where theology was taught along with general school disciplines.

Foreign missionaries began to adapt their services for native people and simplify rituals. In many communities, for example Evangelist Christians-Baptists, special prayer meetings are held in the Kyrgyz language. The Bible (*Injyl*) has been published in Kyrgyz. Various kinds of brochures and postcards with written in Kyrgyz religious songs and extracts from the Bible, enjoy wide popularity.¹⁹⁴

Baha'is is very popular among young Kyrgyzs. The community has 18 local Spiritual Meetings, united into the National Spiritual Meeting. Baha'is do not deny other Gods and prophets and propagate common to all mankind high moral principles. The community was established in 1992 and registered in 1997 by the Kyrgyz Ministry of Justice. The National Spiritual Meeting organizes conferences and seminars, where Baha'is share their experience proceeding from theoretical and practical activities. In 1999, the Baha'is community held a conference 'The cultivation of morality among children and youth', which, apart from the community believers, was participated by school teachers and university lectures.¹⁹⁵

The majority of those following non-traditional religions are women. Women are the most sensitive and vulnerable part of society, who seeks spiritual support in religion. Women are active propagandists of religious doctrines. In the middle of the 1990s, 80% of Jehovah's Witnesses' new believers were women.¹⁹⁶ Many of them are attracted by more democratic, than Muslim, norms of behaviour in family and private affairs.

Intolerance toward differently thinking people seriously affects the relations between Kyrgyz-Muslims and Kyrgyz-Protestants. A hostile attitude towards Kyrgyz-Protestants results in many domestic conflicts arising on the religious ground. Mockery, disdain and rarely violence accompany the conversion of Kyrgyzs to Christianity. In some villages, Kyrgyzs-Muslims propose a number of measures against Kyrgyzs-Protestants: not to allot plots and water for their gardens, cut electricity. Sometimes these conflicts take a more radical form. In particular, the residents of Aktuz village in Kemin district demanded to evict Kyrgyzs-Protestants from their village.¹⁹⁷

However, most of collisions occur during funerals. For instance, in Usubaliev village of Naryn province, at the funeral of a follower of the Jehovah's Witnesses, Z. Istiev, who was a Kyrgyz by ethnic origin, the conflict occurred between three parts: local Kyrgyzs-Muslims, the adherents of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect and the relatives of the deceased. Kyrgyz-Muslims led by local imam opposed to bury the decedent according to Shariat.¹⁹⁸ Recently, the Spiritual Board of Muslims issued a *fatwa* (ban) to bury Kyrgyzs of non-traditional confessions in Muslim cemeteries. The decision of the Board triggered a protest of many Protestant organizations, which interpreted the ban as the violation of the freedom of conscience and religion.

The religious situation in Kyrgyzstan in the second half of 1990s was marked by instability and alarmed both Muslim and Orthodoxy leaders. In spring 1995, they addressed the President of the Kyrgyz Republic requesting to outlaw the activities of non-traditional religions from abroad and set up conditions, favorable for traditional religions.

In 1996, a special State Commission on Religious Affairs was established under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic. The commission was charged with the registration of all religious organizations and foreign missionaries, arriving to Kyrgyzstan, and putting their activities under the state control.

THE 2003 SURVEY ON THE DEGREE OF RELIGIOUSNESS OF
KYRGYZSTANI POPULATION

Religion in Kyrgyzstan is represented by two traditional confessions: Muslims and Christians. By the results of the 2003 survey, 76.7% of the interviewed were Muslims, 15.1% were Christians, 0.2% were Jewish and 7.2% did not practice any religion. It is worthy of note that the received figures were very close to the data of the State Commission on Religious Affairs that allowed speaking of high reliability of the survey results.

According to nationalities, the figures were as follows: 100% of Uzbeks, 96.3% of Kyrgyzs, 70.8% of respondents of 'other' nationalities were Muslims (See Table 8.1). 73.8% of Russians and 15.4% of 'others' were Christians. 3.1% of 'other' respondents were Jewish.

Although 92% of the interviewed affiliated themselves with three religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism), the number of those who followed religious orders was 77.4% (See Table 8.2) or 15% less. Only a quarter (25.7%) always followed religious orders and a half (51.7%) followed them irregularly. 14.3% did not follow religious rules and 7.8% find it difficult to answer.

Table 8.1. Answers of respondents to the question 'What religion do you practice?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Islam	96,3	0,5	100	70,8
Christianity	0,5	73,8	0	15,4
Judaism	0	0	0	3,1
Do not practice any religion	3,0	25,1	0	9,2
Other (Difficult to say)	0,2	0,5	0	1,5

The number of those who pray is even smaller. 15.5% of the questioned pray daily and 34.4% can pray but pray irregularly. At the same time, 0.4% can pray but do not pray and 13.9% cannot pray and do not pray (See Table 8.3).

Table 8.2. Answers of respondents to the question 'Do you follow religious orders?' by provinces, (%)

	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Abad province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Always follow	4,4	7,2	3,6	5,5	5,0	25,7
Follow but not always	10,5	7,6	12,1	10,1	11,4	51,7
Do not follow	2,4%	4,7	2,5	2,8	1,9	14,3
Difficult to say	2,7	0,2	1,7	1,6	1,6	7,8

Table 8.3. Answers of respondents to the question ‘Can you pray and how often do you pray?’ by provinces, (%)

	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Abad province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Can pray and pray every day	3,0	3,0	2,1	3,2	4,2	15,5
Can pray but pray irregularly	8,0	5,7	6,3	6,5	7,9	34,4
Can pray but do not pray	2,9	2,7	2,5	4,0	1,8	0,4
Cannot pray and do not pray	6,1	8,4	8,9	6,2	6,0	13,9

Nevertheless, the worst picture is observed with attending prayer houses (See Table 8.4). 9.9% go to mosque or church once a week, 7.6% go there once a month, 29.1% go there from time to time and 52.8% do not go there at all.

In the light of different nationalities, Uzbeks happen to be most religious, as they have the highest figures of those following religious prescriptions and going to mosque (See Tables 8.5, 8.6). 41% of Uzbeks always adhere to religious orders and 44.4% do it irregularly. As for attending mosque, 28.7% do it once a week, 3.5% once a month and 15.7% do it from time to time.

Table 8.4. Answers of respondents to the question ‘How often do you go to mosque (church and other prayer house)?’ by provinces, (%)

	<i>Bishkek city</i>	<i>Chui province</i>	<i>Issyk-Kul province</i>	<i>Osh province</i>	<i>Djalal-Abad province</i>	<i>Total</i>
Once a week	2,1	1,5	1,1	2,4	2,8	9,9
Once a month	2,4	1,2	1,2	0,8	2,0	7,6
From time to time	6,7	6,4	5,3	5,8	4,9	29,1
Do not go	8,8	10,9	12,1	10,7	10,3	52,8

The interviewees of 'other' nationalities follow Uzbeks. 33.8% of them always follow religious orders and 41.5% do it irregularly. 15.4% go to mosque or church once a week, 4.6% go there once a month and 16.9% do it from time to time.

Kyrgyzs are occupying the third place. 25.9% of them always follow religious prescriptions and 55.2% do it irregularly. 8.1% go to prayer houses once a week, 8.3% go to prayer houses once a month and 29% do it from time to time.

Table 8.5. Answers of respondents to the question 'Do you follow religious orders?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Always follow	25,9	13,3	41,0	33,8
Follow but not always	55,2	49,5	44,4	41,5
Do not follow	12,8	24,5	7,7	12,3
Difficult to say	6,1	12,8	6,8	12,3

The respondents of Russian nationality are least religious. 13.3% of them always adhere to religious rules and 49.5% do it irregularly. 2.7% go to church (mosque) once a week, 9.1% do it once a month and 42.8% do it from time to time.

Table 8.6. Answers of respondents to the question 'How often do you go to mosque (church and other religious house)?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Once a week	8,1	2,7	28,7	15,4
Once a month	8,3	9,1	3,5	4,6
From time to time	29,0	42,8	15,7	16,9
Do not go	54,5	45,5	52,2	63,1

The years after the independence witnessed the strengthening of religious self-consciousness of Kyrgyzstani population. The course towards democratization and an ideological and spiritual vacuum, emerged after the collapse of the Communist ideology, promoted the interest in religion among different ethnic communities. As a result, the number of those who have Koran, Bible, Torah and other religious books in their house sharply increased.

64.4% of the questioned possess Koran, Bible, Torah and other religious books in their houses. In spite of this, only 16.2% have entirely read them, 49.1% read some chapters and pages and 34.4% haven't read them at all.

The highest proportion of those who have entirely read Koran (Bible, Torah) is observed among the respondents of 'other' nationalities (23.1%) (See Table 8.7). Kyrgyzs have the highest figure of those who have read separate chapters and pages (52.1%). And the group of Uzbek interviewers has the largest number of those who haven't read Koran at all.

Table 8.7. Answers of respondents to the question 'Have you read Koran (Bible or other religious book)?' by nationalities, (%)

	<i>Kyrgyzs</i>	<i>Russians</i>	<i>Uzbeks</i>	<i>Others</i>
Yes, have read entirely	15,1	19,1	13,7	23,1
Yes, have read some chapters and pages	52,1	44,1	46,2	41,5
Have not read at all	32,8	36,7	40,2	33,8

Pilgrimage to holy places has become very popular recently. Kyrgyz nomads pilgrimaged to holy places long before they were converted to Islam. The most popular is *Taht-i-Suleiman Mountain* (The throne of Suleiman), which receive

hundreds of Central Asian pilgrims during Muslim holidays. After the independence, the number of those who perform pilgrimage to Mecca sharply increased. Annually somewhat 3,000 people go to Saudi Arabia to perform Hajj.

According to the data of the survey, 11.5% of respondents claimed to pilgrimage to holy places. Among them are 14.7% of Kyrgyzs, 13.7% of Uzbeks, 6.1% of 'others' and 1.6% of Russians.

Considering the figures received, we can conclude that the majority of Kyrgyzstani believers do not follow religious duties, prescribed to the faithful. Most of Kyrgyzstani believers adhere to the ritual side of religions. Giving preferences to religious rituals, the majority of Kyrgyzstani population cannot subject themselves to the complex of strict religious regulations and follow them in their daily life. So, in religion they, first of all, mark out a national-identical element. The devotion to religion, in their view, considerably contributes to the formation of ethnic identity.

9

ISLAM IN THE POLITICS

The Islamic revival of the late 1980-1990s was not only the return to pre-revolutionary Islam, the legitimation of Islamic institutions and the rebirth of 'high' dogmatic Islam but also the emergence of Islamic political movements. The politicization of Islam is a post-Soviet phenomenon, produced by the specificity of Islamic tradition and the current situation in the region. In Islam there is no division into spiritual and worldly. It is a total religion that covers all spheres of life, including politics.¹⁹⁹ The politicization of Islam is a reaction to a sharp and universal social crisis. In such circumstances, people usually appeal to traditional values, in particular to Islam.

At the initial stage of independent development, Kyrgyzstan witnessed the Islamization of politics and the incorporation of Islam into the state structure. A graphic example is swearing of A. Akaev on Koran every time he was elected the president. At the same time, the leadership of Kyrgyzstan refers to Islam not just concerning internal affairs but also in relation to foreign policy.

In this period, Kyrgyzstan established its contacts with Turkey, Pakistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia and became a full member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIK), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and other international Islamic structures. Thus, in order to win the authority in the Muslim world, the officials of the republic had to refer to common Muslim identity and demonstrate their devotion to the idea of Islamic solidarity. 'It were those states, from which the leaders of the Central Asian states were receiving and hoped to receive donations to build mosques and perform pilgrimage. At the same time, the collaboration with Muslim countries also assumed a sincere inclination of Kyrgyzstan towards the Muslim world, and Muslim states, in their turn, regarded Kyrgyzstan as an integral part of their Islamic civilization. The external factor, to some extent, stimulated the reference to Islam on internal issues. The laws were adopted to facilitate the activities of religious groups and confessions and lift restrictions imposed on them during the Soviet period'.²⁰⁰ Thus, Islam became a legitimate participant of the political process used not only by ruling politicians.

Official clergy along with Islamic organizations and unofficial clerics became active participants of the political process. Unofficial clergymen gathered the political strength and authority among the population. The influence of working politicians on religious figures was also noticeable during election campaigns, when candidates hastened to enlist the support of regional religious elites.

Since the early 1990s the region became the scene of activities of new Islamist movements, which used Islam as the political and ideological aim. Islamic organizations of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan tried to propose own candidates for presidential elections in the early 1990s. However, these Islamic organizations were different by the degree of influence and organizational and ideological activities in each of the Central Asian republics.

At the same time, only a few of these political organizations (excluding the Islamic Party of Revival in Tajikistan) enjoyed all-regional support inside the republics. Most of organizations (80%) operated at the subregional (for example, the Fergana Valley) or local level. According to R. Abazov, religious organizations can be divided into the following groups by forms of political mobilization:²⁰¹

- Organizations attempting to form mass religious parties,
- Organizations directing their activities toward indirect participation in the political process,
- Local groups.

Contrary to Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, where several Islamic political parties came to the surface, no independent Islamic political party was established in Kyrgyzstan. According to the Law 'On political parties', the creation of political parties on the religious ground is forbidden, religious organizations should not pursue political objects and tasks. Nevertheless, political Islam tries to materialize in southern Kyrgyzstan, in particular Osh, Djalal-Abad and Batken cities, as well as seek the official registration in the Ministry of Justice.²⁰²

At the same time, there is a growing trend of the interference of religion in the politics. It manifested itself in the formation of the Islamic Democratic Party (IDP), led by the famous journalist N. Mullajanov. The aspiration to create a new political force outside of traditional religious institutes is the fact that causes anxiety, especially in view of the information appeared in mass media in June 2002 that the Islamic Democratic Party is supported by young self-builders of Bishkek city.

Hence, religious organizations of the Kyrgyz Republic are mainly represented by the second group, which includes Islamic cultural centers and religious-cultural associations. Their activities are usually legal. As a rule, they have permanent membership, issue own periodicals, being published in republican mass media and participate in various public events. Their followers often adhere to liberal and moderate forms of Islam. Presently, more than 10 Islamic religious funds and societies are in operation. Among them is the Islamic Cultural Center, which was created on the eve of Kyrgyzstani independence. Islamic newspapers are being issued in different regions of the republic.

HIZB AT-TAHRIR AL-ISLAMI

The politicization of Islam in Kyrgyzstan, occurring under the impact of Tajikistani and Uzbekistani events, resulted in the intensification of activities of the international organization '*Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islami*' (Islamic Party of Liberation) in the south of Kyrgyzstan.

'Hizb at-Tahrir al-Islami' is an Islamic political party, founded in 1952 by the judge of a Shariat appeal court in Jerusalem, the famous religious leader Taki ad-Din Nabhani al-Falastini (1909-1979). The party has its offices in Egypt, Jordan, Tunis, Kuwait, Palestine, Turkey and Western Europe. 'Hizb at-Tahrir' is active on British Isles. Its leaflets in English are found in the streets of London. 42-year old Syrian, sheikh Omar Bakri Muhammad, is in the head of London's branch of the party. By reports of western researchers, all branches of the party are tightly interrelated. The party 'Hizb at-Tahrir' has its Internet site, which is used to disseminate the ideas of Jihad and the call against the ruling regimes of Islamic countries, accused of being deviated from Islam.

Today the cells of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' were created in almost all Muslim countries. In most of the countries it operates on the illegal basis. Following the declaration of independence in five Muslim republics of Central Asia, 'Hizb at-Tahrir' organized its cells in the region. The establishment of Islamic *Khalifat* (state) on the territory of all Central Asian republics was announced as an ultimate aim of the party in the region.

The activities of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' spread to Kyrgyzstan in the middle of 1990s through Andijan and Namangan Uzbeks. The main activity of the

party's members is propaganda work. They illegally distributed religious brochures in the Arabic, Uzbek and Kyrgyz languages.

'Hizb at-Tahrir' does not recognize the new governments of the Central Asian republics and characterize them as non-Islamic. The source of all problems, which is faced by the Muslim community, the party sees in the absence of Islamic system of governing. In this relation, the main task of its members is to be completely liberated from infidels who rule the world. The governments of Muslim countries, especially those in Central Asia, are characterized as non-Islamic.

The achievement of the party aims will include three phases. At the first phase, people who believe in aims, tasks and methods of the party unite and form the nucleus of the party. At the second phase, active interaction between its members and the Muslim community (*Ummah*) takes place. The third phase begins with the establishment of Islamic state and ends with the spread of Islam in the rest of the world.

'Hizb at-Tahrir' issues primitive in content leaflets, aimed against the ruling politicians of the Central Asian states. A huge amount of leaflets come to Central Asia from abroad. However, the leaflets in local languages are printed in the region itself. For example, in April 1999, the officers of the National Security Agency of the Kyrgyz Republic revealed an underground typography in Osh city and seized 1000 copies of the book 'The system of Islam' in the Kyrgyz language, intermediates of a regular magazine 'al-Wa'i' and the computer and copying equipment. The disclosed literature was adapted to local conditions. It contained the recommendations on methods of recruitment and secret work, the ideas of necessity to revive Khalifat and calls for civil disobedience and Jihad.²⁰³

The party is the most active in the Fergana Valley. In 1992-1994, the cells of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' emerged in Fergana, Andijan, Tashkent of Uzbekistan, in 1998-2000 - in cities of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. By different sources, the number of members of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' is estimated at tens of thousands people.²⁰⁴

The Central Asian branch of the party predominantly consists of the youth and unemployed. The party's leaflets are usually distributed by young people aged 17-25 years old. For the distribution of religious brochures and booklets they regularly receive small rewards (US\$50-100)²⁰⁵ what is a good financial support in terms of the Central Asian unemployment.

The main contingent of the party is the people studied in Muslim schools, as well as students and intelligentsia. For instance, in Nookat district of Osh

province the members of the party were engaged in propaganda among schoolchildren. Eight students from fifth to tenth grades attended the meetings of 'Hizb at-Tahrir', where they were taught how to pray and the Arabic language. In 2002, more than 2,000 supporters of the party were officially registered.²⁰⁶

Apart from propaganda, the activities of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' aim at the collaboration with the oppositionist *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* (IDU). In 2000, 'Hizb at-Tahrir' supported the intrusion of the Islamic Movement into the territories of Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan.²⁰⁷ Though the members of the Islamic Movement denied the fact of cooperation with 'Hizb at-Tahrir', it is the established fact that the basis of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' is formed of the former members of such Islamic organizations as 'Adolat uyushmasy' (Society of justice), 'Islom lashkorlari' (Soldiers of Islam) and 'Towba' (Repentance), which were banned in Uzbekistan in March 1992. All those organizations were created with the assistance of the present leaders of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Tahir Yuldash and Juma Namangani.

The intrusion of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan forced 'Hizb at-Tahrir' to dissociate itself openly from the Islamic movement. After the 11 September 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, the party went deeply underground. However, some time later the activities of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' livened up again. That time they concerned not only the spread of religious literature but also recruiting new members for the party. As for the Central Asian branch of 'Hizb at-Tahrir', it was underground from its establishment in 1993.

In Kyrgyzstan, the activities of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' are concentrated in southern Osh province and supported by the local Uzbek population. The members of the party enjoy greater freedom in Kyrgyzstan than their colleagues who live and work in Uzbekistan. The presence of the party negatively affects the religious situation and causes instability in the Kyrgyz part of the Fergana Valley. During the years of independence, 677 mosques and 4 medreses were built in Osh province, while in another southern Djalal-Abad province 127 religious organizations, including 123 mosques and 2 medreses were registered. Most of these mosques were built at the expense of foreign sponsors.

Among the leaders of the Central Asian states, only the President of Uzbekistan, I. Karimov, publicly stated the official position of the republic toward 'Hizb at-Tahrir'. A. Akaev, the President of Kyrgyzstan, carefully distancionates himself from Islamic radicals, keeping the golden mean. 'I am personally very respectful to

many ours Wahhabis, since there are many competent and educated persons among them. For example, their leader Sadykjan hajji Kamaluddin proposed me as a candidate for the post of the president. Toleration is typical for Kyrgyzstan. Why should I artificially create the problem of religious extremism, if I don't have it'.²⁰⁸

The attitude of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kyrgyzstan towards the activities of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' is very different from the presidential. The Mufti of the Spiritual Board Muslims of Kyrgyzstan Kimsanbai aji Aburahmanov spoke harshly about the activities of the party: 'Supporters of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' dim the heads of our citizens. It is an aggressive and militant party. It doesn't serve Islam as well as mojaheds who came to Batken. It is intrigues of Chechnya and other terrorists who aim at the creation of Islamic state. The teaching of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' comes in contradiction with the fundamentals of Islam; the actions of this organization are opposite to the principles of Shariat'.²⁰⁹

A prominent theologian, the translator of Koran into the Kyrgyz language, sheikh Alauddin Mansur, stated: 'In Sura Anaam, which is about dissenters, Allah says: 'In acts of those disobedient who separate the religion and create various groups, You (Munammad) is not guilty. Their acts are under my surveillance. They will be rewarded according to their deserts afterwards'. It means that joining the religious party is the dissent of the faith and leaving the followers of Prophet Muhammad. The members of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' exchanged their religion for the party; they are the people who sow discord in the Islamic world!'

Meanwhile, from the second half of 1999, the officials of militia and the National Security Agency in Osh, Djalal-Abad and Batken provinces detained more than 286 young people (somewhat 100 of them were instituted criminal proceedings), who were engaged in the distribution of religious literature and leaflets of 'Hizb at-Tahrir'. Most of leaflets, as well as extremist audio-video cassettes and books, were withdrawn. In the most secular Chui province, 2 persons were detained, 30 leaflets and 8 books were confiscated. The defendants were accused under Article 299 of Part 1 'The agitation for national, racial and religious enmity' and Article 147 of Part 1 'The infringement of personality and rights of citizens under the pretence of performing religious ceremonies' of the Kyrgyz Criminal code.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Kyrgyzstan in Djalal-Abad and Osh provinces arrested tens of activists of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' and confiscated booklets, leaflets and other materials of religious propaganda. Several typography offices

were liquidated. Some of the detained possessed grenades RGD-5, a small-bore rifle TOZ-8 and a large amount of practice cartridges for Kalashnikov submachine-gun and Makarov pistol.

The officials of Kara-Suu city arrested a few members of 'Hizb at-Tahrir', when they attempted to distribute illegal literature. They had 350 leaflets and several brochures. In response, other members of the party initiated protest pickets, which lasted for two days.

In May 2001, five prisoners of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' made a riot in the provisional isolator of Bazar-Korgon Department of Internal Affairs. They beat the militiaman and destroyed everything, accompanying it with the shout 'Allah Akbar' and threats addressed to militia, law-enforcement bodies and the president of Kyrgyzstan. Local militia suppressed the rite.

There were also facts showing obvious interference of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' in the political life of the republic. For example, three persons in masks attacked the house of the mayor of Uzgen city, B. Saliev. They beat him and constrained him to refuse taking part in the local election on 16 December 2001. The mayor and those who beat him were Uzbeks by ethnic origin. One of the criminals was a citizen of Uzbekistan, while two others were the activists of the local cell of 'Hizb at-Tahrir'.²¹⁰

In order to propagate their doctrine, the members of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' turned to local media asking to provide them the informational support. Their proposal of presenting regular reports in exchange for publications in mass media was denied. Journalists refused to establish contacts with the illegal religious party 'Hizb at-Tahrir'.

In June 2001, the head of the National Security Agency, T. Razzakov, made a statement about the recent growth of religious extremism in Kyrgyzstan. According to the statement, only in the first quarter of the current year, about 40 religious activists with more than 1,500 leaflets of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' were detained. 28 cases of kindling of interreligious enmity were recorded and more than 3,000 people were registered. He also noted that annually about 10,000 books with religious propaganda arrived from Saudi Arabia to Kyrgyzstan and somewhat 300 Kyrgyzstani citizens studied in radical religious medreses of Pakistan. In this connection, Razzakov made the proposal to introduce amendments into the Criminal code about the kindling of interreligious enmity and develop a special program on the struggle against religious extremism.

On the account of the resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, dated 22 August 2000, the draft law 'On introduction of amendments to the Criminal code of the Kyrgyz Republic' was sent to the parliament. The draft proposes to supplement Article 299 of Part 1 of the Criminal code with the punishment imposed

for production, storage and spread of extremist literature, directed at stirring up national, racial and religious enmity. On the other hand, it is very important that the law will not become the instrument of exerting pressure on traditional Muslims.

It is worthy of note that the measures for extremist propaganda, prescribed by the Criminal code of Kyrgyzstan, are very light to compare with those in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. For instance, in Uzbekistan, the members of 'Hizb at-Tahrir' are sentenced from 8 to 15 years, in Tajikistan – from 8 to 11 years. In Kyrgyzstan they are convicted to 2-4 years, but are often released after paying the fine. However, as the international experience shows, repressions of authorities have little effect and only intensify radical activities.

The Spiritual Board of Muslims works in the similar direction. The Department of Propaganda and Agitation, established under the Board, makes its efforts to prevent extremist activities in the Muslim community of the republic. To achieve this aim, the State Commission on Religious Affairs holds meetings and seminars at the republican level. Furthermore, to heathen the preventive work in southern provinces, by the decision of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated 5 April 2001, the headquarters of the State Commission on Religious Affairs was moved from Bishkek to Osh city.

Hence, it is possible to establish the fact that in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, the illegal Islamic party 'Hizb at-Tahrir' made its appearance. The basic method of the party is propaganda activity. The party is predominantly active in the Fergana Valley, divided between Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. At the same time, it is difficult to estimate the number of its members, as well as its influence among the Central Asian population. Though initially 'Hizb at-Tahrir' spoke in favor of peaceful coming to power, after the beginning of the 2001 antiterrorist campaign of the USA in Afghanistan, 'Hizb at-Tahrir' became more radical and aggressive. The brochures spread by the party activists call for the holy war against the US and Great Britain.

FACTORS OF POLITICAL ISLAM IN KYRGYZSTAN

The analysis of the growth of political Islam in Central Asia and Kyrgyzstan allows us determining the following factors of political Islam.²¹¹

Modern political Islam has its roots in the Soviet past. According to researchers, political Islam in Central Asia showed up in the 1970s as a result of the 1960-1970

'Islamic Boom' in the Middle East.²¹² The publications in mass media about political Islam and the activities of Islamist organizations such as 'Muslim Brotherhood' in Egypt, the development of scientific and technical cooperation with the Middle East countries, the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and the uprisings of Islamic *mojahedin* in Afghanistan, led to the emergence of political Islam in Central Asia. *Perestroika*, initiated by Gorbachev, made for the legalization of radical Islamic movements in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The latter, in the long run, was the factor that brought to the destabilization of political situation at both the national and regional levels. It was the time when scholars and officials started speaking about political Islam and Islamists made their attempts to come to power.

The restoration of contacts with foreign Islamic states, the construction of mosques and medreses, the flow of religious literature and arrival of Islamic missionaries of radical religious movements deeply affected the development of political Islam in the region. Furthermore, many young people were dispatched to Muslim institutes of Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, Tunis.

Though external factors played a significant role, they were not decisive in the politicization of Islam in Central Asia. Solely external causes could not generate the current religious situation; the existing internal conditions, on the other hand, contributed to the stirring up of political Islam in the region. Thus, external factors have to be examined in their correlation with internal circumstances.

The first factor is of a social nature. A general system crisis, the difficulties of the economic transformation, the degradation in the status of many social groups, led to growing disappointment of people about the politics of official authorities and created favorable conditions for radical Islam. In this context, many people find the only way out in the recurrence to authentic ethno-confessional values of the past, which were lost under the Soviet pressure. The 'Islamic alternative', utopian in many ways, becomes the most demanded by various social groups.²¹³ The new model is based on the aspiration to restore social justice, on the appeal to return to pure Islam of the Prophet Muhammad and first four righteous Khalifs.

The second factor is demographic. On the account of traditionalism and religious ignorance, radical Islam exerts a profound influence on the most sensitive population groups, villagers and youth, who form the majority of the Central Asian residents. Through exploiting the ideas of social justice, different kinds of sects and non-traditional religions, including those of extremist and dogmatic trends, manipulate the consciousness of these people. The religious ignorance of the most population allows

radical Islamists advancing their own vision of Islam and presenting it as the only true one.

Thirdly, political Islam is caused by spiritual vacuum. The rejection of the Marxist ideology resulted in the ideological vacuum, which is attempted to be replaced by various religious doctrines under the cover of Islam. People refer to Islam to find stability and the course of their future life.

However, the main factor of political Islam is the manipulation of Islam by the republican ruling elites and oppositionist groups to serve their own ends. After the breakup of the Soviet Union, in two of the Central Asian republics, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, Islam became the force that mobilized oppositionist groups in their struggle against nomenclature elites. They are *the Movement of Islamic Revival of Tajikistan* that later became the core of *the United Tajik Opposition* (OTO) and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IDU).

Hence, the dissolution of the USSR and the creation of newly independent states of Central Asia were followed by the emergence of new participants seeking the establishment of Islamic state in the region. Despite seventy years of forced secularization, Islam in Central Asia remained alive and manifested itself in the domestic and family sphere. If during the Soviet period it was deprived of the right to participate in the political life of the country, since the early 1990s Islam started laying claim not only to the role of a cultural-civilizational but also a political factor.

Political Islam in Central Asia emerged as an oppositionist Islamic movement, representing not only a religious, in the strict sense of the word, but, first of all, a social and political phenomenon. The latter is demonstrated by the evolution of political Islamic movements in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. In Kyrgyzstan, Islamic extremism is not so scaled, however, as the events of 1999-2000 in Batken showed, it can easily cross borders, especially those in the Fergana Valley.

ISLAMIC FACTOR IN THE SOCIO-POLITICAL LIFE OF KYRGYZSTAN

Considering the importance of Islamic factor in the socio-political life of Kyrgyzstan, it is necessary to point out the spheres, where its influence is limited.

Islam is not the factor of consolidation of ethnic Kyrgyzs. Regional, tribal, clan interests are of priority over the belonging to the common religion of Islam.

Islam is not the factor of consolidation of Kyrgyzstani society. It can be justified by the presence of a significant Russian-speaking population (17%), as well as attempts to establish civil society, which is enriched in President A. Akaev's slogan 'Kyrgyzstan is our common home'.

Islam is not the state religion of Kyrgyzstan. The constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic declared Kyrgyzstan a secular state, where the politics and the religion are separated.

Islam is not the factor of interstate consolidation of the Central Asian republics. Despite the appeal to Islamic tradition at the official level and joining a number of Islamic organizations, the leaders of the Central Asian states rarely refer to common Islamic identity.

In spite of its limited nature, Islamic factor in Kyrgyzstan remains a social and political reality. It is part of the system of values and the regulator of social relations. 'Cultural Islam' but not 'political Islam' will play a determining role in Kyrgyzstani development. The post-Soviet evolution of Kyrgyzstan once again demonstrated the necessity to take into account the impact of cultural traditions on socio-economic and political institutes. Cultural-confessional traditions, being less dynamic, impart stability to the more active layers of economic and political relations. At the same time, the modernization of economic and political spheres does not mean following the Western way of development but signifies the transition to a new model of society, which combines universal achievements of the world civilization and original national forms.

Kyrgyzstan is basically conservative. The call of revolutionary doctrines, whether of the Islamic variety, the Marxist variety, or any other, is not strong in Kyrgyzstan. Traditional structures are highly inert and least yielded to internal transformation; they will remain to be determinative in the Kyrgyz society. It is obvious that Kyrgyzstan will continue to overcome its Sovietness and its society will operate according to the rules of market economy, though deformed, and specificities of its ethno-cultural and confessional traditions.

CONCLUSION

Ethnicity is a quality of the individual of an unconscious-conscious nature. It is a collective tradition that is transmitted from generation to generation and serves as an important ideological instrument of the individual socialization. Ethnic is a socio-cultural community, based on anthropological-genetic peculiarities. In contrast to it, nation is the product of state and a socio-political community. Nation is the result of a conscious state policy, which is transforming from the idea of intellectual elites into mass ideology.

The 'ethnic boom' of the late 1980s in former Soviet countries brought to the actualization and politicization of the ethnic factor and the appearance of ethnic nationalism. Ethnic nationalism is a political concept, according to which different ethnic groups are competing for achieving political power and resources. Hypertrophied ethnicity of de-ethnized members of the new states replaced national civil identity, imposed from the above, and gave rise to ethnic nations. In view of ethnic nationalists, a multiethnic state, where such new 'nations' emerged, had to be reconstructed in order to fit the key principle of ethnonationalism 'one nation – one state'.

Ethnic nationalism in post-Soviet countries is deeply rooted in the politics and practice of the Soviet state. The Soviet leadership tried to develop two opposed and alternative tendencies at the same time: the integration of the society into one civil nation and the creation of particular nations in the form of union and autonomous republics. The creation of particular nations, along with the development of literary languages and upbringing of national cadres, resulted in the growth of national self-consciousness and emergence of ethnic nationalism.

As soon as the control of the center over national elites weakened, they began to struggle for having real power in formally sovereign national states. The national idea became a powerful instrument of mass mobilization. The struggle of national elites against Moscow, then against the ruling party elites was mainly of a political character, however, in some republics it was accompanied by sporadic manifestations of interethnic violence and political conflicts between the titular nationalities and republican ethnic minorities.

After the collapse of the USSR ethnonationalism became of more radical forms and manifested itself in the conflicts at the broader regional level. It has been stimulated by the growth of ethnic separatism among the leaders of ethnic minorities, the problem of water supply, the demographic outburst in the region, the issue of refugees and migrants, religious extremism. The most evident is the contradiction between Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan.

Post-Soviet development of Kyrgyzstan in many respects resembles the case of non-European countries, which did not create themselves gradually, through trial and error, but were invented by external circumstances. The fear of social disorder, the danger of border and territory disputes, as well as the natural desire of local political elites to retain power, gave rise to non-European nations. At the same time, national consolidation in Kyrgyzstan has also been dictated by a number of other factors. First, it is the multiethnic composition of the country, where according to the 1999 census lived 65% of Kyrgyzs, 14% of Uzbeks, 13% of Russians and about 10 % of other nationalities. Secondly, it is the aggravation of interethnic contradictions that manifested itself in the interethnic conflicts of 1989 between Kyrgyzs and Tajiks and of 1990 between Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks, as well as the emigration of Russian speakers. Thirdly, it is the lack of intra-ethnic solidarity among Kyrgyzs themselves, whose attachment to the northern or southern region and different tribal groups dominates over common ethnic belonging.

Although Kyrgyzstan declared the course toward building a civil society, where the rights of the individual would be of priority regardless of his ethnic, linguistic, racial, gender and religious background, the new ethno-political situation was characterized by the politicization of ethnicity and polarization of Kyrgyzstani society on the ethnic ground. The understanding of sovereignty as the sovereignty of the titular group and the creation of preferences for it in all spheres of life brought to the escalation of interethnic tension in Kyrgyzstan.

On 7 December 1993, the leaders of 11 national-cultural centers addressed the President of the Kyrgyz Republic to call Kurultai of the people of Kyrgyzstan for the purpose of discussing interethnic problems and working out the ways of achieving stability, civil peace and interethnic harmony. First Kurultai that took place on 22 January 1994 established the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan, an extraparlimentary body under the President of the Kyrgyz Republic on the issues of interethnic relations and national policy.

The Assembly became a state-public form of the state national policy. On the one hand, the state delegates its authority to public structures; on the other, public structures take a responsibility to maintain the interethnic peace. Nevertheless, the Assembly only raises questions, which the state later resolves. It is necessary to seek the situation, when ethnic minorities would directly participate in the settlement of all problems, caused by interethnic interaction. At present, the Assembly is the only effective instrument of management of interethnic relations in the country. The republic lacks another state body, which deals with the problems of interethnic relations. There is a need to establish a legislative basis of interethnic interaction and work out legal, social and other instruments to protect the rights of ethnic minorities.

In the second half of the 1980s, linguistic russification, carried out by the Soviet state, met a strong resistance from national intelligentsia of Kyrgyzstan. Public demands of granting Kyrgyz a higher status brought to the adoption of the 1989 Law 'On the state language of the Kirgiz SSR', recognizing Kyrgyz as the only state language of the republic. The acknowledgement of Kyrgyz as the state language aimed at the elimination of a great disparity between the functioning of Russian and Kyrgyz and the promotion of Kyrgyz at the expense of Russian, which had a higher social status during the Soviet time.

At the same time, the shift in the language policy of Kyrgyzstan generated a negative reaction of ethnic minorities and mass emigration of Russian-speaking population. As a result of migration, Kyrgyzstani economy suffered irreplaceable damage, since tens of thousands qualified specialists, who worked in various sectors of economy, mainly in industrial planting, building, energy and other vital spheres, left the republic. This and a number of other factors forced Kyrgyz leadership to introduce a number of changes into the initial language policy and the implementation of the 1989 law.

Meanwhile, language is not only the means of communication; it is an important marker of ethnic identity. Learnt from childhood, language becomes an integral part of personality. The individual usually identifies with his language and has a strong sense of loyalty to it.

The language policy of Kyrgyzstan, aimed at turning Kyrgyz into a basic and, hereafter, a sole language of political and intellectual life of the republic, does not often take into account the real linguistic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Despite Kyrgyz is the most popular language among Kyrgyzstani citizens, the position of Russian in many spheres of the republican life is still considerable and in some of

them is even dominating. Besides, the functional weakness of the Kyrgyz language prevents it from replacing Russian in higher education, science, mass media and the sphere of new technology. Another important factor is the presence of a significant number of ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan, which in their majority speak Russian. Finally, the cultural orientation of Kyrgyzstani citizens toward Russian remains, since today Russian is a channel of entering the world informative space and the means of international communication.

The growth of ethnic self-consciousness brought to the restoration of Muslim traditions that manifested itself in the desire of Central Asians to be not only full-fledged nations but also a full-fledged confessional community. In spite of the Soviet persecution, Islam in Kyrgyzstan 'remained alive'. Even under the Soviet rule it continued to be the regulator of social relations and deeply affected public consciousness. However, that was so-called 'domestic Islam' – sanctioned by Shariat the norms of domestic behaviour and family relations.

At the same time, 'high' dogmatic Islam was annihilated. Muslim community was bereaved of mosques, the system of Islamic education was destroyed and the higher Muslim clergy was liquidated. Islam of Central Asia was deprived of the right to take part in the political life of the republic.

Islam is an important element of a Kyrgyz ethnic identity. However, the strength of the Islamic component of national identity in Central Asia does not always bring with it a strong sense of belonging to a broader, supranational Islamic community. For Central Asian Muslims, who obtained the national identity under the Soviet regime, Islamic identity should be considered in its relation with the ethnic category.

The authentication of ethnic and religious principles is typical for the Kyrgyz society. As a result of the Soviet pursuit, many Islamic customs entered traditional Kyrgyz culture. Therefore, present-day Kyrgyzs perceive national traditions as Islamic and Islamic traditions as national. Today even those who do not place themselves among Muslims consider following Islamic customs and rituals as their duty.

The Islamic revival of the late 1980-1990s was not only the return to pre-revolutionary Islam, the legitimation of Islamic institutions and the rebirth of 'high' dogmatic Islam but also the emergence of Islamic political movements. The politicization of Islam is a post-Soviet phenomenon, produced by the specificity of Islamic tradition and the current situation in the region.

Ethnicity, language and religion in Kyrgyzstan were the focus of this study. All three factors demonstrated a close relationship of one to another and severely complicated the state building in Kyrgyzstan. Despite the official declarations of the Kyrgyz authorities, the practical policy of Kyrgyzstan turned to be very different. To a greater degree it reflected the opposition of two different tendencies: civil and ethnic nationalism. On the one hand, this opposition is manifested in the granting to Russian of the official status and the sensibility of Kyrgyzstani leadership to the problems of Slavic and European population. On the other hand, an ethnocratic policy of promotion of interests of the Kyrgyz majority, the neglect of cultural and language demands of other ethnic groups are the manifestations of ethnic nationalism. Nevertheless, post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan has avoided acute interethnic conflicts mainly because Kyrgyzstani leadership has been capable to keep a thin balance between two contradictory trends, by one hand, supporting the rights of Kyrgyzs to satisfy their ethnic identity and, by the other, developing common civil identity and enforcing the sense of belonging to the Kyrgyz Republic.

NOTES

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¹⁷ *Ibid*, p 32.

¹⁸ J. Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'nyi vopros* (Moscow, 1939), p 7.

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²⁰ Y. V. Bromley, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), pp 57-8.

²¹ Both names are often used as synonyms. At the same time, there is a difference. Whereas ethnography is a more descriptive science, ethnology is of 'explanatory' meaning that fits the theory of ethnos to a larger extent.

²² It is worthy of note that instrumentalist theories of ethnicity in the Russian-language literature are called 'constructivism'.

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²⁴ A. Akaev, *Kyrgyzskaya gosudarstvennost' i narodnyi epos 'Manas'* (Bishkek, 2003), p 481.

²⁵ Endogamy is a custom preventing from contracting a marriage outside a certain group.

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- ¹⁰¹ *Osnovnye itogi pervoi natsional'noi perepisi naseleniia Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki 1999 goda*, p 52.
- ¹⁰² For the designation of ethnic origin, the term 'nationality' is commonly used. Therefore, that term was applied in the sociological survey.
- ¹⁰³ The 2003 sociological survey was carried out jointly with the Center for Social Research at the National Academy of Sciences of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- ¹⁰⁴ Data for the interviewers of nationalities, different from Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Russian, were placed in the separate column entitled 'Others'.
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