

**THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN:  
THE VOLGA-TATAR'S ROAD  
TO THE NATIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION**

**A THESIS PRESENTED BY RAMIL ZALYAYEV  
TO  
THE INSTITUTE OF  
ECONOMICS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**BILKENT UNIVERSITY**

**AUGUST 1996**

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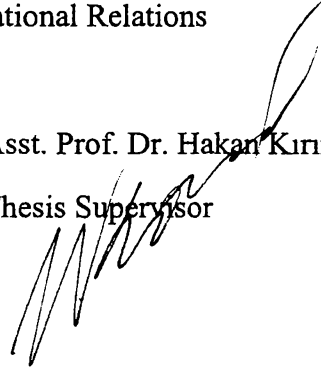
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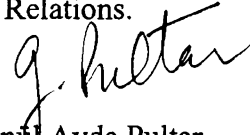
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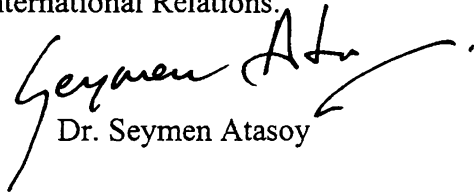


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Dr. Seymen Atasoy

## ABSTRACT

The liberalizing policies of *glasnost'* (openness) and *perestroyka* (restructuring) during Michail Gorbachv's leadership in the USSR enabled the various republics to express their national views. By the end of 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, all republics of the former USSR without any struggle declared their sovereignty and independence.

Tatarstan was one of the first autonomous republics to adopt a Declaration of Sovereignty. It did so on 30 August 1990, less than three months after the Russian Federation had declared sovereignty. What distinguished Tatarstan's declaration from those of the other autonomous republics of the Russian Federation was the fact that it proclaimed independence on behalf of the whole people of Tatarstan, and it made no mention of the republic's being part of the Russian Federation. Tatarstan began its new stage with the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty and a new Constitution in 1992, which declared Tatarstan a sovereign State, a subject of International Law united with the Russian Federation on the basis of equal treaty.

Even after the Volga Tatars lost their sovereignty in 1552, as a result of the Russian conquest, the Volga Tatars continued their struggle for independence, and never lost the idea of nationhood. The Tatar national intelligentsia was the first in the republic to begin the movement for sovereignty. In February 1994, Tatarstan and Russia signed a treaty defining their political and economic relations.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the Volga Tatars' road to national self-determination and the process of negotiations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation.

## ÖZET

Mihail Gorbaçov'un Sovyetler Birliği liderliği sırasındaki *glasnost* (açıklık) ve *perestroyka* (yeniden yapılanma) olarak anılan liberalleşme politikaları, pek çok Sovyet Cumhuriyetinin milli görüşlerini açıklamalarını sağladı. 1991 yılı sonu itibari ile, Sovyetler Birliğinin çöküşünden sonra, eski Sovyet Sosyalist Cumhuriyetler Birliğinin bütün Cumhuriyetleri herhangi bir mücadele yaşanmaksızın egemenliklerini ve bağımsızlıklarını ilan ettiler.

Tataristan Egemenlik ilanını ilk olarak açıklayan muhtar cumhuriyetlerden biriydi. Tataristan, Rusya Federasyonu'nun egemenliğini ilan etmesinden üç aydan daha kısa bir zaman sonra, 30 Ağustos 1990 da egemenliğini ilan etti. Tataristan'ın egemenlik ilanını Rusya Federasyonu'nun diğer muhtar cumhuriyetlerinkilerden ayıran nokta, egemenlik ilanınının Tataristan'da yaşayan tüm insanların adına yapılmış olması ve Cumhuriyet'in Rusya Federasyonu'nun bir parçası olduğundan bahsetmemesiydi. Tataristan, Devlet Egemenliğinin ilanı ve 1992 de kabul edilen, Tataristan egemen bir devlet olduğunu, Uluslararası Hukuka tabi olduğunu ve Rusya Federasyonu ile eşitlik temelinde birleştiğini ilan eden anayasası ile yeni bir döneme girdi.

1552 yılında Rusların fethi ile egemenliklerini kaybettikten sonra bile İdil tatarları bağımsızlık mücadelelerine devam etmişler ve hiçbir zaman millet olma fikirlerini kaybetmemişlerdir.

Bu çalışmanın birincil amacı İdil Tatarları'nın milli kendi kadrihi tayin yolunu ve Rusya Federasyonu ile Tataristan arasındaki görüşmelerin sürecini incelemektir.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In the preparation of this research I have been fortunate to have had the assistance of a number of people and institutions.

My deep sense of gratitude goes to the Bilkent University, International Relations department authorities.

I would like to express my appreciation for the encouragement, interest and academic guidance by Asst. Prof. Dr. Hakan Kırımlı. I also thank to Dr. Gönül Ayda Pultar and Dr. Seymen Atasoy for their kind and expert critique on my thesis.

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## CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Current Situation of Tatarstan

The Republic of Tatarstan is situated at the confluence of the Volga and Kama rivers, at the junction of Central Russia and the Ural-Volga region, at a transportation crossroads in the heart of the Russian Federation. Its contemporary borders took shape in the early 1920s, when the Union and Autonomous Soviet republics were formed<sup>1</sup>.

The Republic of Tatarstan occupies an area of 67,830 sq. km. and is home to about 3,696,000 people (as of 1 January 1992)<sup>2</sup>. It holds seventh place in the Russian Federation. Its inhabitants are members of 107 nationalities, Tatars exceeding 50 and Russians making up 43 percent. The Republic's urban population consists of 2,719,000 (73.6%) and rural population 977,000 with its capital Kazan, of more than 1,1 million residents<sup>3</sup>.

The Volga-Tatars have a thousand-year history, and is renowned for their scientific and cultural traditions. Tatarstan is an economically developed region. It has a powerful scientific and technological potential, fairly stable agriculture and a strong construction industry.

The liberalizing policies of *glasnost*" (openness) and *perestroika* (restructuring) during Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership in the USSR enabled the various republics to express their national views. Although material progress had improved initially, by 1970 economic performance began to stagnate. The accompanying economic and political crisis fueled by the collapse of production, the catastrophic decline in the living standard for virtually all strata

of society, and serious environmental issues led to the collapse of the center. By the end of 1991, all republics of the former USSR without any struggle declared their sovereignty and independence <sup>4</sup> .

Tatarstan was one of the first autonomous republics to adopt a Declaration of Sovereignty. It did so on 30 August 1990, less than three months after the Russian Federation itself had declared sovereignty <sup>5</sup> . What distinguished its declaration from those of the other autonomous republics of the Russian Federation was the fact that it proclaimed on behalf of the whole people of Tatarstan, and it made no mention of the republic's being part of the Russian Federation<sup>6</sup> . Tatarstan began its new stage with the adoption of the Declaration of the State Sovereignty and a new Constitution in 1992, which declared Tatarstan a sovereign state, a subject of international law united with the Russian Federation on the basis of delegating powers <sup>7</sup> .

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study will focus on the processes and activities of Tatarstan prior to and after the adoption of the "Declaration of the State Sovereignty" by Tatarstan on 30 August, 1990 and on the efforts of the Tatar people to build its national statehood. The Russian Federation leadership began the process of sovereignty. Yeltsin, during his visit to Tatarstan in 1990, supported the aspiration of Tatarstan for sovereignty and said: "Take as much sovereignty as you can" <sup>8</sup> . After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former Union republics automatically became independent states. However, the situation for Tatarstan was not so easy.

The indigenous people of Tatarstan, the Volga Tatars, have more than a millennium history of statehood. Even after they lost their sovereignty in 1552, as a result of the Russian conquest, the Volga Tatars always continued their struggle for independence, and never lost the idea of nationhood. At the beginning of the 20th century leaders of the national movement worked out several projects for a Tatar national State. From the earliest days of Soviet rule, the Tatars, one of numerous nationalities in the country, resented the fact that their territory was only an autonomous and not a Union republic. The question of Union republic status for Tatarstan was brought up again in 1936, and 1977, when the USSR Constitutions were being adopted<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, this study will aim to show a history of statehood of the Kazan Tatars, in order to analyze the validity of the aspiration of the Tatar people for sovereignty.

The Tatar national intelligentsia were the first in the republic to begin the movement for sovereignty<sup>10</sup>. Their declared goal was attaining the status of Union republic for Tatarstan. This study aims to answer the question of how the Tatar national movement developed and what were the reasons of the crisis within this movement.

The adoption of the "Declaration of the State Sovereignty" by Tatarstan and its further aspiration to strengthen the sovereignty of Tatarstan caused alarm for the Russian Federation leadership. Tatarstan insisted that relations with the Russian Federation should be based on a treaty between equal partners. This study also analyzes the process of negotiations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. The experience of these negotiations is of interest, and may be used in the current process of the reformation of the Russian Federation as a democratic State. The establishment of relations

on the basis of equal agreement between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan can also be used as an example for the establishment of similar relations between the Russian Federation and its subjects.

### 1.3 Methodology of the Study

Several different types of information sources have been used in this study. They include conventional sources such as books, annual volumes of research institutes and periodicals. Due to the recent nature of the subject of the study periodicals, journals, books and other contemporary sources of information that were published in the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan were frequently utilized.

The methodology used in the study can be described as follows: the developments of the past and the new period in Tatarstan are presented in the chapters of the study whose outline is given below. The answer to the research question has been sought by the interpretation of these results. Therefore, an analytical approach has been employed in the study.

### 1.4 Outline of the Study

This study is devoted to the process of state building in Tatarstan. The second chapter begins with the history of the statehood of the Volga Tatars. A clear recollection of the past allows an understanding of the region and the Kazan Tatar people. The history of statehood is important since it shows that the Tatar people have a long experience in state building; therefore, by

proclaiming sovereignty in August 1990, Tatarstan only reclaimed its right to be a sovereign state.

The third chapter studies the developments in the Republic during the Soviet period, emphasizing the conditions of the origin of the Tatar national movement and the reasons for the crisis within it. The period that will be investigated is important for understanding of the factors and conditions which gave impetus to Tatarstan in the proclamation of its sovereignty. It should be noted that three aspects of Gorbachev's reform program played critical roles in bringing national problems to the forefront of politics: the impact of *glasnost*, which gave an enormous impetus to the expression of long-simmering grievances; the Soviet leadership's increasingly radical critique of Stalinism and its call for the development of a new model of socialism; and economic stringency.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the process of lengthy negotiations between Tatarstan and Russia. This chapter indicates that "Tatarstan model" has proved that inter-ethnic and political accord can be reached by civilized means and that sovereignty does not mean granting some people unilateral advantages and infringing on other people's rights. A number of significant events during the period of negotiations in Tatarstan and in Russia are examined.

The Power Sharing Treaty, signed by Tatarstan and Russia in February 1994, is analyzed in the concluding part of the study. The Republic of Tatarstan had not signed the Federation Treaty in 1992. A comparison of the principal propositions of the Federation Treaty and the Power Sharing Treaty of February 1994 are made.



## CHAPTER II: STATEHOOD IN THE HISTORY OF THE KAZAN TATARS

### 2.1 The Volga Bulgars and the Golden Horde

The Volga Tatar people's statehood originated in the Volga Bulgar, a major East European state that was highly developed for its day and existed on the banks of the Volga and Kama rivers for several centuries until the Chingiside invasions.

During the tenth century the city of Bulgar emerged as a center around which the gathering of Bulgar lands was completed <sup>1</sup>. 922 was the year Islam became the official religion of the Bulgar state. Even before Ibn-Fadlan's arrival, Islam had become the religion of the people who lived along the shores of the Volga and Kama <sup>2</sup>.

One of the true measures of the Bulgar state's emancipation was the ability of its rulers to establish diplomatic ties and conclude treaties with their neighbours, as well as with the rulers of more distant lands. In 984, for instance, the Bulgars signed their first treaty with Kiev. When that treaty was renewed in 1006, it included trade privileges for the Bulgar and Russian merchants. Trade and commercial ties were important for the Bulgars. Agriculture, crafts, cattle breeding, hunting, fishing and trade represented the backbone of the Bulgar economy. The Volga-Kama region, with its rich black soil, was suitable for agriculture <sup>3</sup>. Archeologists have identified approximately 2.000 villages and 150 towns<sup>4</sup>.

Islam became the nucleus around which the spiritual life of the Bulgar state developed after the tenth century. The Arabic script that accompanied the adoption of Islam became not only the vehicle for disseminating a new religion but also the key to learning and opening the door to the cultural heritage of the Muslim East. Russian chronicles show evidence that Bulgar had high culture. High cultured by the standards of that time, the Bulgar State was in existence before the appearance of the Chingiside Tatars, who came in the beginning of the XII century.

The Bulgar state was eroded during the early 1200s, when Batu invaded the area and established the Golden Horde. The Mongols, a small minority in the conquering force, were quickly assimilated by the Turkic majority, and the Bulgars and Qypchaq Turks became ethnically dominant elements in the Golden Horde.

During the Golden Horde the Bulgars enjoyed a considerable degree of autonomy, which at times even enabled them to exhibit a certain independence in foreign policy<sup>5</sup>. The Golden Horde is the other period in history of the contemporary Tatar people. The Bulgars played a civilizing role. Partially under the influence of the Bulgars, the newly arrived peoples accepted Islam. The Bulgars turned this Islamic culture into the basis of their state, and provided the general unity of this state. This unity, that was formed in the last period of the Golden Horde, makes up the basis of the Tatar people.

## 2.2 The Kazan Khanate

During the first half of the fifteenth century the Golden Horde broke up into the Khanates of Kazan, Astrakhan, Crimea, and Siberia and the Noghay Horde. A brief review of the socioeconomic and cultural developments of the Kazan Khanate during the sixteenth century leads to the conclusion that this state exhibited dynamism and vitality.

The binding element in the conglomerate that composed the Kazan Khanate was provided by the office of the khan, in which the whole sovereignty of the state was vested. Another institution of significance was the Assembly of the Land, which was comprised of representatives of the landed aristocracy, the military, and the ecclesiastical establishments. Its principal function was to decide matters of succession and foreign policy.

The period of the Kazan Khanate is the consequential moment in the history of the Tatar people. The Volga Bulgars' traditions were presented and carried forward by the Kazan Khanate. The Khanate of Kazan also included the Turkic-speaking Mordvinians, Maris and Udmurts, all formerly part of the Bulgar state.

For most of its 107-year existence, the Kazan Khanate was independent. The Khanate of Kazan remained a formidable opponent of Muscovy for more than a century. In the middle of the XVth century Muscovy launched a massive advance toward the North-East. Ivan IV's coronation as tsar in 1547 had marked the beginning of an overtly hostile policy toward Kazan that would culminate in its conquest on 2 October 1552<sup>6</sup>.

### 2.3 The Volga Tatars under Russian Rule and the National Awakening

During the two centuries following the fall of Kazan, the Volga Tatars were subjected to political persecution and severe economic and religious pressures, which forced large numbers of the Volga Tatars to leave their homes. When, in 1552, Kazan was conquered and destroyed by the armies of Ivan IV, the very existence of its people as a different national, cultural, and religious entity was in danger. This danger was nowhere better illustrated than by Ivan IV's own statement: "Let the unbelievers receive the True God, the new subjects of Russia, and let them with us praise the Holy Trinity for ages into ages" <sup>7</sup> .

The Moscovite political elite and the leadership of the Russian Orthodox Church were to a great extent motivated by religious beliefs in their political and military actions against the Kazan Khanate.

Ideologically, the capture of Kazan and further policy towards the Volga Tatars had been defined clearly: "punish infidels, disparage physically disobedients (non-Russians), baptize by force"<sup>8</sup> .

Missionary activities represented one of the major channels through which the Russian state exercised religious pressure upon its *inoroadtsy* (non-Russians). These conversion policies likewise prompted the beginning of an exodus of the Volga Tatars toward the Kazak steppes and Turkestan. Many, finding themselves expelled from the fortress cities, had no other choice. Their best lands, situated in the river valleys or meadows, were confiscated and distributed among the Russian nobility or were given to the monasteries. In 1740, the Empress ordered that all newly built mosques be destroyed and construction of new ones prohibited.

Between 1740 and 1743, 418 of the 536 existing mosques were destroyed in the Volga region.

Thus, during these two hundred years, the elite of the Volga Tatars as well as the structure of their commands were destroyed. This was a period in which members of the upper classes of the Volga-Tatars were subjected to forcible russification and christianization under the threat of being killed.

However, religion played a crucial role in the preservation of the people. The violent annexation of the Kazan Khanate by the Russian state broke the natural course of life of the Volga Tatar society. In all sections of the population, discontent was accumulating. Thus, religion was the sole accessible form for people to realize their own oppressed position. Tatars felt enmity because of belonging to a different faith than the Russians. Russian dominion and influence of Russian institutions were perceived as a real threat to the traditional order of the Tatar life and social culture. Islam was the symbol of patriotism, and until the XIXth century it was the only force that was capable of inspiring and mobilizing people for a struggle of liberation. Indeed, this was a consequential period in people's lives. If the Volga Tatars had not overcome with dignity this period of harsh oppression, then the policy of the Russian Christian State, aimed toward the destruction of the Tatar State, would probably have succeeded.

Catherine II's reforms in the second half of the 18th century brought some relief to the Volga Tatars. These reforms paved the way to the formation of a new merchant class for whom new opportunities were opened. It became possible for Tatars to engage in trade not only in the Eastern part of the Russian State, but in all Russian territory. The Tatar merchants arranged trade relations

with other foreign countries. This contact broadened their *Weltanschauung*. Moreover, realizing the significance and necessity of the educational process, the Tatar merchants began sponsoring schools. This was the beginning of a cultural Renaissance among the Tatars. Notwithstanding the Russian policy of conversion to Christianity and Russification during three and a half centuries, a massive and total departure of the Volga Tatars from their identity, religion and culture could not be achieved. Making use of the freedoms brought by Catherine II's reforms, the Volga Tatars not only began building mosques but also opened new *mektep* and *medresse* (religious school). These *mekteps* and *medresse* played a formative role in raising the level of literacy among the Volga Tatars.

The renowned orientalist Herman Vambery wrote at the end of the 19th century, that "the percentage of people among Tatars who do not know how to read and write is much less than the percentage of the same kind of people in England and France combined" <sup>9</sup>. The well-known Professor of Kazan University Karl Fuchs wrote: "For all travellers, without any doubt, it will seem strange to find people among the Kazan Tatars, who are more educated than some Europeans. Tatars who were unable to read and write were despised by their fellow citizens. Therefore every father tried to enroll his children in school, where they would learn how to read and write and would receive an introduction to their religion" <sup>10</sup>.

At the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, there were significant changes in the lives of the Tatar people. In the general context of the development of Russian capitalism, a new bourgeois class appeared among the



Volga Tatar society. The Tatar intelligentsia came from the petty bourgeois strata of the rural and urban populations.

The development of capitalism among the Tatars brought about the rise of culture. There were tendencies to liberate culture and public education from the religious methods of teaching, the course of the formation of the Tatar bourgeois nation, the leading representatives of this nation worked out liberation motives. They drew up national goals, attitudes to history, language, literature and culture <sup>11</sup>

One significant in this development was reform in the sphere of public education. The old system school with medieval scholasticism and religious disciplines did not meet the requirements of social development. The progressive parts of society tried to replace the syllabic method of teaching by the phonetic method and to introduce the teaching of secular disciplines, including the Russian language in *mekteb* and *medresse*. This new trend was called *cedidism*, and the supporters of this trend were called *cedid*. The opponents were called *kadimists*. However, this movement was not limited in aspiration only to replacing the old scholasticism and the old methods of teaching, but this movement tried to carry out reforms in the whole Tatar world, and tried to define the role of the Tatars in this World<sup>12</sup>.

Many reformers dealt with the issue of education. The activities of the Halfin dynasty Sagit, Ishak, Ismail, Ibrahim, Sakir-Gerey were significant. This family had been teaching the Tatar language for more than 60 years. Sagit Halfin, at the beginning of the Enlightenment initiated the secular method of teaching among Tatars. He issued *Azbuka Tatarskogo Yazyka* in 1774, and *Tatarskiy Slovar'* in 1775. It is also necessary to mention Gabdrahman Utiz- Imeni (1756-1836), who's mind was preoccupied by Enlightenment ideas as well. According to his view,

knowledge is the pearl of the human soul and the key that helps to overcome any obstacles <sup>13</sup> . The activities of Şihabütdin Mercani (1818-1889), scientist and pedagogue, became a phenomenon in the history of the Tatar people. He opened a school in Kazan, where secular disciplines were taught side by side with religious ones. He supported the organization of this kind of Russian-Tatar school. Hüseyin Feyizhanov, follower of Mercani, takes up a significant place. He extended the Tatar secular school to ten years and included the learning of foreign languages, geography and geometry. Kayyum Nasırı also played a significant role in the development of public education, opening a primary school for Tatars in 1871 in Kazan.

Here, it is also necessary to mention the role of Tatar book-printing. Among the Turkic peoples of the Eastern part of Russia, the Tatar book is the oldest. The Tatar book served as means to introduce these people to world treasures and advanced Russian scientific and social thought. Moreover, thanks to Tatar publishers, the first books in Kazakh, Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Tajik, Turkmen were published in Kazan <sup>14</sup> .

For the central authority, the Tatar book was *inorodcheskaya*. This had a negative impact on the development of the Tatar book. The capability of the Tatar people in the spheres of economics and culture and their wish to live independently caused alarm for the *tsarism*. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 20th century, Kazan became the most developed center of book-printing.

At the beginning of the 20th century, 900 books were printed in Kazan. By 1908, books issued increased to 1,000 titles with edition of 3,000,000. Books in the Tatar language took a significant place among them. According to E. Rubinshtein 1,600 books in the Russian language were published and 6,200 in the Tatar

language <sup>15</sup> . As a result of the Russian revolution of 1905, Tatar publication centers appeared in S.Petersburg, Astrakhan, Ufa, Orenburg, and Troitsk.

The developments that took place in Tatar society were defined as a "Muslim Phenomenaon" and against the existing State system in the Empire <sup>16</sup> . The problems of the Tatar people were considered to a large extent in many works on public education, culture building, and the national issue. Therefore, the Tatar publications played a great role in cultural and national awakening of the Tatars and also influenced other nations of the Volga region.

For the Tatar people, the turn of the century was a period of renovation. They began to develop self-confidence and depicted themselves as leaders among other Muslim people. This was the period of the Golden Age of the Tatar people, when large numbers of periodicals were issued and numerous poets and writers appeared. It was the time , when Enlightenment was used for the economic growth of the Tatar nation. In this period the class of Tatar industrialists was born. They contributed heavily to the material growth of the Tatar nation. Enlightenment ideas spread in the life of the people. The Tatar people was a nation that could read and write and displayed the wish to return to their former glory.

The Tatar "*Uçak*" appeared in this period: "*Muhamadiya*" in Kazan; "*Husaniya*" in Orenburg; "*Galiya*" in Ufa; and Gabdulla and Gubaydulla Bubi Medrese in Izh-Bubi town near Vyatka. Many reformers of the Enlightenment period were graduated from these Tatar educational institutions. National goals were worked out in these institutions.

The Russian revolution of 1905 played a significant role in the formation of the Tatar nation. The magazine *Ang* (consciousness) said in 1912 that "this revolution was more helpful for the Tatars than to other nations." This revolution not only developed Tatar culture, but also awakened Tatar national consciousness<sup>17</sup>. The press of that time gave a large space to the matters of national unity and the revival of historical consciousness. Such newspapers and magazines as *Vakit*, *Şura* and *Ang* especially were on the front line of the Tatar national movement. The newspaper *Vakit* wrote in 1911: "People, who have their own outstanding history, their own literary language, will never lose themselves. This grave condition in which our nation is now this is just a temporary situation. Every difficulty will be overcome. Our nation will awake"<sup>18</sup>. Also, this newspaper called on the Tatar people to organize in one common mass, and in this situation, no one will be able to hinder its will<sup>19</sup>.

In this period, ideas of recovering the Tatar Statehood appeared first in Kazan, and subsequently, in St.Petersburg, Moscow, Orenburg and Astrakhan. In 1913, the magazine "Ang" offered to its readers to discuss the Tatar nation. It distributed a questionnaire entitled "How can we interpret the term 'nation'?" The magazine posed the following questions: "When did the nation appear?"; "What is your attitude to religion and to the native land?"; "What was the progress of people in the past and the present?"; "What is the future of our nation?"; "How do you want to see our nation's future?"; "Do you feel the power of our nation?" Many people participated in this discussion. For instance, the answer of Gaziz Gubaydullin, a student at the University of Kazan, consisted of the following: "I am prone to consider the development of society as a natural-historical process"<sup>20</sup>.

Many participants considered a nation as a cultural community and the majority of participants paid more attention to the issue of the origin of the nation.

These facts were evidence that the Tatar nation was at a high stage of development. When a people attempt to understand their origin, wish to define their place among other nations, and aspire to find kindred nations, it means that these people are already formed as a nation and will stay at this high stage of the formation.

Thus, at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, there was a process of national awakening among the Tatars of the Idel-Ural region. This national awakening affected other Muslim people of the Russian Empire. The Tatar national movement expressed the need for their national State. There were several variants of the State suggested by the leaders of the national movement.

#### 2.4 The Variants of the National State

The Joint Grand Assembly of the three Congresses took place on 22 June 1917. It was an Assembly of three Congresses: The Congress of the Muslim Clergy; The First Congress of Muslim Soldiers; and The Second Congress of All Muslims of Russia. The Assembly proclaimed a cultural-national autonomy. Announcement of this cultural-national autonomy strengthened feelings of national unity<sup>21</sup>.

These Congresses also managed to unify a significant percentage of the population, won popularity among them, and created a "single stream" within the national liberation movement. By trying to release the nation from the fetters of *tsarism* and feudal chains in the social life in this period, this movement played an indisputably positive role. These organizations awakened a political life in all strata of society and stimulated the rise of the national consciousness.

The First and Second Congresses of the Muslims of Russia displayed contradictions about defining the forms of a national-state system. For instance, Sadri Maksudi talked about necessity of territorial autonomy for Muslims living in the districts of Russia, but never advanced a slogan of federation. Both Akhmed Tsalikov and Gumer Teregulov supported him in his views.

In 1917, many, including the Tatar *esers*, held that if Russia became a federative state, it would not be possible for Tatars to establish territorial or local autonomy settled outside Kazan <sup>22</sup>. For example, Fuat Tuktarov thought that even if Russia was established as a federative state, only a national-cultural autonomy would be acceptable for Tatars.

At the same time, there were those who thought differently. The Muslim Socialist Committee was established at the beginning of April 1917 with Mullanur Vakhitov as the head of this organization. He welcomed a proclamation of the cultural-national autonomy, but included class issues in building this autonomy, believing that workers and peasants should be owners in this State.

In St.Petersburg, "Tatar Uchagy", a group of Tatar and Bashkir *esers*, supported federation, as the form of future national-state building for Russia and advocated the granting of independent territorial autonomy for both Tatars and Bashkirs.



## 2.5 National State- building after the Bolshevik

### Revolution of 1917

The Soviet government announced the following matters of national policy: equality and sovereignty of people of Russia; the right of free self-determination, up to and including separation and establishment of independent States; abolition of all national and religious privileges and restrictions; free development of minorities and ethnic groups<sup>23</sup>.

The Soviet government appealed to the Volga Tatars, the Crimean Tatars and to others oppressed by the tsarists. While their beliefs and customs had been violated by the tsars, the new Soviet government pledged, that their "beliefs and customs, their national and culture institutions would be free and inviolable." It was said in The Decree of Every Nation on Self-Determination: "Regulate your national life. You have a right to do it. Your rights are protected by all powers of the Revolution and by its institutions." However, this decree did not find concrete implementation in local places. The Tatars were represented very faintly in governing bodies and therefore could not have influence on serious matters. Moreover, their national organizations were not included in the local governments. All of this affected the national dignity of the Tatar people.

The *Millet Meclisi* (National Assembly) met from 20 November to 11 February 1918, in Ufa<sup>24</sup>. This assembly invited the Turk-tatars of interior Russia and Siberia. There were two factions in this Assembly; *turkceler* (turkists) and *tuftrakchylar* (federalists). *Turkcheler* wanted to unify all turkic-tatar people on the basis of cultural-national autonomy, because they thought that territorial autonomy could not resolve national problems. *Tuftrakchylar* advanced a territorial national

autonomy. They advocated the union of republics, and in this assembly, they suggested to create the Idel-Ural State of the Volga Tatars <sup>25</sup> . As a result, the *Millet Meclisi* proclaimed the Idel-Ural State. In a resolution of the Assembly it was said that, taking into account that the majority of the Tatar people populate the territory between the Southern Ural and the Volga river, and also taking into consideration national and cultural interests of nationalities that live in this territory, the National Assembly recognized the necessity to create the Autonomous State<sup>26</sup> .

This State included all territories of the Kazan, Ufa, Samara *guberniya*, and the southern part of the Orenburg *guberniya*. The project of this state took into account the national needs and cultural requirements of the people of this territory.

At the end of the Assembly, Sadri Maksudi said: "we will create the State deserving of the standards of the 20th century, and we will struggle not only for federation but also for an independent State <sup>27</sup> . However, the decision of the *Millet Meclisi* was not recognized by the Soviet government <sup>28</sup> .

### 2.5.1 Principles of the Tatar-Bashkir Soviet Republic

The Soviet government considered the Idel-Ural state a "creation of bourgeois nationalists", and tried to prevent its proclamation at any price. In this time the issue of establishment of the national statehood of the Tatar people was the most important question in the social life of Kazan. The Central government looked after the course of events in Kazan very carefully, because delaying a solution of the nationalities issue would antagonize a considerable part of the population within the Soviets. However, active figures of the Tatar national

movement such as Sadri Maksudi, Fuat Tuktarov, Ayaz Ishaki, Z. Kadiri, B. Kerimi, and G. Battal did not believe the promises of the Soviet government and rejected collaboration with them. After occupation of the territory of the Idel-Ural by the White Army, they tried to resume work on organization of the Tatar-Bashkir autonomy. However, General Kolchak, Supreme Commander- in-Chief of the White Army reacted negatively to their plans. After this, many leaders of the Tatar national movement went abroad and never came back to the USSR.

After banishing the White Army from the Volga and Ural region, the situation changed in favour of the Soviet government. On 23 March, 1919, the Bashkir Soviet autonomous republic was established. This was done to prevent the establishment of a Turkic State on the Middle Volga. There is no doubt that the Idel-Ural or the Tatar-Bashkir State was divided up before it came into existence, because its existence would have become a danger too real to be overlooked by the Soviet government, which was already weary of the nationalism of its Muslim minorities. The Tatar-Bashkir republic with the capital at Kazan would have further enhanced the role of that city as the political and cultural center of the Muslims of Russia. To prevent Turkic unity and the emergence of a dynamic republic in the Middle Volga, the Soviet government chose to sponsor the formation of a smaller republic. By doing so, it also fostered isolation and even nourished old jealousies and rivalries, thus facilitating its control over the peoples of the area<sup>29</sup> .

### CHAPTER III THE TATAR ASSR Under SOVIET RULE

#### 3.1 The Creation of the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Republic (Tatar ASSR)

On 4 May 1920, the Politburo created a commission for working out the formation of the Tatar republic, and for the establishment of its borders. I. Stalin, S. Kamenev, I. Preobrazhenskiy, and M. Vladimirskiy, who bore no relations to the Volga Tatars, were included in this commission. M. Sultan-Galiyev and S. Said-Galeyev, were the only Tatars who were included in the commission. Those discussions were culminated with the joint meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Party and of the Soviet of People's Commissars, which on May 27, 1920 issued the decree declaring the formation of the Tatar ASSR, as a part of the Russian Federation. The creation of the Tatar ASSR was the result of an effective application of administrative methods by the Centre, without taking into account local people's opinion. This decree ignored all projects of the national organizations regarding borders and the composition of the population of the Republic. The republic's borders were drawn so that the territory consisted of 68,000 sq. km., as opposed to the planned Tatar-Bashkir project of 130,000 sq. km. and the 220,000 sq.km project of the Idel-Ural State<sup>1</sup> . Only 1,459,600 of the 4,200,000 Tatars living in the Middle Volga area were included in the new republic. Despite the fact that in 1920 the Tatars represented 51 percent of the population of the republic, as compared with the 39.2 percent that was Russians, the Tatars could hardly rejoice. The borders of the republic, as they stood in 1920, excluded such areas as the Belebeev, Brisk, and Ufa *Uezds*, where Tatars represented the majority of the population<sup>2</sup> . Because of the arbitrary drawing of the borders of the Tatar and Bashkir ASSRs, 75 percent of the Tatar population

were left outside the boundaries of the Tatar republic. Moreover, the Tatars paradoxically represented the ethnic majority in the Bashkir ASSR.

The formation of two small separate Tatar and Bashkir autonomous republics instead of the promised Tatar-Bashkir republic, undermined the strength of Muslim unity under the leadership of the Volga Tatars, who were culturally and economically the most advanced Turks in Russia. Taking advantage of the geographic location of their territory, they had developed considerable commercial activity, serving as middle-men between Russia and the East. A statistical survey undertaken at the beginning of the nineteenth century, revealed that the Volga Tatars owned one-third of the industrial establishments in the Kazan province, and controlled most of the trade with the Orient. The Volga Tatars were the first of the Turks in Russia to develop a middle class. This enabled them to assume leadership of the Turkic movement in Russia.

Creating an autonomous republic, both the Soviet government and the Tatar-Communists pursued their own objectives. The Volga Tatars, who had lived under the oppression of the Russian State for four centuries, and who were arbitrarily separated among different administrative establishments, considered autonomy as a means for unification of the majority of the Volga Tatars. They believed that this would provide them with ample opportunity to carry out large-scale cultural, scientific and economic measures. It would also be possible to open schools, where instruction would be in the Tatar language, and to raise their standard of living. Autonomy, for the Volga Tatars, was an end in itself.

Lenin's theory of national-determination, viewed as a solution of the national issue in Russia, was entirely inadequate. The Communists looked upon national problems as something to exploit, not as something to solve. However, as a psychological weapon in the struggle for power, first in Russia and then abroad, Lenin's slogan of self-determination was to prove enormously successful. The outbreak of the Russian revolution allowed the Bolsheviks to put it to considerable demagogic use as a means of winning the support of the national movements, which the revolutionary period had developed in all their magnitude.

The Volga Tatar intelligentsia's notion of the scope of autonomous rights was different from that of the Soviet government's. The Tatar intelligentsia was in quite an optimistic mood for autonomy. Fatih Seifi Kazanlı and Galimcan Şeref, the renowned representatives of the Tatar Intelligentsia, wrote in their book *Tatarskoe Gosudarstvo*: "The Tatar republic was an autonomous republic, a part of the Russian Federation. Besides the Tatar republic, the Bashkir, Kirgiz, Turkestan, Azerbaijan, Ukrainian republics were also autonomous republics"<sup>3</sup>. By doing so, they tried to visually prove the place of the Tatar republic among other republics, and its equality with these republics.

The autonomous rights of Tatarstan were determined so that Tatarstan could issue its own laws in the spheres of administration, education, public health, agriculture, justice and social security. However, the Soviet government did not give the essential state functions to the local Tatar-Communists.

The Soviet government had to win Muslim allegiance to the new regime by proving in some fashion that the revolution's promises to eliminate the existing inequalities between Russians and non-Russians were not empty phrases.



To achieve this goal, until the mid-1920s the Soviet government chose not to interfere to any great extent with the Tatar party and government officials' approaches to the implementation of the policy of *korenizatsiya* (indigenization) in Tatarstan. This policy, which went into effect in 1920, was designed to promote the formation and growth of national personnel and thus to eliminate some of the tensions between Russians and non-Russians that stemmed from the frustrated national aspirations of the latter.

In Tatarstan, *korenizatsiya* became the policy of Tatarization of the party and government apparatus, the intellectuals, and the language, and had the support of all Tatars.

The Tatarization of the language was understood to mean its purification - the restoration of its integrity and wholeness after eradication of the damaging effects of the centuries old russification policies. The Congress of the Tatar-Bashkir teachers and intellectuals held in Kazan and Moscow in 1924 and the Congress of Terminology held in Kazan that same year could be singled out as major efforts in the campaign to halt Russification and implement Tatarization. To this end, when the participants at the Congress on Terminology discussed the principles that would be adopted for the development of the Tatar language, the main emphasis was on the need for the Tatars to abstain from borrowing any other language whenever their own language contained enough resources for enriching its own vocabulary. The Congress further recommended that the Tatar language be weeded of Arabic and Russian words. Whenever the language lacked a word or a term, the terminology most widely used in Western languages should become the repository from which the missing term would be selected, and then adopted to the pattern and rules of the Tatar language<sup>4</sup>.

The most outspoken and ardent supporter of tatarization of the language was Galimcan Ibragimov. He considered the national language to be the primary ingredient of a national culture and saw the future of Tatar culture as dependent on the future of the Tatar language. Ibragimov also elaborated on the efforts aimed at the tatarization of national institutions. Here, the crucial issue was the link between the national skilled personnel and the development and improvement of education.

In connection with this, preparatory courses were organized to train skilled personnel among the Tatar population. The Tatar language was the language of instruction at these courses. 800 Tatars were trained at these courses in 1925. All of this had as its object the wide use of the Tatar language, that was intelligible to the indigenous population.

In the first years of *korenizatsiya*, when Tatar national Communists still held important positions in the party and government apparatus, the Tatar party organization supported the efforts of the intellectuals to promote the Tatar language. The ninth Conference of the Tatar party organization, criticized the chauvinism that characterized the attitude of some Russian Communists toward the Tatar language.

The government of Tatarstan also prepared a draft of the republic constitution, which was discussed in a session of the Central Executive Committee of Tatarstan in 1925<sup>5</sup>. However, there was resistance from the Centre, and the draft of Constitution did not obtain the force of law. The Soviet government was willing to tolerate to some extent the use of autonomous rights by the government of Tatarstan, but it refused their legitimation. At first, the Tatar intelligentsia's views on autonomous rights of Tatarstan, and practical work were greeted with enthusiasm. However, they gradually began to meet with obstacles.

A small number of the Tatar Communists were members of the administration. The Buro of the Tatar obkom of RCP(b) (the Russian Communist Party of bolsheviks) consisted of nine members. Only three of them, S.Said-Galiyev, Kasimov and Izmailov were Tatars<sup>6</sup> . The government of Tatarstan consisted of seven Tatars and six non-Tatars. However, non-Tatars were at the head of all important state organizations.

The recurrent purges of the Tatar Communists gradually led to their exclusion from political work, and later even to their liquidation. However, until as late as 1923, Tatar leaders made a special effort to reserve as many positions as possible for their nation.

Until the late 1920s, the Volga Tatars used the Arabic alphabet which their ancestors, the Volga Bulgars had used since the ninth century. The adoption of the Latin alphabet was discussed at the First Turcological Congress held in Baku in 1926. Ibragimov defended the validity of the Arabic alphabet for the Volga Tatars. His principal argument was that Tatarstan had an old and significant culture based on Arabic script. However, the Congress passed a resolution adopting the Latin alphabet. Overnight it produced an instant crop of millions of illiterate Muslims who found that a wall had been erected between them and their pre-Soviet cultural heritage. Another major impact was the elimination of a vital channel of communication with the Islamic umma outside the Soviet Union and, as a result, the further isolation of the Muslims of the Soviet Union. The adoption of the Latin alphabet was a means of facilitating the Russification of the Tatar Language. Twelve years later, in 1939-1940, in line with the soviet national policy toward Russification, the Latin alphabet was in turn replaced by a modified Cyrillic alphabet. This last alphabet change gave the soviets a convenient opportunity to

reprint, in the new Cyrillic alphabet, only those works they considered acceptable, relegating all others to oblivion.

### 3.2 The Liquidation of the Autonomous Rights of Tatarstan

The 14th Congress of the Communist Party, held in 1925, took a resolution on the construction of socialism in the Soviet union. In connection with this resolution, the Party began the centralization of the state apparatus. The Party and the Central government were recognizing autonomous rights of republics only so far as this served as a means of propaganda. At the end of the 1920's, the work on collectivization of agriculture and on State grain procurements were begun. This was accompanied by peasant uprisings and by murders of Party members. As a result, the power of OGPU and NKVD was strengthened and they began to rule the country by methods of terror.

Purges of the Tatar Communists began with Sultangaliyev's first arrest in 1923. During the period between his first arrest in 1923 and his arrest and banishment in 1928, Sultangaliyev gave impetus to the nationalist drive by organizing, leading underground national societies, and continuing to add new theses to his program. One such thesis advanced the concept of the creation of the The Republic of Turan, an independent and ethnically homogenous state that would include the Middle Volga, Azerbaijan, Dagestan, the North Caucasus and Turkestan, and would bring about the administrative unity of all the Turkic peoples of Russia. This issue gained the attention of the underground political circles that had sprung up in both Middle Volga and Turkestan.

The boldness exhibited by the Tatar Communists in defending their national culture proved to be counterproductive, however, and it brought about the ultimate demise of national communism as a political force in Tatarstan. In 1927, at a time when Ibragimov's essay underlined the urgency of finding out "Which Way Will Tatar Culture Go?" a high-ranking delegation of Tatar commissars of the people traveled to Moscow to call attention to the chauvinism and imperialist policies of the Russian Communists, and to negative effects the Volga Tatars were having on the national interests of their republics. Accusations of nationalist deviations triggered Sultangaliyev's second arrest and justified the final purge of the Tatar national Communists.

The Party Control Commission expelled the Sultangaliyevists from membership in the Communist Party in 1928. After their expulsion from the Party, K.Muhtarov, chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Tatarstan, K.Mansurov, head of the propaganda section of the CEC of Tatarstan, R. Sabirov, first secretary of the Obkom, M. Burundukov, people's commissar of education, V. Ishakov, vice-president of Tatar Gosplan and M. Badaili, first secretary of the Tatar Komsomol were arrested and convicted for sins that included "plotting against the dictatorship of the proletariat" and maintaining ties with emigre circles.

The purge of the top leadership was soon followed by a general purge of the party organization of Tatarstan. In 1930 alone, 2,056 Tatar Communists, representing 13.4 percent of the total membership, were expelled from the Party; 2,273 received the death penalty for their nationalist deviation, and 329 were fired from the posts they had occupied.

Equally important targets were the cultural, educational and scientific institutions of Tatarstan. The first to feel the brunt of the cultural purge, the

Society of Tatarology which was dismantled in 1929. This was followed by a similar action against the Oriental Institute of Kazan in 1930, and virulent attacks on the Union of Tatar Proletarian writers and the Tatar State Publishing House in 1932. The purge of the top establishment in the world of culture, science and education was only the beginning of the overall purge of cultural institutions, a purge that touched writers and humble village teachers alike simply because Tatar Communists had dared to express openly a firm commitment to the national values, culture, and aspirations of their people.

The work on *korenizatsiya* carried out by the Tatar government and purification of the Tatar language were labeled as counter-revolutionary<sup>7</sup>. The laws, taking into account the local conditions in Tatarstan, were also abrogated and were replaced with laws that were common for the Russian Federation. The Party created centralism in economy, ideology and in administration. Autonomous republics began to lose their autonomous rights and as a result, they could no longer distinguished from the administrative-territorial establishments any.

The Stalin era was marked by a dramatic shift toward greater centralization, cultural russification, and the repression of non-Russian national elites. The rights of republics and autonomous regions were whittled away, their boundaries arbitrarily redrawn, and the populations of some liquidated or forcibly resettled during World War II. National histories were rewritten to emphasize the progressive character of Russian imperialism, and criticism of Great Russian chauvinism came to the an end. The cultivation of national languages and cultures was replaced by the process of Russification.

The Constitution of the USSR, that was accepted on 5 December 1936, regrouped national establishments of the USSR and some autonomous republics

were given Union status. However, as before, Tatarstan remained an autonomous republic. Both Union and autonomous republics adopted their constitutions; however, these constitutions were drawn up on the same pattern of the Soviet government. Tatarstan's Constitution adopted in 1937, was the same as the Constitutions of the Russian Federation and the USSR and repeated all the main provisions of these Constitutions. Thus, the Tatarstan Constitution was stillborn, and as a result it could not change the status of the republic for the better. The purges of the Tatar intellectuals and other strata of the population were continued and the remaining national rights of the republic were liquidated.

The Constitution of 1937 so narrowed the functions of the Supreme state bodies of Tatarstan, that they could not even take decisions to rename a city or town in Tatarstan without the approval of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation. In more important issues, such as the disposal of economic resources of the republic, finance, the regulation of wages, issues of education, culture, public health and social security, Tatarstan was treated almost the same as the usual administrative-territorial establishments.

The purges continued until 1939 among the Tatar and Bashkir intelligentsia and affected all those - former partisans or opponents of Sultan-Galiyev who defended the political and cultural autonomy of native Muslims. Even linguists opposing the introduction of the Latin alphabet became targets.

In the post- World War II period, Tatarstan underwent an intensive industrialisation and urbanisation program together with heavy Russian immigration. This resulted in a dangerous polarisation of society in Tatarstan, where the Tatars represented mainly the rural, peasant communities and the Russians represented urban industrial workers and technical cadres. Although

urban migration began later among the Tatars than among Russians, it remained fairly steady between 1930 and 1950, the gap between the two communities beginning to widen in the late 1950s. The percentage difference between the Tatar and Russian urban population in the republic was 13 percent in 1926, increasing to 28.4 percent in 1959 and 30.5 percent in 1979 <sup>8</sup> . According to the All-Union census of 1979, the Tatars represented only 38 percent of the urban population of the republic. As a result of this, the qualification of Tatar workers became lower than that of the other national groups of the republic.

Because the Volga Tatars were granted an autonomous and not a union republic, they were more restricted in action , with fewer rights than those nationality groups possessing Union republics. For example, on account of their ASSR status, the six million Tatars had only 11 deputies in the Soviet Nationalities, whereas the one million Estonians and one million Kirgiz had 32 deputies each <sup>9</sup> .

The paradox has not gone unnoticed by Soviet authorities. A 1966 study in the Tatar ASSR by the Institute for State and Law of the Academy of Sciences called for the extension of rights of the Tatar ASSR to correspond with the republic's high cultural and economic level. The Study established that there were no spheres, where the republic could actually create their own laws taking into account the local conditions in Tatarstan. Thus the word "autonomy" in application to Tatarstan, did not have any real meaning.

Furthermore the ideological concept of the CPSU toward russification of the Tatar language led to the exclusion of the Tatar language from daily use . In 1950-1951, there were 1,741 Tatar schools in Tatarstan; by 1974, this number



decreased to 1,515. The number of students in Tatar schools was reduced as well from 197,000 to 127,000.

### 3.3 The Tatar National Movement

The Tatar National Movement was one of the significant constituent parts of the liberation movement in Russia at the beginning of the XXth century. As a result of the acts of terror of Stalin's regime in 1920-1930, this movement was beheaded and suppressed. However, the potential for struggle against totalitarianism remained.

Some facts, that have only recently become known attest to this. According to S.M. Lipkin, translator of the Tatar epic *Idigey*, on the eve of accepting the decree of the Soviets of Commissars of the Communist Party of 9 August 1944, in which the party in the Tatar ASSR was severely criticized for the idealisation of the Golden Horde and Tatar national history, Stalin apparently remarked, that "Tatars thought a lot of themselves"<sup>10</sup>. It is no mere chance that the issue of the status of Tatarstan had been discussed by the Communist Party Politburo before the acceptance of the 1937 Constitution of the USSR. Stalin gave private instruction to A.Vyshinsky to work out criteria, based on which, Tatarstan was blocked from receiving the status of Union republic. It became obvious, that the decree of 9 August 1944 was a blow against the Tatar intelligentsia, which was at the forefront of the National Movement that had emerged during the temporary weakening of Stalin's dictatorship.

However, this decree and a number of concrete measures did not achieve their objective. Discussion between two Tatar scientists Kh. Gimadi and M.

Safargaliyev, that took place in 1951 in the pages of the journal *Voprosy Istorii*, became the first symptom of the new phenomenon in Tatar society. The heart of the discussion consisted of the following: Kh. Gimadi argued the point, that the Tatars descended from the Volga Bulgars, while Safargaliyev raised the question of the role of Turkic groups during the period of the Golden Horde in forming the Tatar people. This broke with the official version of the origin of the Tatars, canonized by the decree of 1944 and consolidated by the special session of the Department of History and Philosophy of the Academy of Sciences conducted on 25-26 April, 1946, with participation of scientists from the Institute of Language, Literature and History of the Academy of Sciences<sup>11</sup>. This discussion was by no means the first time that this point of view had been expressed.

In the post-Stalin era, the Volga Tatars national movement, more sophisticated and less outspoken than nationalism in Central Asia and the Caucasus, could mainly be discerned in the efforts of the intelligentsia to rehabilitate their political history and literature.

In 1954 a group of Tatar writers and specialists on the Tatar language and literature sent a letter to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, in which they indicated an artificial restraint on the development of the Tatar national culture, the reduction of the number of Tatar schools, the distortion of the history of Tatar-Russian relations and the decline of the Tatar population. They also raised the question of granting the status of Union republic to Tatarstan<sup>12</sup>.

With the thaw under Khrushchev this opposition strengthened and the local government was obliged to carry out arrangements in 1957-1959 to relieve the tension. A plenary session of *Obkom*, district Committee of the Party, accepted a resolution to increase the number of national schools<sup>13</sup>. Orfographical and

terminological commissions had resumed its work a year before. The state of national music was discussed. In October 1958, the first Congress of Cultural Workers took place<sup>14</sup> . However, counter-measures by Moscow followed immediately. Prominent rearrangements of the leaders of Tatarstan were made on 28 October, 1960, removing those leaders who were supporters of a new course, and the resolution on national schools was established<sup>15</sup> .

The Tatar intelligentsia attempted to act under these circumstances. It made an unsuccessful attempt to create an edition of a Tatar encyclopedia in 1962, and to establish the Society of Archeology, History and Ethnography at Kazan University. In the 1960's the strengthening of the Brezhnev-Suslov regime also prevented the process of national renewal that began in the second half of 1950's, from spreading. At the same time, the regime could no longer completely control the situation.

Certain informal groups had been active in Tatarstan during 1964-1966. Members of these groups had written letters and appeals to the party and state bodies. They wrote of their belief that without colonial oppression, fanatical Islamic religion and other obstacles, Tatar national culture would have developed successfully and taken its rightful place in world culture. They stated that they were troubled by the geographical disconnection of the Tatar people and the fact that Tatarstan was not a Union republic<sup>16</sup> . A number of letters, sent by ordinary citizens to party and state bodies, indicated their feelings that due to the high state of culture and social development, Tatarstan should be granted the status of Union republic.

The journal *Kazan Utları* had been publishing materials about the culture history of the Tatar people<sup>17</sup> . These materials show renewed interest among

representatives of the national intelligentsia and their new views on their history and culture. For instance, the discussion of the tower Suyumbike and aspiration to mark it as a Tatar monument, turned into a complicated problem of Tatar public opinion of the beginning of the XXth century.

Thus, there were preconditions for forming a national movement in 1950-1960. However, in the post-Stalin period, this movement did not take any large scale character. The problem of national identity was most critical in the cities, and in this period, the greater number of Tatars within the republic were still living in the countryside. During this time period, the gradual improvement of the well-being of the people must be noted. Nevertheless, the paradigm of national demands had been formulated. These demands appeared again with the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika, but on an absolutely new basis.

The 1970's and the first half of the 1980's form a transitional period. This period was highly important for Tatar society in many aspects. In this period urbanization processes intensified in the republic. The ratio of urban population among Tatars in Tatarstan rose from 38.6% to 63.4% during 1970- 1989<sup>18</sup> . The trend of cultural assimilation also increased. At the same time, demands for preserving the cultural integrity of the nation began growing. Existing differences in the level of proficiency between Tatars and Russians were not overcome. Moreover, in the conditions necessary for forming new cities, Tatars found themselves in a very disadvantageous situation. For instance, the number of highly skilled specialists among Tatars is half of the number among Russians<sup>19</sup> .

The social situation led to the increase in the dissatisfaction among Tatars, the more so, as limits on autonomous republics made it difficult to develop the national culture. Thus, during the process of developing the constitution of the

USSR of 1977, some suggestions about raising Tatarstan to the status of Union republic were prepared<sup>20</sup> . It is curious that starting with the 'end of the 1960's, quite a large number of works on Tatar history and ethnography appeared. Consequently, it can be inferred that there was social demand for such publications that favored deeping of the selfconsciouness of the nation.

In November 1982, the Academic Council of the Institute of Language, Literature and History organized a group that was required to learn the ethnic history of the Volga Tatars. In 1984, the monograph "The Tatar People: Their Origin and Development" was prepared and discussed. In February, 1985, the Conference on "Problems of Ethnic History of the Tatar People" took place <sup>21</sup> . There were aspirations among scientists for the preparation of a new history and attempts to reconstruct the history of the Volga Tatars.

### 3.4 Gorbachev's Nationalities Problems

The reforms of Mikhail Gorbavchev unleashed an unprecedented tide of protests and demonstrations across the USSR in which national grievance occupy a central place alongside economic unrest. From Alma Ata to Abkhazia, from Tallin to Tbilisi, virtually no region of this vast and complex multinational society appeared immune to the rising tide of national self-assertion.

Whether in the form of anti-Russian demonstrations, as in Kazakhstan and Georgia, or in the emergence of new sociopolitical movements demanding greater economic and political autonomy, such as the Popular Fronts of Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia, or in more volatile outbursts of communal violence that have resulted in a tragic loss of lives and many thousands of refugees, as in Armenia, Azerbaijan

and Uzbekistan, national self-assertion posed a growing threat to Gorbachev's leadership and to the future of his reforms.

Gorbachev clearly failed to anticipate that the process of reform would inevitably reignite the "nationalist question" and then its potential explosiveness. In two short years, between 1986 and 1988, swiftly moving events propelled the nationalities question to the top of the Soviet political agenda. The decision to convene a special plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee to address critical problems of national relations was clear recognition of both the urgency of the challenge and the need for new departures. The fact that the plenum, as of this writing has been postponed four times is testimony to the issues complexity. Gorbachev's dilemmas have their roots in the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, which established Soviet power on the ruins of the tsarist imperial state. A fundamental tension was thus built into the Soviet system from its very origins. The Federal structure offered an organizational framework and political legitimacy for the protection and advancement of the interests of national groups, but at the same time Soviet ideology anticipated the ultimate dissolution of national attachments and loyalties and sought the creation of an integrated political and economic community based on universal Soviet citizenship. Gorbachev came to power relatively ill prepared to deal with the nationalities question.

Three aspects of Gorbachev's reform program played critical roles in bringing national problems to the forefront of politics. First and foremost was the impact of *glasnost* (openness), which gave an enormous impetus to the expression of long-simmering grievances by legitimizing public discussion of issues that were previously taboo, and allowing the Soviet media to become settings for genuine public debate. Gorbachev himself gave explicit

encouragement to this trend when he complained that for years social scientists had depicted national relations in an excessively rosy light, and that the absence of frank discussions of the problems had in fact exacerbated them.

The leadership's increasingly radical critique of Stalinism, and its call for the development of a new model of socialism, gave further impetus to a fundamental reassessment of the nationalities question. A growing number of articles, letters and roundtable discussions in the Soviet media began to speak out against an overcentralization that undermined the very principle of federation, against economic ministers that rode roughshod over local needs and interests, against language and cultural policies that were tantamount to forced russification and threatened the extinction of national identities, as well as against the mutilation of national histories and the repression of national elites.

Mass meetings and public demonstrations numbering many thousands of participants became a regular feature of the Soviet scene. Informal and unofficial organizations were devoted to a variety of political and social causes.

Political democratization also altered the status and attitudes of local leaders. Once almost exclusively dependent on political superiors, their careers now depended as well on their perceived responsiveness to local constituencies, as measured by success or failure in competitive elections.

For the first time in its history, the Communist Party itself fragmented along clearly national lines. Growing national divisions were creating tensions within other republic party organizations as well, promoting repeated appeals from the Baltic leadership to maintain party unity and organizational discipline.

Finally, economic stringency-compounded by the disruptions caused by the very process of economic reorganization was itself a major source of rising

discontent, just as economic growth had earlier contributed to the political stability, emboldened by a political climate that tolerated increasing outspokenness and expression of discontent. Striking miners in Siberia and the Ukraine in July extracted major concessions from the leadership and set an example that was likely to have widespread repercussions.

### 3.3 The Rise of the Tatar National Movement after 1985

Simultaneously, in the early of 1988, Tatars from different regions of the USSR began sending letters to the Party organs<sup>22</sup>. In these letters they indicated to the party that the Tatar language and culture were in grave condition. They said that Tatars who lived outside of Tatarstan could not contact with those who lived within Tatarstan. Scientists of the Kazan branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR sent letter to the XIX Conference of the Communist Party that took place in June 1988<sup>23</sup>. In this letter, they indicated their national demands, including the demand that the autonomous republic of Tatarstan should have union status. In this period, ethnic history and issues of the ethnonymy of the Tatar people, the issues of toponymy, the role of Islam, the problems in culture and in the Tatar language began to be discussed in newspapers<sup>24</sup>. The actual topics concentrated public opinion on the main issues of the Tatar people. In 1987 and 1988, there were debates around ethnic history and issues of ethnonymy of the Tatar people and issues of "Bulgars and Tatars". Consequently, there were changes in public consciousness.

In this period, the issues of the toponymy of the Tatar people were discussed<sup>25</sup>. Participants in the discussion expressed the desire to rename the city



of Kuybyshev to Bulgar, initiating the introduction of some names from the period of the Volga Bulgars into Kazan.

Related to the issue of toponymy was the issue of symbols. Attempts to return some old names such as "Bulgars" or to consolidate them in the toponymy of Kazan had the aim of incarnating certain symbols of the Tatar people such as towers and buildings. The discussion about the tower of Süyümbike is evidence of this. This discussion began on 6 June 1987 and was continued in 1988 and 1989<sup>26</sup>. Some leaders of the Tatar national movement initiated the erection of a crescent on the top of the tower of Süyümbike on 10 August 1989<sup>27</sup>. It is obvious that the aspiration to mark the tower with the muslim symbol attested to the aspiration to see the tower as a particular relic and as a symbol of the Tatar people. These discussions created a positive shift in people's consciousnesses. By the end of 1990, as a result of these phenomena, the Tatar community was prepared to address the question of State symbols of Tatarstan such as arms and the flag.

The Tatar people's understanding of the role of Islam by was progressing very slowly. This topic was still forbidden in 1987. The first careful demands for a respectful attitude to the words Islam sounded in the newspapers and magazines of Tatarstan only in March of 1988. The All-Russian Congress took place on 24 May 1988 in Kazan but, the issue of the role of Islam in the history of the public thought of the Tatar people was discussed in 1989 only, during the preparation of the 1100th anniversary of the acceptance of Islam by the Volga Bulgars.

Specialists on ethnic identity agree that Tatars have historically rallied around religion and language. Both Tatar and Western scholars say that the strength of the Tatars' Islamic heritage is the reason they have survived as a distinct and ethnically conscious people since Ivan the Terrible invaded their

country in 1552. Although the tsars attempted to convert them forcibly to Christianity and the communists imposed atheism, the Tatars have continued to see themselves as Muslims<sup>28</sup> .

The discussions concerning culture and language took place in 1987, but they were not on a large scale. In this period, the situation in the spheres of folklore, music, and theatre was somewhat better. Two conferences on these matters took place in February 1987 in Kazan<sup>29</sup> . However, the discussion did not reach the necessary scope. In 1988 and 1989, everything in the sphere of culture was reduced merely to the organization of folklore festivals, conferences and some competitions. Most issues of culture and language were tied to the political status of Tatarstan, as by this time, the political status of Tatarstan had taken the key place in public discussion. The struggle for the return of the cultural heritage of prominent figures of Tatar culture, such as Mercani, Ishaki, Atlasi, Davletşin and some politicians of the 1920s, such as Sultan-Galeyev was quite impressive, but it was done without trying to deeply understand their role and place in the history of the Tatar people.

In December 1987, the question of broadening the spheres of the use of the Tatar language was raised, but this issue was narrowed to merely the problem of orthography. The first detailed article with substantiation of the necessity of State status for the Tatar language appeared on 26 October 1988<sup>30</sup>. Although the issue of language had been discussed in the press in 1989 and 1990, the matter was reduced to the allocation of State status for the Tatar language. Many key aspects of a socio-linguistic character were not sufficiently interpreted in publications. These include the level of command of the Tatar language by the Tatar population. The establishment of real spheres of functioning of the Tatar language; cleansing the

language of foreign words; and the problem of a literary language and that of dialects.

In 1988-1990, various public groups and associations appeared among the Tatar people. These organizations became a catalyst for public consciousness. The democratization process in the USSR and the change in many aspects of life brought about the appearance of these organizations. This was the period of the formation of the modern Tatar national liberation movement. On 27 June 1988 The Tatar Public Center (TPC) was created<sup>31</sup>. Its structure reflected a broad spectrum of concerns shared by the social forces. These concerns were being articulated by committees for history, language education, the economy, ecology, young people, relations with foreign countries, the clergy, and Tatar mothers<sup>32</sup>. This last committee of the TPC emerged as a social force concerned both with the moral regeneration of the Tatar nation and with the problems, values, welfare, and role of Tatar women and mothers. The main topic concerned federalism and sovereignty. Dissatisfaction with the 'second rate' status of the Tatar republic had been endemic since the days of Sultan-Galiyev. It had surfaced in 1936 when a new constitution of the USSR was being adopted, again in the 1960s and 1970s resulting in purges of the national elites, and again in 1986 when an active campaign was unleashed demanding that the republic be upgraded from 'autonomous' to 'union republic' status. TPC's manifesto stated in its introductory lines the need for a genuine federal system that could guarantee the sovereignty of all the republics and nations of the USSR. Without this fundamental prerequisite there could be no *perestroyka*.

The Mercani Society and the Club of Bulgar History "Bulgar Al-Cedid" were created, and later entered the TPC with the rights of a section within this organization. The Ethnographic Cultural Association of the Tatar-Kryashen, The

Union of Young People, The Committee "Sovereignty", The Center of Islamic Youth Culture also came into existence in 1990.

The XIXth Congress of the CPSU took place on 28 June 1988. For the first time since the beginning of *perestroyka* the CPSU raised the issue of nationalities. In the Congress delegates spoke of the necessity of widening the rights of autonomous establishments using delimitation of competence of the Soviet Union and Soviet republics; decentralization; transfer of some functions of governing to regions; strengthening independence and the responsibility of local governments in the area of economics<sup>33</sup>. This gave impetus to the leadership to speak openly about social and economic problems in the republic.

Although, the Tatar ASSR was one of the most economically developed regions of the Russian Federation according to the level of productive forces and scientific and technical potential, it had some problems in economics. With the rapid development of new cities (Naberezhnye Chelny, Nizhnekamsk) and industrial oil extraction centers, the population had increased to two million in these regions<sup>34</sup>. However, attempts to improve the production of foodstuffs and to build infrastructure on an adequate in the scale were unsuccessful. The truck factory "KAMAZ" produced its millionth truck, yet, at the same time, there were not enough trucks in agricultural zones. In 1989 more than two billion tons of oil was extracted from the Tatar ASSR. In connection with this, large number of communication systems were built, the soil was dug up, covered with wounds and nature was ruined. However, the Tatar ASSR did not directly profit from the oil extraction. Moreover, the Tatar ASSR did not have the right to dispose of any representatives of the national intelligentsia and their new views on their history and culture. For instance, the discussion of the tower Suyumbike and aspiration to

mark it as a Tatar monument, turned into a complicated problem of Tatar public opinion of the beginning of the XXth century.

Although the agriculture sector of the Tatar ASSR was far from perfect, it was better developed than in the neighbouring republics. A considerable amount of agricultural products were sold outside of the republic. In 1987, the central government in Moscow defined quotas for the Tatar ASSR as 40 million kilogram of meat intended for different regions of the country<sup>35</sup>. When the Tatar ASSR did not implement this quota and allowed part of this meat to remain in Tatarstan, the center immediately punished Tatarstan by cutting off the fund on goods<sup>36</sup>.

The enterprises of Tatarstan assigned a large part of their profits to the union and the Russian Federation budgets. However, only a small part of these budgets returned to Tatarstan for development. The leadership of the Tatar ASSR worked out a conception of transition from the center to the regional *khozraschet* (self-governing and self-financing programme). The aim of this transition was to raise the standard of living on the basis of intensification of production; the rise in effectiveness and organization of production; and the establishment of productive agriculture, national and cultural development for all nationalities living in Tatarstan. The new approach to the territorial management meant the widening of economic self-government of the Tatar ASSR; defining the borders of economic sovereignty; proceeding with realization of political, economic and legal defense for establishing sovereignty and transferring some powers from the center to the local level. The leadership of the republic considered this transition as a step to real political and economic independence<sup>37</sup>. In this situation Tatarstan would be able to resist bureaucratic dictates of the central government and to command methods in economics. However, the conception of *khozraschet* worked out in the republic

was altered in Moscow<sup>38</sup> . This was more evidence that , without political sovereignty, economic independence was out of the question.

In connection with this, the press began to publish materials and discussions of the Party leaders about sovereignty and its benefit to the republic. It was marked in discussions that differentiation in the status of union republics and autonomous republics had been Stalin's heritage<sup>39</sup> . It was said that Tatarstan had a full right to be a sovereign republic. By the volume of production, Tatarstan took second place in the Volga region and 11th in the Russian Federation, by profit, the first eight places accordingly. Tatarstan had produced 25% of all union products of polyethylene, 75% of butylrubber, 30% of photographic, 14% of tires, 7% of crude oil and 3,5% of electric power. Furthermore, than 70 nationalities live in Tatarstan, among them 1,712,800 Tatars, 1,583,300 Russians, 154,700 Chuvashes, 32,400 Mordvas, 28,000 Ukrainians, 25,200 Udmurts, 10,800 Bashkirs. At this time there were 1,771 libraries with 26 million books and magazines, 10 theatres and 16 museums<sup>40</sup> .

Also, there was a judicial basis for the sovereignty of Tatarstan. The XXIst Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations accepted "The Pact of Civil and Political Rights" on 16 December 1966<sup>41</sup> . This Pact consolidated the right to establish a national state. Also, the Vienna meeting of Representatives of the States of the Conference on Security and Collaboration in Europe signed on 19 January 1966, and ratified by the USSR. The Declaration of the Rights of People of Russia had also consolidated the right for self-determination.

The Principle of Sovereignty of Nations was written into the Constitution of the USSR and in a new law of the USSR on differentiation of powers between the Soviet Union and subjects of federation. The XXVII Congress of the CPSU had also confirmed the right of autonomous establishments to raise their status.<sup>42</sup>

However, in this period, the Russian population of Tatarstan was afraid of sovereignty. Their fear was based on some reasons, including 1) Transfer of the national collision in the Baltic republics and other regions of the country on the territory of Tatarstan; 2) Persistence of old stereotypes; and 3) The fear that the Tatar language would be introduced as the State language<sup>43</sup>.

Sovereignty was initiated by the Russian leadership, Boris Yeltsin who was then the chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. They demanded that the former USSR's old totalitarian center, which resisted all reforms, concede greater rights to the republics and territories. The sovereignization processes had a deep impact on the multinational Russian Federation itself. It was perfectly natural that the autonomous formations should become actively involved in the struggle for independence. All this applies to Tatarstan as well, especially since Boris Yeltsin visited Tatarstan and promised not to create inside Russia anything like old union center. He proposed to take as much sovereignty as Tatarstan could<sup>44</sup>. All these factors played a definite role in the republic's struggle.

"The Declaration of the State Sovereignty of Tatarstan" appeared on 30 August 1990<sup>45</sup>. This document opened the way to real sovereignty, and was an act of self-determination by the Tatar people. This document also threw out from the name of the republic the word "autonomous" discredited itself during the years of Soviet power. In spite of the collapse of the USSR, the Declaration continued to work, and laid the judicial basis for negotiations with the Russian Federation and

for the establishment of relations on the basis of a bilateral treaty. This Declaration played a significant role in establishing stability, and inter-ethnic peace. The Declaration put forward the establishment as state languages of both Russian and Tatar . This statement was later sealed in the 1992 Constitution of Tatarstan.

### 3.5 Tatarstan after the Declaration of Sovereignty

On 17 March 1991, while the Soviet Union held a referendum to decide on the future of the Union, Tatarstan refused to take part in the vote, held simultaneously in the RSFSR, on the instigation of a popularly elected president. Preparations for the presidential elections of the RSFSR were met in Kazan by massive demonstrations. As a result, on 27 May 1991 when the Soviet leaders met in the Kremlin to sign the Union Treaty, Mintimir Shaymiyev, then leader of Tatarstan's Supreme Soviet, declared that Tatarstan intended to sign the treaty only as a subject of the USSR and not as a vassal of Russia<sup>46</sup> .The next day Tatarstan's Supreme Soviet declared that the Republic would elect its own president and forbade republican civil servants to take part in the forthcoming RSFSR elections. On 12 June 1991, the day of the Russian elections, Mintimir Shaymiyev, the only candidate, was elected president of Tatarstan. Only 36 percent of the Tatarstan electorate took part in the federal elections, of which 14 percent voted for Yeltsin. 60 percent voted in the Tatar elections, with two-thirds of the votes supporting Shaymiyev.

The appearance of new national public organizations continued in 1991-1992. The First All-Tatar *Kurultay* took place in February 1992<sup>47</sup> . Representatives of Tatars living in the Commonwealth States and the Baltic countries took part in it



along with delegates from the Tatar population of Tatarstan. A *Milli Meclis* (National Assembly) of 75 deputies was elected at this Kurultay. The *Milli Meclis* adopted a law on the status of the Tatar language declaring it to be the state language of Tatarstan. A decision was also adopted "On the national flag of the Tatar people," a green panel bearing a half moon and seven pointed stars which was significantly different from the State flag of Tatarstan. Those taking part in the Kurultay appealed to be "taken to the bosom" of the Islamic Conference organization. In the view of the official politicians and lawyers the decision adopted by the Milli Meclis had no legal force, for the republic's constitution did not recognize any such body. The First Kurultay requested the Security Council of the UN to admit Tatarstan as a full member of UN, and had requested the parliaments of the Independent Commonwealth States to recognize Tatarstan's independence.

The Islamic Democratic Party was organized on 31 March 1991. Under the aegis of the TPC, the Congress of Public Education Workers took place on 9 November 1992 in Kazan. At this Congress, The All-Tatar Association "Magarif" was established. Finally, the Congress of World Tatars took place on 19 June 1992 in Kazan, with 1.200 delegates from CIS, USA, Turkey, Finland, Germany, Poland, Japan, Australia, China, Sweden, Norway and Romania<sup>48</sup>. This Congress elected the 25-member executive committee which included delegates from Tatarstan, countries of the CIS, the United States, Finland and Turkey. This international public organization, to function between congresses, was to mediate in settling ethnic problems and meeting the spiritual needs of Tatars living outside Tatarstan. The resolution of the congress expressed the confidence that the Tatar people will continue living in friendliness with the Russian and other peoples. The Executive

Committee of the Congress put to task to promote the social, economic and cultural development of Tatarstan; to develop and implement linguistic, scientific, educational and cultural programmes; and to organize the publication of newspapers and journals and the making of television and radio programmes. For the first time in centuries, representatives of republics, assembled on the ancient land of their Tatar ancestors. The national organizations played a significant role during the authority crisis in Tatarstan and during preparation of "The Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan."

The Tatar national movement actively participated in a number of large-scale political actions during 1991. The national movement facilitated the elections of the Tatarstan president and boycotted the elections of president of the Russian Federation in the territory of Tatarstan.

The leadership of Tatarstan held an inflexible position during the elections of the Russian president which resulted in an extremely tense political situation in May 1991. The leaders of the national movement managed to gather together a meeting of more than 50,000 people. This was the biggest manifestation of national powers. Also, the national public organizations played a significant role during the referendum of Tatarstan on its union status in support of sovereignty. In 1989-1990, the national movement became quite influential. According to a public opinion poll of December, 1990, 12% of people expressed their trust in the national organizations, whereas only 9.4% supported the CPSU.

Such problems as absence of consumer goods, price increases and the crime pushed the national issues into second place. Simultaneously, the official authority of the republic took initiatives into its own hands and consolidated its position in the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan in 1990.

By 1991, the Tatar national movement began weakening, a tendency which became especially noticeable after the August coupe. The founding of the *Milli Meclis* had created two streams inside of the national movement. This fact played a negative role in the future development of the movement by causing a conflict among the different factions within the movement. By the end of 1993, the Tatar national movement experienced a severe crisis.

While the worsening economic situation played some role in this process, this crisis can not be reduced to economic factors only. A deeper reason was the national intelligentsia's lack of preparation in offering a new programme of national development, and their inability to formulate clear, explicit goals. Their initial concept of sovereign Tatarstan with the status of Union republic and the achievement of complete independence was quite abstract, and this caused feelings of deep dissatisfaction. In addition, there were no leaders on a national scale within the national movement. There were three factors for this. Firstly, the republic held the status of "autonomous republic" for a long time, horizons for political activities were distinctly limited and the possibility for the growth of the political activities of the leaders essentially diminished; the more so as this process had strictly been controlled by Moscow. Secondly, until recently, the expression of the national idea or a national feelings openly by Tatar political leaders in Tatarstan was impossible. In summer of 1992, the rate of the TPC had 2%, Ittifak-1.3%, at the same time communists were supported by 8% of the population.

Thirdly, Gorbachev's decision to end the 'leading role' of the Communist Party in the USSR, implemented in March 1990, legitimized political pluralism in Tatarstan, promoted the disintegration of the Party and gave a boost to the national-democratic movement.

Following the March 1992 Tatarstan referendum and the November 1992 adoption of the Tatarstan Constitution, the popularity of President Shaymiyev grew. Many Tatar nationalists came to believe that their government acted in the best interests of the republic and the Tatar nation, while the Russian population of Tatarstan, less politicized than the Tatars, was satisfied with the political stability and the republic's relative economic prosperity.

Thus, Shaymiyev, President of Tatarstan, became the national leader. In 1992, 57,6% of electors expressed their trust in him, and 59,1% of those who had been polled in December of the same year. The President, the Prime Minister of the republic and the Chairman of the Parliament are all Tatars, and they are seen as national leaders in the public consciousness. The issue of the role of the Tatar *nomenclatura* in contemporary social processes has not been investigated. This social strata can become an exponent of interest of the Tatar nation.

In the near future the decline in the Tatar national movement will continue. The state and state organizations will take in their hands the functions of organizer of national life and of the national movement. Consequently, the official power is strengthen its role in Tatar society and in Tatarstan.

## CHAPTER IV: THE NEGOTIATION PROCESS BETWEEN TATARSTAN And RUSSIA in 1991-1994

### 4.1 The Beginning of Negotiations

Negotiations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation began on 12 April 1991. The "Declaration of State Sovereignty of Tatarstan" that was accepted by the Supreme Soviet of Tatarstan on 30 August 1990, laid down the basis for these negotiations, because the Declaration made no mention of Tatarstan as being part of the Russian Federation. The Declaration put the basis of sovereignty, this document creating a "particular position" for Tatarstan. These negotiations became the first one in the history of the Volga Tatars since the Russian State invaded their country in 1552.

In Moscow, President Yeltsin's principle negotiator with the Tatar delegation was his State Secretary, Genadiy Burbulis. The Tatarstan delegation was led by Vasiliy Likhachev, Vice-President of the Republic of Tatarstan. A well-known member of the Tatar delegation was Doctor Indus Tagirov, who was a leading scholar of Tatar studies and Dean of the History Faculty of Kazan University. In his speech, he stood for the goals of the Republic of Tatarstan in these negotiations, and on those principles, on which its activity was based. He also marked that the Volga Tatars have a thousand-year History and they never stopped their struggle for independence. He also mentioned the fact, that Tatarstan never voluntarily formed a part of Russia<sup>1</sup>.

The Tatar delegation relied heavily upon the early Soviet commitments namely, "The Declaration of Working People"<sup>2</sup>. This document, accepted by the Third Russian Congress of the Soviets, in January 1918, said that the Russian

Federation was based upon the principle of freedom and equality of Soviet republics; that the republics were to join the Federation voluntarily; and that it was up to the republics to decide for themselves whether to join or to get out of the Federation<sup>3</sup>.

It is well known that M. Gorbachev began his reforms with the renovation of the USSR and the CPSU, the only party in the country. With Gorbachev's initiatives, a project on drawing up the new Union Treaty was started. Tatarstan defined its own particular position regarding this issue. Tatarstan would sign this treaty only as an independent unit, but not as a part of the Russian Federation. This position would give Tatarstan the status of the Union republic, and would put it on equal rights with other Union republics. It would also mean the secession of Tatarstan from the Russian Federation. This is why the leadership of the Russian Federation's goal was to keep Tatarstan in the same positions as other autonomous republics. Therefore, during the first negotiations G. Burbulis and S. Shakhrai said that Tatarstan had to sign the Union Treaty as part of the Russian Federation. However, the August 19 coup against Gorbachev occurred while the negotiations were proceeding and the political dynamics changed. The USSR collapsed and the signing of the Union Treaty fell. However, the issue of relations between Tatarstan and Russia remained.

#### 4.2 The Referendum of 21 March 1992 on the Status of Tatarstan

Why did Tatarstan decide to hold this referendum? After the adoption of Tatarstan's Declaration of the State Sovereignty on 30 August 1990, when the disintegrated center still existed, neither the former center nor Russia recognized

the Declaration of the Sovereignty of Tatarstan. M. Shaiymiyev, the President of Tatarstan stated at a press conference, "Russia has managed to preserve its sovereignty, so why should we not do the same? One must take a vote of the actual and now unstoppable processes of self-assertion occurring in the former autonomies"<sup>4</sup> .

Tatarstan continued its consistent course toward strengthening State Sovereignty as it was declared by the Supreme Soviet in August 1990. The republic encountered many obstacles on this path<sup>5</sup> . Tatarstan had less autonomy under the new democratic system, than it had before the introduction of *perestroyka*<sup>6</sup> .

During the first round of negotiations, G.Burbulis had proposed the idea of a referendum in Tatarstan in order to determine the preferences of the population. Perhaps, he was counting on the loyalty of the resident Russians, to vote negatively on the question of sovereignty for Tatarstan<sup>7</sup> . The leadership of Tatarstan considered that the referendum would mark a "stride towards greater democracy and the observance of human rights, as required by International Law, and towards real control over the republic's economic independence. It would also open up the prospects of a new and mutually beneficial relations among the peoples of Russia and also lay the foundation of a genuine union between Tatarstan and Russia."<sup>8</sup>

Other reason behind the decision for a referendum were the leadership of Tatarstan's increasing pressure from the Tatar nationalists to implement the republic's sovereignty declaration, and the Russian Federation's refusal to accept Tatarstan's demand for a one-channel system of taxation, that is, to do away with the concept of federal taxes<sup>9</sup> . It will be recalled that Yeltsin, who himself insisted

on a one-channel system during negotiations with M. Gorbachev eventually felt compelled to give way, even though he regarded the existence of federal taxes a *sine qua non* for a Federation.

In these circumstances, in order for the declaration to be recognized, the Parliament of Tatarstan decided on 21 February 1992 to hold a referendum on the status of the republic on 21 March 1992. Just one question would be required "Do you agree that the Republic of Tatarstan is a sovereign State, a subject of International Law, building its relations with the Russian Federation and other republics on the basis of fair treaties?"<sup>10</sup> .

The announcement of the referendum immediately aroused concern in the Russian leadership and its parliament. The Russian Federation was afraid of the referendum. Its fear and criticism of the referendum was based on four reasons. The first reason was that the "traumatized psychology of the population as a result of the collapse of the Russian Federation could have tragic consequences, right up to an attempt, under patriotic slogans, to overthrow the existing leadership, the parliament of the Russian Federation, the Parliament of the Republic of Tatarstan"<sup>11</sup> . The Vice-President of the Russian Federation at of that time, Alexandr Rutskoy, who was the defender of an "indivisible Russia," reacted to the issue of Tatarstan's referendum declaring that "The breaking of Russia is like a death, and not only for us, but also for mankind. It is the death of the World. As a Russian, as a citizen of Russia, as a soldier and as a state official I cannot keep aside from the latest event in Tatarstan, on the outcome of which the fate of Russia depends. It is a matter of a most important thing the existence of our peoples and the existence of a thousand-year old unique State uniting Europe and Asia"<sup>12</sup> . In the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation he also said, "I regard the



following referendum in Tatarstan as an act of lawlessness, which will set off a chain reaction throughout Russia, and we shall find ourselves on the threshold of troubles<sup>13</sup> .

The second reason was "the political situation in Tatarstan"<sup>14</sup> . The Russian leadership considered that a gradual loss of ground to nationalist forces was under way, and in such a situation Russia thought if the nationalists gain power, they will interpret the results of the referendum in such a way as regard it as a legal definition of Tatarstan's not being part of Russia.

In response to such statements, the Tatar Supreme Soviet issued an appeal to the people of the republic attempting to clarify the meaning of the referendum on the future of Tatarstan. The appeal stated that "the question which was put on the referendum does not envisage the secession of Tatarstan." It also said that Tatarstan would remain in the same economic and geopolitical space as the Russian Federation and would build its relations on the basis of equitable treaties and the delegation of a number of powers<sup>15</sup> . The Leadership of Tatarstan did not put forward questions of borders, customs, military doctrine or its own currency<sup>16</sup> . However, the statements of the Tatarstan leadership and Parliament that the referendum was not about secession were not believed by the Russian leadership.

The third reason was a fear of self-determination. It was also argued that the referendum could lead to a serious deterioration in interethnic relations in Tatarstan, where the Tatars account for only 48% of the population and Russians made up 43%<sup>17</sup> . According to S. Shakhrai, the self-determination of nations was a dead-end situation, because it was impossible to separate one nation from another to create ethnically pure states<sup>18</sup> . On 5 March 1992 the Russian parliament issued an appeal to the parliament, people and president of Tatarstan urging them not to

take the separatist path and warning that the referendum could lead to interethnic strife. In the Russian Parliament's appeal it was stated that "we are sincerely concerned by the recent events in Tatarstan, fraught as they are with the risk of national discord in the republic and the destruction of the Russian Federation. The formulation of the question and the unjustified haste in holding the referendum are an act of disrespect towards the multi-national people of Tatarstan and the statehood of the Russian Federation"<sup>19</sup>.

Fourthly, the issue of delimitation of powers also worried the Russian leadership. It was guided by the Federation Treaty initialled at the Russian Supreme Soviet, which included an article stating the level of these powers can only be broadened by agreement on both sides, not on a unilateral basis not by revolution from below or revolution from above<sup>20</sup>.

The final week before the referendum was marked by a ruling of the Russian Constitutional Court. This resolution stipulated that "the decision by the Tatar Parliament does not correspond to the constitution as regards the wording of the question. Such wording can be related to a unilateral change in the national state structure of the RSFSR and signifies that the Republic of Tatarstan is not a part of the Russian Federation."<sup>21</sup>

On 19 March an appeal by Yeltsin to the Tatarstan Parliament was broadcast in which Yeltsin declared that the planned referendum could tear the Russian Federation apart, and regardless of the outcome, could be used by nationalist forces to kindle ethnic conflict. He added that it was not too late for the Tatarstan Parliament to take a decision in accordance with the Constitutional Court's ruling<sup>22</sup>.

On 20 March, the eve of the referendum, when there was no longer any doubt that the referendum would go ahead as planned, Yeltsin addressed an appeal to the people of Tatarstan calling on them to vote "no"<sup>23</sup>. Shaiymiyev called for a "yes" vote, saying the outcome of the referendum would decide whether Russia or Tatarstan would enjoy Tatarstan's material and spiritual wealth<sup>24</sup>.

At the same time, there were forces inside Tatarstan that acted against the referendum. For instance, a rally concerning the referendum was organized by The Workers Union, The Tatarstan Democratic Reform Movement, The Democratic Party of Russia and The Citizens of the Russian Federation Movement. More than 700 people gathered outside the Kazan Central Park under the motto: "The Russian Federation is our common home." Also, a people's deputy of the Republic of Tatarstan, Yuriy Reshetov, on behalf of deputies group '*Soglasie*'(Consent), declared that the group intends to demand in Parliament that the referendum be cancelled. However, the referendum took place on 21 March in Tatarstan. A majority of electorate voted in favour of the republic's independence. 2,134,271 people took part in the referendum, 61,4% of whom voted for Tatarstan's sovereignty with 37.2% against. 81,6% of the republic' citizens took part in voting<sup>25</sup>.

The leadership of the republic drew three main conclusions from the results of the referendum. The first was, that no intercommunal strife took place, although it was not expected anyway. Secondly, the referendum was a display of commitment to democratic principles, as the people themselves decided of their fate. And thirdly, it would help to revive Russia, while maintaining her integrity as a state. Also, Tatarstan prevented the creation of a new, powerful center<sup>26</sup>. In a press conference on 22 March in Kazan, the UN observer and Illinois Senator John

Nimrod welcomed the Tatarstan people's participation in a just referendum, and he stated that "these free and open elections gave the people an opportunity to express their free will"<sup>27</sup> . Most important, the results of the referendum strengthened Tatarstan's position in negotiations with Moscow.

#### 4.3 The Federation Treaty and the Reaction of Tatarstan

The Federation Treaty divided political power into three categories; 1) powers of the Russian Federation; 2) the joint jurisdiction; 3) full powers of the republics. Article I of the Federation Treaty listed twenty items of Russian state power, including 1) the federation's constitution and monitoring its observance; 2) protecting human and civil rights, and the rights of minorities; 3) forming federal state bodies; 4) protecting state property and its management; 5) establishing federal policies and programs in the field of state, economic, social, cultural and national development in the entire federation; 6) establishing of foundations of a unified market, finance, currency, credits and customs regulations, the issuance of money, pricing, policy, federal economic services (including federal banks); 7) federal budget, federal taxes and fees, and federal funds for regional development; 8) federal power engineering systems, nuclear power engineering and fissionable materials, including transportation, railroads, information and communications, and activities in outerspace; 9) foreign policy and international relations; 10) defense and security, including defense production, and determining procedures for the sale and purchase of weapons; 11) protection of state borders, territorial waters, economic zones and the continental shelf of the Russian Federation; 12) the judicial system and its related structures.

Article II enlisted eleven items under the categories of joint jurisdictions and Article III listed three items under full state power of the republics highlight the extent to which the autonomous states retained their "cherished" autonomy.

(Article II) Joint Jurisdictions

1. Ensuring that the republic constitutions correspond to the Russian laws and constitution;
2. Law and order and public safety;
3. Use of natural resources, culture, sports;
4. Education, science, culture, sports;
5. Social security, protection of family, public health;
6. Natural disasters and epidemics;
7. Taxation in the republics;
8. Laws for labor, family, land , housing;
9. The system of notary's offices;
10. Protection of small ethnic communities;
11. Local self-government;
12. Federal principles of legislation to be followed by the republics.

(Article III) Full State Powers for the Republics

1. Independent participant in international and foreign economic relations, if not at variance with the constitutional laws of Russia and this Treaty. Coordination to be exercised by Russia;
2. Russian law and Republic's legislation to regulate use of land

- subsidy resources, water and other natural resources;
- 3. republics' "preliminary consent" needed to proclaim a state of emergency in the republic;
- 4. (Article IV&V) The republic and the Russian Federation can transfer the exercise of power to each other;

Designed to re-establish Russian control over the destiny of the autonomous republics, the Federation Treaty was perceived in its true colors by the Tatar negotiators, who rejected it. Clearly, Article I of the Treaty established the sweeping powers of Moscow over the autonomous republics, Article II further reduced the scope of the republic's authority, and Article III lowered them to the status of minor municipal corporations.

#### 4.4 The Second Round of Negotiations

The second round started in March 1992. Ramazan Abdulatipov, Chairman of the Soviet of Nationalities of the Russian Parliament, at a meeting with journalists on 28 March, 1992 in the Russian White House, announced that it had been agreed to start a dialog between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation<sup>31</sup>. The working group set up by Russia and Tatarstan to draw up proposals for a draft treaty on delegation of powers held their first meeting in Moscow on 31 March, 1992. The Tatar delegation led by V. Likhachev, Vice-President of Tatarstan, consisted of representatives of the presidential staff, Parliament, and the Council of Ministers. The task was to sign a bilateral treaty on delegation of powers before the start of the Russian Congress of People's Deputies<sup>32</sup>. During this meeting, the

positions on the most important issues were more clearly defined<sup>33</sup> . Tatarstan announced it would delegate to the Russian Federation its powers in defense matters, emissions, customs and communicative politics<sup>34</sup> . Both sides assumed the obligation of ensuring human rights and freedoms; however, the question of citizenship was not definitely solved. Both sides signed a protocol that granted equal rights to the use of Russian and Tatar languages in the Tatar republic. This meeting was Russia's and Tatarstan's first extremely serious step towards one another, because it the first time that an official document recorded the Russian Federation's consent to have special relations with the Republic of Tatarstan<sup>35</sup> . But the key questions of Tatarstan's status still needed to be discussed.

A renewed delegation of the Russian Federation arrived in Kazan in May 1992<sup>36</sup> . The delegation was led by Yuriy Yarov, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet, a man of firm conviction, who had often used the principle of frightening. Because the Russian side had made changes in the membership of its delegation, the Tatar delegation had to explain many case stands in a new fashion. This was a presummit consultations during which an agreement was reached to accelerate the negotiations and work on the text of the treaty<sup>37</sup> .

The delegations again met on 2 July 1992. The negotiating process, that had been continuing for eleventh months, now had been joined by the Russian Parliament, representatives of the President's think-tank and the Cabinet of Ministers. Tatarstan's status was the main item on the agenda of the talks. The distinguishing feature of these negotiations was that the two sides started work on elaborating the content of the agreement between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. They decided to set up expert groups on such problems as military, law and state security<sup>38</sup> . Both sides had the same goals of preserving the

territorial integrity of Russia, recognizing the sovereignty of Tatarstan and concluding a renewed union between Tatarstan and Russia<sup>39</sup>. But in spite of this, their positions were different. Yuriy Yarov considered this accord as a way to make Tatarstan closer to the Federation Treaty, while the Tatar delegation regarded it as a way leading to an independent agreement strengthening the sovereignty of Tatarstan.

Delegations from the federal bodies of power in Russia and delegation from Tatarstan held a two-day working meeting on 3 and 4 August, 1992 under the chairmanship of Genadiy Burbulis, State Secretary in the office of the President of the Russian Federation and Vasiliy Likachev, Vice-President of the Republic of Tatarstan. The meeting discussed the draft treaty and whether to define Tatarstan's status in the agreement as a republic integrated in Russian Federation or a state operating within the Federation on a bilateral agreement.

As a result, the two sides agreed to write in the draft treaty that "Tatarstan as a state operates with the Russian Federation, but within the Russian Federation"<sup>40</sup> The main achievement of Tatarstan was the "recognition of the principles of equality, voluntariness and freedom of expressing wish by the Russian side." The draft of the bilateral treaty recognized the sovereignty of Tatarstan and outcome of the Referendum<sup>41</sup>. Following talks in Moscow with Yegor Gaydar, a provisional agreement was signed on the mutual relations of the budgets of Tatarstan and Russia, and on the export of Tatar oil<sup>42</sup>. Tatarstan also reserved the right to have an independent foreign policy and foreign economic relations, to establish military service, and to distribute the Russian Federation's military units with Tatarstan. This was a substantial step forward, because the draft was signed by Baltenkova, head of the Russian experts, and Hamidullin, head of the Tatar experts.



In Tatarstan, among the representatives of the National movement, there were both supporters of preserving the former autonomy and supporters a complete break-up of relations. Neither position was accepted by the official Tatarstan leadership. Their point of view was that one can neither waive sovereignty nor break age-old cultural links with Russia.

National-patriotic Tatar organizations signed a joint statement which accused the leadership of Tatarstan of inactivity and the inability to act on the results of the referendum. According to those who signed this statement including the leaders of the *Ittifak* Party (Tatar Independence Party), the Sovereignty Movement, The Cultural Society Mardzhany, The Tatar Youth Union "Azatlik" and The Tatar Independent Party *Namus*, Tatarstan was relying on historical claims to revive its statehood<sup>43</sup>. They called the Milli Meclis the only legal representative organ of the Tatar people, not Tatarstan, agreed to unite under its aegies, and announced themselves to be in opposition to the official governing powers. One of the more influential national socio-political associations, The Tatar Public Center did not sign this document.

The leader of the *Ittifak* Party, Fevziye Bayramova protested that "the talks between Russia and Tatarstan were just so much eyewash." She saw the republic's future "as an independent state with all its attributes", and rules out "delegating any prerogatives to Russia, not even defense." She insisted that Tatarstan "should proclaim itself a neutral zone and have only a national guard"<sup>44</sup>.

The presidents of Tatarstan and Russia met twice after these meetings. They had to solve two issues; the first one was the status of Tatarstan, and the second one was the issue of relations with the Russian Federation. However, meetings did not bring results. There were two reasons. The first reason was

Burbulis's resignation. He admitted, that Russia had to be an asymmetrical federation with elements of confederation. However, the right wing nationalists accused him of being "soft" in relation to the republics, and of deviation and they mounted a vitriolic campaign against Burbulis. Sergey Stankevich, a member of the Russian negotiating team, adopted an uncompromising position against the Tatars' objectives of independence and sovereignty. Stankevich conducted a relentless campaign against Burbulis in the Russian Supreme Soviet and consequently Burbulis was removed<sup>45</sup> .

The newspaper *Argumenty i Fakty* announced that if the Russian President would put his signature on an equal agreement, then he should be subjected to impeachment<sup>46</sup> . The second reason comes from the first one. The Russian society was living in the spirit of the Great nationalism. Therefore, no one in that time signed the equal agreement. It should be noted that the asymmetrical federation proposed by Tatarstan based on freedom of rights and equality was the only way for the Russian Federation to recover from the economic and political crisis. Because, the time of Empires was already over.

#### 4.5 The Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan

A milestone on the road to real sovereignty was the adoption of the Republic of Tatarstan Constitution by the Supreme Soviet on November 6, 1992, the first one in Russia and the Commonwealth. The 150 page draft law had been elaborated for two years.

According to the Constitution, the Republic of Tatarstan is a sovereign democratic state associated with the Russian Federation under the treaty on the

mutual delegation of powers. The Constitution proclaims the primacy of Human Rights as the highest social value. It guarantees to all citizens irrespective of nationality equal political, economic, social and cultural rights. Tatar and Russian are recognized as official languages. Tatarstan rejects force and war as a means of settling disputes between peoples and states, and its territory is free from weapons of mass destruction.

The Constitution declares that the land, mineral, water, timber and other natural resources, the assets of the State Bank, cultural and historic values and other property shall belong to the whole people of the Republic of Tatarstan. In accordance with the Constitution, the republic's economy is based on socially oriented market relations. It allows diverse types of property which is declared inviolable. The Constitution provides equal conditions for their legal protection. Other countries, international organizations, foreign judicial persons and persons having no citizenship may own property in the Republic of Tatarstan.

The Supreme Soviet, which is elected for a term of five years, is defined the highest legislative and control body of the Republic of Tatarstan. The State is headed by a president elected for a five-year term by universal, equal and direct suffrage: a vice-president is elected for the same term. On 12 June 1991, the Republic elected its first president, Mintimer Shaymiyev. The republic's executive and administrative government body is a cabinet of ministers headed by a prime minister.

Late in 1994, the Republic of Tatarstan Supreme Soviet adopted amendments to the Constitution and a new law on elections and local government bodies. The Republic's new parliament, The State Council, was elected on 5 March 1995 and comprise 130 deputies.

In the Russian Federation State Duma Tatarstan holds six seats: five of the deputies were elected as independents, and one of them won election to the Russian Parliament on the Yabloko list.

The Milli Meclis criticized the provision which proclaimed two state languages in the republic; Tatar and Russian. The Meclis recommended to retain only the Tatar language, which will have to be learned by representatives of all groups of the population. The Meclis also opposed dual citizenship. According to its amendment, all citizens in the republic must have only one citizenship, that of Tatarstan.

Up to here, the Republic of Tatarstan did not have its own genuine constitution. All autonomous republics had identical constitutions, that were imitations of the Russian Constitution. Those who wanted to see Russia as an empire were against the Constitution of Tatarstan, because it went against the imperial aspirations of Russia. This Constitution gave complete equality of rights, in the relationships between peoples, nations and states. Supporters of the Empire threatened Tatarstan with stopping financing of military plants and educational institutions and closing the Russian pension fund for Tatarstan if the Constitution of Tatarstan was not made to coincide with the Russian Constitution.

Three points of the Constitution of Tatarstan worried Russia. The first point declaration that Tatarstan was subject to international law, because the Russian imperial forces did not want Tatarstan itself to establish international relations with other countries. The second point was that Tatarstan citizenship and Russian citizenship were given equal rights, while Russian citizenship should have a higher status than Tatarstan citizenship. The third point concerned the relations between Tatarstan and Russia. The Russian Federation considered that it would be

possible to continue talks with Tatarstan, if Tatarstan remained a subject of the Russian Federation.

These facts show that Russia did not have a national policy, and that it was guided by the "prison of people" policy, inherited from the tsarist empire, and later strengthened by Stalin. The use of force had priority in national policy in Russia at that time.

Speaking of Tatarstan's new Constitution, Professor J. Traut, Vice-Director of the German Institute of Federalism, said "...The new Constitution of Tatarstan is also a most important step towards achieving stability in the Russian Federation. Within federal structures of a democratic state, the desire of every republic, region, and so on to secure maximum sovereignty and independence from the center is perfectly legitimate."

#### 4.6 The Negotiating Process in 1993

The negotiating process that had begun in the middle of 1991 reached the highest level by May 1993. The Republic of Tatarstan was in favour of signing a treaty on cooperation between Russia and Tatarstan before the referendum on basic principles of the country's constitutional structure was held in the Russian Federation. Talks between delegations from Russia and Tatarstan at the highest level were held in Moscow on 27 May, 1993<sup>47</sup>. Tactics for drafting the bilateral treaty was changed. Whereas, formerly it was planned to clarify certain provisions after the signing, the delegations opted for the tactic of clarifying matters beforehand. Agreements on specific issues were to be signed first, and only after that was the bilateral treaty to be signed.

Sergey Shakhrai and Tatarstan Deputy Premier Vasilii Likhachev worked up the definitions of some economic intergovernmental agreements that created a basis for a future bilateral treaty<sup>48</sup>. The agreements had to be presented for endorsement to the Russian and Tatarstan heads of governments. However, during this meeting not all questions were settled. Among the outstanding ones were financial, banking and taxation issues. On 5 June Victor Chernomyrdin and Muhamet Sabirov signed a number of agreements in Moscow, including an agreement on the sale and transportation of the oil and petroleum refining products and an agreement on higher education.

At the end of June 1993, Chernomyrdin made a working trip to Tatarstan<sup>49</sup>. As result, three governmental agreements were signed. According to the agreement on property, the part of the former Soviet property on its territory went to Tatarstan, another part remained under the joint jurisdiction of Tatarstan and Russia, while the third part, "burdensome" to the republic went to the federal authorities<sup>50</sup>. The agreement also envisaged that the Kazan branch of the Moscow customs office became an independent customs service of Tatarstan. The other two agreements split the duties of Russia and Tatarstan regarding the defense industry which was granted the right to export its products<sup>51</sup>.

At that time, the discussion of the draft of the new Constitution of the Russian Federation was in full swing in Russia. The attitude of the Republic of Tatarstan to this discussion was an inalienable part of the negotiating process. Tatarstan considered a renewed federation as a union of states, which would establish a new state. Tatarstan deemed that federation is founded by its subjects, who would have to define the powers of this future state. The draft new Russian

Constitution was not, however establishing such a kind of renewed federation. Russia had remained a unitary State.

Difficulties had arisen during the Constitutional Conference on 24 June in Moscow to finalize the constitution draft . The Constitutional Conference ignored the initiative of Tatarstan to put down in the draft constitution that Tatarstan's relations with the Russian Federation were based on agreements, therefore, the leaders of Tatarstan took a decision to recall their republic's representatives<sup>52</sup> .

The new Russian Constitution draft inclined in certain respect toward conservative tenets rather than progressive ones. Tatarstan clearly rejected the assumption that the current constitution draft for Russia should be for a transitional period. Tatarstan considered that it should be a long-term document, which would be recognized by society and by federation members, and that this document would allow the whole mechanism of the State to function properly. It should not be based on the short-term interests of certain political forces, but on objective political, economic, social and national rights.

President Mintimir Shaiymiyev and the Republic of Tatarstan Supreme Chairman Ferid Muhametshin issued a statement concerning the work of the Constitutional Conference on 25 June 1993<sup>53</sup> . The republic's leaders noted that the Draft Fundamental Law of the Russian Federation drawn up at the first stage on the conference shows the desire to belittle and discredit the very idea of the establishment of a fundamentally new type of federal relationship. It ignores the legislative initiative of the Republic of Tatarstan on the new vision of federalism in Russia and on incorporating in its Fundamental Law provisions relating to treaty-based constitutional relations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation. Therefore, in this connection, the authors of this political

document deemed it impossible to participate further in the work of the Constitutional Conference and its organs and confirmed their commitment to the desire to build relations on the basis of the Treaty on reciprocal delegation of powers<sup>54</sup> . The Vice-President of Tatarstan added that "the provision of certain members of the working group, who at this stage were fiercely against the fact that Russia is a State made up of many nationalities were just like a cold shower." There were attempts to play down the multi-ethnic factor and make it out to be a factor causing Russia's destruction<sup>55</sup> .

During the meeting between the President of Tatarstan and the President of the Russian Federation on 28 May 1993, it was agreed that the coordinated treaty between Russia and Tatarstan on mutual delegation of powers was expected to be prepared by 30 July 1993<sup>56</sup> . But this did not happen. Analyzing this fact, there are several conclusions that may be drawn. It was a critical moment not only in Russia's relations with Tatarstan, but for Russia as a whole. The political crisis in the federal leadership was intensifying. Attempts by both the executive and legislature to create economic, political and financial stability were coming up against a lack of understanding from their opponents and a lack of coordinated action. Naturally, against this background it was extremely difficult to put an agreed version of the Treaty on Mutual Delegation of Powers and areas of responsibility on the desk of negotiations by 30 July<sup>57</sup>

There were also those who were unable to shake off their imperial mentality. The Russian President's advisor on political issues, Sergey Stankevich, said, that "the Russian Federation had enough time and patience to wait, if need be, for 10 or 15 or 20 years and sign an agreement with Tatarstan on acceptable terms. He wanted Russia to concentrate on "voting in a new constitution and economic



reforms, and only after that an agreement with Tatarstan should be signed"<sup>58</sup>. According to him, under no circumstances should Russia "agree to terms that were known to be unacceptable and harmful to Russian interests, creating a time bomb that would blow up the federation and set a dangerous precedent." Should Russia accept some of Tatarstan's terms (a "contractual character of the federation, the right to secede from Russia, a new-channel taxation system, and a republican-level resolution of customs issues") it would ruin the Russian State<sup>59</sup>.

#### 4.7 The continuation of the negotiations at the end of 1993

Russian President Boris Yeltsin held a meeting with Tatarstan's President Mintimir Shaymiyev on 21 January, 1994. The sides agreed to speed up the negotiating process as much as possible, because on 13 March, 1994 new elections to the Federal Assembly had to take place in Tatarstan. The leadership of Tatarstan believed that the Republic should be represented in the Federal Assembly and in order for the population to turn out actively for the elections, Tatarstan needed to sign a bilateral treaty. Without determining a formula of mutual relationship, expecting the voters to be active would be simply naive<sup>60</sup>.

There were some problems in the work on the treaty text. The main difficulties emerged in the process of preparing five intergovernmental agreements. The working groups under Tatarstan Vice-President Likhachev and the Russian Federation Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Yarov began working on it. The most intensive period of coordinating the position of each side had begun. Not only the draft treaty was being discussed but also intergovernment agreement draft, seven of which were signed in 1993. At present, five more were pending; on

crime control; on finances (the debate was over Tatarstan's demands for independence in defining the interest rate on credits allocated by the Russian Central Bank and also that the republic's government be granted the power to influence its share in money emission); on budget relations (through how many channels and in what volume to remit taxes to the center), on military matters; and on foreign economic activity (Tatarstan demanded that the republic's status on foreign markets be adjusted to its constitution, which says that "Tatarstan is a subject of International Law")<sup>61</sup> .

## CHAPTER V: THE TREATY BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN And THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

The Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation signed "The Treaty on Demarcation of Subjects of Jurisdiction and Reciprocal Delegation of Powers Between Organs of State Authority of the Russian Federation and Organs of State Authority of the Republic of Tatarstan on 15 February, 1994. After the signing of this Treaty, Tatarstan has been governed by three legal documents: 1)The Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan; 2)The Constitution of the Russian Federation; 3) The Treaty of February 15, 1994. According to the Treaty Tatarstan is "united" with the Russian Federation. Article II recognizes Tatarstan's Constitution, and then enumerates 15 areas of authority for the exclusive exercise of Tatarstan. Article III establishes 22 areas of joint authority.

### ARTICLE II: Tatarstan's Exclusive Authority

1. Protection of human and civil rights and freedom.
2. Make the republic's budget, define and impose republic taxes.
3. Decide issues of jurisprudence and notary public.
4. Regulation of administrative, family and housing relationships, environmental protection and use of nature.
5. Grants of amnesty to individuals convicted in Tatarstan courts.
6. Possession, use and disposal of land, mineral wealth, water, timber and other resources, including state enterprises, organizations, other movable and immovable property except for units of federal property (state property to be defined by a separate agreement).
7. Establish state governmental bodies, their organization and activity.
8. Decide issues of republic citizenship.
9. Establish civil service for citizens who have the right to substitute their service in the armed forces.
10. **Maintain** relations, conclude treaties and agreements with the republics, territories, regions, autonomous districts, and with cities of Moscow and

- St.Petersburg (which shall not contradict the three basic documents).
11. Participate in international affairs, establish relations with foreign states and conclude treaties (which shall not contradict the three basic documents) and participate in international organizations.
  12. Establish a national bank (pursuant to a separate agreement).
  13. Independently conduct foreign economic activities (the delimitations to be settled by a separate agreement).
  14. Conversion of enterprises (pursuant to a separate agreement).
  15. Establish state awards and honorary titles of the Republic of Tatarstan.

ARTICLE III: Russia and Tatarstan's Joint Authority

1. Guarantee civil rights and rights of national minorities.
2. Protect sovereignty and territorial integrity.
3. Mobilization of national economy; production of armaments and military equipment and conversion of defence industry. (shares and participation of both parties to be determined by separate agreement).
4. Settle contradictory questions of citizenship.
5. Coordinate international and foreign economic relations.
6. Coordinate pricing policies.
7. Create funds for regional development.
8. Pursue monetary policies.
9. Manage Russia's property in Tatarstan, which are transferred to common management (by separate agreement).
10. Coordinate activity on geodesy, meteorology and the calendar system.
11. Create funds for common pprograms; i.e. national disasters.
12. Coordinate common power system, highways, railways, pipe, air and tubing, communications and information.
13. Management of duty-free movement of transportation, cargoes, and production by air , sea, river, railway and pipe transport.
14. Management of environmental conditions, stabilization, restoration and prevention of ecological disasters.
15. Implement policy in social sphere, population employment.
16. Coordinate health, family protection, education, science, culture, sport; preparation of national specialists for schools, institutions, culture, news media; provide native language literature, scientific research in history and national cultures.
17. Personnel for justice and police enforcement.
18. Settle litigation, arbitration and notary public questions.
19. Crime prevention, coordinate police agencies' activities and security forces.
20. Establish common principles for organization of state bodies, and local self-government.
21. Establish administrative legislation for labor, family, housing, land, mineral

- wealth, and surrounding environment.
22. Common use of land, mineral wealth, water and other natural resources.
  23. Execute other authority established by mutual agreement.

In addition to the 23 items of joint authority that Russia would exercise in Tatarstan, Russia acquired 17 items, where it would exercise exclusive power in Tatarstan. Article IV listed the adoption and amendment of the Federation's laws and constitution and the implementation of the "federal system".

Other items of the Federation's authority are (1) protection of the rights of national minorities, civil rights and issues of citizenship; (2) establishment of federal legislative, executive and judicial power; (3) management of Federal State property; (4) development of federal policy and programs for economic, ecological, social, cultural and national development of the Russian Federation; (5) establishment of a common market, finance, currency, credit, customs regulation, money supply, general price policy; federal economic agencies, including federal banks; (6) control of the federal budget, taxes and duties, and funds for regional development; (7) control of the federal power system, nuclear energy, fissionable materials, federation transport, communication and information systems and space authority; (8) foreign policy and international relations and agreements and questions of war and peace; (9) foreign economic relations of the Federation; (10) defense and security; (11) state frontiers, territorial waters, air space, exclusive economic area of continental shelf of the Federation; (12) the Judicial System; (13) federal collision law [law of torts]; (14) the meteorological service; (15) state awards and honorary titles and (16) federal "state service".

## 5.1 Russian Reaction to the Treaty

Russian reaction to the Treaty came from President Yeltsin's administration. The comments of the opposition were basically offered by the Communists. In general, the Treaty was well received by the Russians. Yeltsin, commenting that the agreement had been "hard won", said, nevertheless, that it was a "completely new kind of act"<sup>1</sup>. Sergey Filatov, Yeltsin's Chief of Staff, described the Russian Federation Constitution, the Federation Treaty and the bilateral Treaty of February 1994 as three major landmarks in strengthening the Russian Federation<sup>2</sup>.

Sergey Shakhray, Deputy Prime Minister, who had vigorously participated in the last round of negotiations between Russia and Tatarstan, developed a distinct eleven point nationality policy of his own, which had been worked out by this state committee. Briefly, these eleven points include: 1) equal rights for all peoples of the Russian Federation; 2) recognition of peoples rights of self-determination; 3) federalism; 4) territorial unity and integrity of the Russian Federation and its members; 5) the depoliticization of the nationality policy; 6) reliance on the elected bodies of power whether the center likes them or not; 7) political methods of settling conflict; 8) the indivisibility of economic policy; 9) nationality policy that forestalls crisis; 10) consistency, even in small matters and, 11) mandatory consideration of the complexity of Russian societies' religious make up<sup>3</sup>. Shakhray firmly believed that the threat to the territorial integrity of Russia was not very potent from the regions and from the autonomous republics, but that it stemmed from the "discord among the authorities in Moscow"<sup>4</sup>. He said the model of Tatarstan could be used for other "problem regions and republics within Russia - such as Chechnya, where General Jokhar Dudayev, the president,

has declared independence; and in the Kaliningrad(Konigsberg) region in Russia's extreme north-west, where the local authorities have declared a customs-free zone<sup>5</sup>. The deal was also seen as a model beyond the Russian Federation. Valerian Advadze, the Georgian ambassador in Moscow, said that the Treaty could become a model for his country in attempting to strike an agreement with the breakaway region of Abkhazia, where fierce fighting raged until Georgian troops were expelled in September, 1993<sup>6</sup>.

To highlight the new status of Tatarstan, and to develop the joint mechanism for implementing the provisions of the Treaty, Yeltsin visited Kazan from 30 May to 1 June<sup>7</sup>. In the Kremlin, the negotiations between the two presidents dealt with these issues: 1) economic problems; 2) modernization and reconstruction of the Kazan airport; 3) building a new automobile plant; 4) building a bridge over the River Kama; 5) the launching of new share holding enterprises. For the last project, both presidents agreed that Tatarstan will have a tax holiday for one year and that it would be considered as joint property of both countries. The tax structure was subjected to a great deal of scrutiny because it was found to be a negative element discouraging foreign investment. The Russian Government agreed to other guarantees to foreign investors for Tatarstan's automobile manufacturing industry, particularly the KAMAZ joint stock company to which the export-import bank of Japan was willing to grant \$400 million credit. Both sides agreed to create a bilateral commission for monitoring the implementation of the treaty between Russia and Tatarstan.

The Most political parties reacted positively to this event, although critical comments came from the leader of the Russian Federation Communist Party, Genadiy Zyuganov, who said, "The Treaty with Tatarstan is unacceptable"<sup>8</sup> .

## 5.2 Reaction to the Treaty in the Republic of Tatarstan

The Treaty was highly appreciated by the official authorities in the republic of Tatarstan. Vasiliy Likhachev, Vice President of the Republic of Tatarstan and Doctor of Juridical Sciences said that "the Treaty makes a significant contribution to the revival of Russia and to the construction of democratic federation. On the other hand, it performs a kind of summing up of the legal-state development of the Republic of Tatarstan under contemporary conditions from the moment of the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Tatarstan to the adoption of its new Constitution of 1992." He characterized "the concluded treaty as being of a reformative nature." With respect to it, the term 'for the first time' can be used repeatedly. For the first time , it is bilateral, for the first time, it is in two languages (Tatar and Russian), and for the first time, it was signed at the highest level. The Treaty was created in controversy, in a search for compromises, and in the resolution of difficult questions, ready answers to which simply did not exist. The accumulated negotiating experience has political significance, and it is a new word in diplomacy<sup>9</sup> . He added, that "contrary to the aspiration of some political forces to belittle the fact of the signing of this historic document, it is possible to say with full confidence: 'there are no losers here, but there are winners. They are people of various nationalities, common sense, and courage. This, finally, is the common future of Russia and Tatarstan."<sup>10</sup>



The Tatar nationalists met the 15 February signing of the agreement between Kazan and Moscow with criticism. The Tatar Public Center called the Treaty "a step backward from independence"<sup>11</sup>. The Congress of the Tatar national movement evaluated this agreement as "a tragedy of the Tatar people" and "betrayal of the interests of our children." Bayramova announced that those who had signed the agreement for Tatarstan did not have the authority to give their signatures, since they had not asked the opinion of the people<sup>12</sup>.

A sampling of the elite polled in a February 1994 survey conducted by the sociological service of the "Inform-Klub E5" were asked to express their view of the Treaty. In assessing the treaty demarcating the powers and subjects of jurisdiction between Russia and Tatarstan, 72% of those polled expressed a positive attitude toward this document, 6% thought that "the enemies of sovereignty" in Moscow had deceived our president, 4% had difficulty making an assessment and finally, 18% of respondents decided to comment, stating that 1) a lean compromise is better than a fat lawsuit; 2) despite the lack of specifics in the wording and the possible short duration of the treaty, it is still base for the strengthening of relations between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation; 3) the treaty guarantees the existence of two political elites without confrontation. One of the respondents assessed the Moscow agreements as a treaty between two presidents which cannot be compared with the Constitution as far as legitimacy was concerned, in his view, and it is consequently illegal. The famous Tatar author Dias Valeyev noted sadly, that this document reminds him of agreement between two desks on the sinking "Titanic"<sup>13</sup>.

### 5.3 Proposals of the February Treaty

According to Sergey Shakhray, as he was quoted in a *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* interview, "the methodology of the Federative treaty formed the basis of the bilateral treaty between Tatarstan and Russia"<sup>14</sup> . However, a number of areas of behavior, including some extremely important ones, that were ascribed in the Federation Treaty to the sphere of the joint jurisdiction of the Center and the subjects of the Federation have now been firmly established as being within the exclusive jurisdiction of Tatarstan. They include, for example, "question of possession, use, and disposal of land, mineral wealth, water, timber, and other natural resources, as well as the state enterprises, organizations, and other movable and immovable property situated on the territory of the Republic of Tatarstan."

In discussing the topic as the "exclusive property owned by the people of Tatarstan", rather than "by the state"(read: the state bureaucracy), as is frequently written in Russian Federation acts, an extremely important principle had been established<sup>15</sup> .

According to the Treaty, Tatarstan itself has the right to resolve questions of the bar and notary practices, and to carry out the legal regulations, and relations in the area of environmental protection and use of natural resources. Tatarstan itself establishes the system of the republic's state agencies, and the procedure for organizing them and for carrying out their activities. Like any other sovereign state, Tatarstan itself resolves questions of republic citizenship, and itself forms its budget, establishes and collects, and independently carries out foreign economic activity. Without waiting for the signing of this document.

The republic had already formed a Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and a Department for Foreign Affairs. Business contacts were established with companies, banks, and cultural and social organizations in the United States, Turkey, Hungary, and South Korea, and treaties have been concluded with almost all republics of the former Union<sup>16</sup>.

According to the Treaty, Tatarstan itself resolves questions of conversion at enterprises that are part of the republic's state property; creates the National Bank; concludes agreements with foreign states; participates in international organizations. These and other exclusive powers and sovereign rights correspond to the Tatarstan Constitution, which has firmly established the State Sovereignty of the Republic of Tatarstan. For those who, in 1991, adopted the Declaration of the State Sovereignty of Tatarstan, who, in March 1992, in a referendum voted for the republic's sovereignty, and who subsequently, on the basis of that referendum, developed and adopted, in November 1992, the Constitution of Tatarstan, something that must be of substantial importance is the fact that the treaty, as is stated in its preamble, is the "completely equal unification of two states", and that this unification occurred on the basis of the constitutions both of Russia and Tatarstan, as well as the principles enumerated in the Treaty itself.

The fact that the Treaty is an agreement between sovereign states and the subject of International Law was not stated in the text caused discussions. Vyacheslav Nikonov, Russian Federation State Duma deputy stated that in his view, "the Treaty does not add sovereignty to it, it contains altogether no mention of sovereignty, although it says that Tatarstan is entitled to pursue international relations independently.

**The Treaty** has not cleared up this problem, but once again, if we take some **other federations**, for example the United States, we see that in each state there is a **state secretary**, essentially a minister of foreign affairs, and that each state pursues an **original foreign policy**, which is confined, it is true, to a very narrow range of **issues**."<sup>17</sup> .

Reis Tuzmuhamedov and Vladimir Pustagarov, Doctors of Legal Sciences noted **that the essence of the act is self-evident**, primarily on the basis of the sense of **the name and text of the agreement**. It is called: "The Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan" and that means an agreement **between two sovereign states** (Article I in both Constitutions). This is also mentioned in the preamble, where it is directly stated that the Republic of Tatarstan unites with the Russian Federation "as a state". Furthermore, the treaty was signed at the highest level, by chiefs of state. The sovereignty of the contracting parties as entities in international law is also attested to by the subject of the agreement. It pertains to the delimitation of authoritative powers, that is, the powers that are inherent in state sovereignty, since sovereignty is a category of authority<sup>18</sup> . They added that "the fact that the treaty is an act in International Law also evolves completely obviously from the fact the contracting parties indicated as their legal basis their own constitutions, each of them unambiguously established the quality of a sovereign state that is based on the sovereignty of the multiethnic people of those countries (Article I and III of the Russian Federation Constitution; preamble and Articles I, II and 61 of the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan"<sup>19</sup> .

**At the same time**, it is interesting to see how the matters of property, taxes, the **judicial system**, citizenship, and so forth were resolved in the Federation and

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At the same time, it is interesting to see how the matters of property, taxes, the judicial system, citizenship, and so forth were resolved in the Federation and

February Treaties. In the Federation Treaty, the title paragraphs of the article on the subjects of joint jurisdiction by the Russian Federation and the republics which signed this treaty are the paragraphs providing for conformity between the constitutions and laws of the republics and the Constitution and laws of the Russian Federation, legality, and law and order. It also states there that on matters of joint jurisdiction, the federal organs promulgate the fundamentals of the law, in conformity with which the republic's organs of authority promulgate their own law and other formal legal documents (Part 2, Article II ) <sup>20</sup> . There are no such provisions in the Treaty between Tatarstan and Russia. Further, while disputes between organs of the Russian Federation and the republics on matters of joint jurisdiction are resolved in accordance with the Federative Treaty and the Russian Federation Constitutional Court ( Part 3, Article VI ), disputes between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Tatarstan organs "are resolved in a procedure coordinated between them ( Treaty between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation, Part 3, Article IV ). In the event that the sides adopt laws which conflict with the treaty, the sides have the right to appeal against them (Part 2, Article IV ). In the Federation Treaty, this matter is resolved by different means: if the republics promulgate documents on matters of Russian Federation jurisdiction, an official act of the Russian Federation will come into force. It also states there that Russian Federation organs may not promulgate documents on matters related to the republic's jurisdiction <sup>21</sup> .

The Treaty between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation, in conformity with the Tatarstan Constitution, states that organs of state authority independently "resolve the problems of jurisdiction, use, and disposal of lands, mineral resources, and water, forestry, and other natural resources..." (paragraph 6,

**Part 2, Article II).** Meanwhile, in the Federation Treaty and the Russian Federation Constitution, these questions are grouped with joint jurisdiction of the Russian Federation and the republics<sup>22</sup> .

**Taxes** are basic sources for the budget of any state, and for this reason, it is important who sets them and collects them. The Treaty between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation clearly differentiates between the federal and Tatarstan taxes, which are imposed and collected accordingly by federal and Tatarstan organs. In the Treaty between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation, the question of taxes is excluded from matters of joint jurisdiction, unlike in the Federative Treaty and the Russian Federation Constitution.

The system of state organs is probably the matter of greatest importance. It was resolved in the Treaty between the Republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation in complete conformity with the status of Tatarstan, which has been consolidated in its Constitution. Paragraph 7, Article II of the Treaty states that the Tatarstan Republic's organs of state authority "establish the system of state organs of the Tatarstan Republic and the procedure for their organization and activity".

This Treaty, signed on 15 February, 1994, is an important landmark in Tatarstan's development as a sovereign state, and ranks with such documents as the republic's Declaration of State Sovereignty of 30 August, 1990 and the Tatarstan Republic Constitution of 6 November, 1992. For the first time since Russia seized the Kazan Khanate in the middle of the sixteenth century, a treaty was concluded between the new Russian Federation and the new Republic of Tatarstan, and it was based, as is stated in its preamble, on "the generally recognized right of nations to self-determination, on principles of complete equality and voluntary expression of free will." This treaty is a fundamental document and a case in which a situation of

conflict between the center and region was resolved by peaceful means. This Treaty prevented the creation of a totalitarian state, and opened the way for the new federation. In the end, Moscow had to abandon its pressure and recognize the Constitution of the Republic of Tatarstan. This document created a precedent for treaty relations.



## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

The chief political result of the past five years was the signing of the Treaty between the republic of Tatarstan and the Russian Federation on the delimitation of the objects of jurisdiction and the reciprocal delegation of powers. In accordance with this advantageous power-sharing Treaty with Moscow, Tatarstan won full ownership rights over its large oil reserves and industrial companies, the right to retain the bulk of tax revenues and to conduct an independent foreign economic policy. However, the republic's 'associated' status with the Russian Federation, as described in Tatarstan's Constitution, was replaced by the formula of Tatarstan being a state united with Russia, on the basis of the constitutions of two states and the Treaty on delimitation of Spheres of Authority and the Mutual delegation of Powers.

The historic significance of this Treaty lies in the fact that it shut off for Russia the opportunities to become ossified in a unitary condition and opened up paths for the formation of the state as a genuine democratic federation. The "Tatarstan model" has formed the basis for similar treaties which Moscow recently signed with other regions such.

In the economic area, Tatarstan succeeded in carrying out its own socio-economic policy, and in considerably easing the burdens of the transitional period to the market economy for the population. Tatarstan was a fierce critic of the "shock therapy" adopted by the Russian government, headed by Yegor Gaydar. At that time, critics labelled Tatarstan an "island of communism" for failing to liberalise prices, privatize state property, and axe credits to obsolete industrial plants as happened in the rest of Russia. However, whereas for Russia as a whole,

the decline in the national standard of living began immediately after the release of prices in 1992, the inhabitants of Tatarstan did not sense this until the second half of 1994, which was inevitable under conditions of the single economic space. But even today, with regard to a number of indicators, things in the Republic of Tatarstan are better than in many other regions.

With the legitimization of political pluralism in Tatarstan, which promoted the disintegration of the Communist Party and gave boost to the national-democratic movement. The presidential elections of March 1996 displayed Shaymiyev's authority, that has increased so much, and none of his opposition rivals could even gather the number of signatures necessary to register with the Central Election Commission. Tatarstan's leader, as sociological studies demonstrate, is firmly associated in the mass consciousness of the republic's population first and foremost with the socially oriented policies.

The State and state organizations took in their hands the function of organizer of the national life and the national movement. The official power strengthened its position and role in the Tatar society and in Tatarstan. The presidential elections which took place in Tatarstan in March, 1996 were an evidence of this process.

From a high point in 1992, the national movement in Tatarstan lost momentum and popularity. The national movement was unavailable to propose a realistic and serious program for reforms in Tatarstan. Their initial idea of sovereign Tatarstan with the status of union republic and achievement of complete independence was quite abstract and it caused feelings of deep dissatisfaction. The founding of the Milli Meclis created two streams inside of the national movement by causing conflict among different factions within movement.

The nationalist parties have been unable to respond to the Treaty. They have lost their influence but this does not mean that nationalism is dead. The nationalists try to re-assess their tactics.

Horizontal economic links, backed by bilateral agreements, are developing in the Volga-Urals and Siberia, with Kazan the communication centre. The legal and tradition basis for a Tatar-Bashkir confederation exists. There is growing coordination between the nationalists of the other Volga republics, through the Assembly of the Volga-Ural nations.

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