



Russification of Muslim Central Asia: An Overview of Language, Culture and Society

Vol. 2, No. I (2017) | Page: 70 – 85 | DOI: 10.31703/grr.2017(II-I).06

p- ISSN: 2616-955X | e-ISSN: 2663-7030 | L-ISSN: 2616-955X

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Abstract

Russian influence in Muslim Central Asia was far reaching. The transformative effects of Russian presence first emerged in the administrative setup and governance, and soon it spread to the domain of education and sociocultural symbols. The Muslim Central Asian society lost its connection with the Muslim world in the neighborhood as Russian alphabets, lexemes and structures replaced the Arabic script. The Tsarist administration initiated these changes which culminated in the Soviet era when Central Asian Muslims were forced to cultivate Russian language and culture. However, the distrust among the Russian diaspora and Muslim Central Asian local population was deep seated. Once the Soviet Union fell, the demographic and linguistic changes were attacked by nationalists. Despite the post-1991 attempts, the Russian language is still dominant in Muslim Central Asia as compared to English and other modern European languages.

Key Words: Muslim Central Asia, language Contact, Language Policy and Planning, Russification, Soviet Union.

Introduction

Russian Ethnic groups entered Muslim Central Asia as coloniser, which set a reactionary attitude against them in the national life of Muslim Central Asian people. Muslim Central Asia comprises of the present five former Soviet states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan besides Afghanistan. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) comprises many nations due to the expansionist Tsarist policies of earlier times spanning nearly four centuries (early 16th through early 20th century). The culmination of Tsarist expansion in Asia occurred with annexation of Turkestan (present day Central

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Asian Republics). The dominant ethnicity is Turkic that subsumes Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Turkmen and Uzbeks. Besides Turks, the Iranian descendent Tajiks and Slavic descendent Russian also live the contemporary Central Asia. However, after Turkic Mongol conquests, Russian rule has largely transformed the ethnic, cultural and linguistic landscape of contemporary Central Asia. This study will describe the entrance and stay of ethnic Russians and its effects on the various facets of central Asian nationalities. Afghanistan is a part of central Asia but this study excludes it because it has a non-existent ethnic Russian population.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on the qualitative description and analysis of the diachronic aspects of language policy and planning and culture of Muslim Central Asia, under the influence of Russian (Tsarist and Soviet era) influence.

This study attempted to know what and how language policy and planning relates to the effort of bringing and keeping Muslim Central Asian under the Russian sphere. The study provides an analytical commentary on the events and facts related to Russian presence and Muslim Central Asian responses.

Russian Domination of Muslim Central Asia during the Imperial and Soviet Era

This section traces the beginning of Russian influence in Eastern Europe and Western Asia. Then, the establishment of Russian colonies in Muslim Central Asia are discussed. The discussion approaches Muslim Central Asia during the soviet period as an extension of Tsarist expansion.

Rise of the Russian Empire

Russian nation traces its history to the Slavs of the ancient town of Kiev. Western historians consider east Slavs to have divided in Russian, Ukrainian, and Belarusian nations. The indigenous as well as Western scholarship agree that the term “Rus” was originally the name of a tribe of Slavic descent that populated the south-eastern part of the present-day Russia. They established the “Kievan state”. They developed their socio-cultural values that became hallmark of Russian identity. They acquired the name “Rus” because they originated along the banks of river “Ros” (Rus, 2005).

Whether southern or eastern Slavs in beginning: it is certain that Kiev is the first town in the history of the Russian nation.

Russian cultural history is good guide to the understanding of the motives behind the intervening policies in politics, culture and demography of the captured territories including central Asia. The Kievan period was dominantly Christian

ecclesiastical. The Muscovy period was influenced by the Mongols. And the last period has seen westernization on Western European model. The original Slavic element has acquired a unique modern Russian character. This has given Russian a sense of pride over their national history. Russian national character is full of a national pride that looks down on the culture of the conquered lands in Muslim Central Asia.

Establishment of Russian Colonies in Muslim Central Asia

Before the ascendance of Russian, Muslim Central Asia was a major part of Russia dominated by the Turks. For two and a half centuries Russians were under “the Mongol Yoke”(1241-1481). The ruling Turk elite converted to Islam later in Muslim Central Asia. Tatar Turks’ cruelty and Islam became associated in the collective memories of Russians. This hatred provided a spur to the Christian Russians motivation to conquer Muslim Central Asia.

Tsar Ivan IV (1530-1584) spearheaded the Russian expansion in Muslim Central Asia when the power of Tatar at their doorstep in Kazan eroded in 1550s. Russian expansion in early days took two directions: firstly, to the east and secondly to the south. Siberia was annexed in eastward conquests and Caucasus under the southward push. The setbacks in Crimean war made expansion in Muslim Central Asia more attractive.

Russian expansion was natural from geopolitical perspective as the weakened power of Turks there created a power vacuum that incentivized Russian expansion. And when this started, they considered themselves natural heirs to the areas governed by the horde. As stated earlier, the hatred for Turks drove Russian to move to Muslim Central Asia (the last bastion of their power out of their home in Mongolia and eastern part of Asia). The economic promise and sparse population of Muslim Central Asia made this region attractive for Russian colonization. So, when the conquest of Muslim Central Asia started in earnest in 19th century, all major towns fell one by one to the advancing Russian force and the Muslim Central Asian Khanates crumbled without offering effective resistance. Russia had conquered the Muslim Central Asia in merely 30 years (Between 1854 and 1885).

At this stage Russians started heavily colonizing Muslim Central Asia. From 1897 to 1939 despite the tendency of higher birth rate in local population of Muslim Central Asia no growth was recorded in their population. On the other hand, a startling increase in the population of Russian started in their land. The table below shows this relation:

Year	Population of Muslims in Millions	Population of Russians in Millions	Russians Percent of Muslim Population
1897	9.3	0.7	7.5
1911	10.4	2.0	19.5

1926	10.7	2.7	20.0
1939	11.7	4.5	38.5

(Zahoor & Haq, 1997)

This table shows a steady decline in local population and rise in the Russian population. In the gap of only forty-two years Russian colonies grew from one tenth to half of the total population. Local population remained stunted, which is supporting the idea of very unfavorable conditions for the growth of the local population. Therefore, massive colonization and annexation of Muslim Central Asian land and people by Russians started first with the appearance of Russians along the northern regions of Muslim Central Asia in seventeenth century and it was at its peak in the last days of Soviet Union.

During 1860s Tsarist Russia started division of Muslim Central Asia into administrative areas. It is notable that Cossacks played an important role in the Russian conquest of northern Muslim Central Asia. By 1880 Russian colonizer had established two colonies in Aktyubinsk and Kostanai. Russian rulers facilitated and encouraged this settlement of Russian in Muslim Central Asia. In the beginning of twentieth century (1905), the railway line was completed between Orenburg and Tashkent, which helped in mass migration of Russian colonizers to Muslim Central Asia. Railway transportation enabled nearly one million migrants to move and settle in Muslim Central Asian in the next seven years (till 1917). This happened in a demographic shift in Muslim Central Asia as it had one third population of Russian ethnicity in the first half of twentieth century.

This was followed by the Bolshevik take over. In 1920s Basmachis fought them bravely but they could not withstand the immense Russian force for long. By the middle of 1930s this method of resistance was largely dissolved by Russian forces. At this moment some of the leaders of Muslim Central Asian people as Mir Said Sultan Galiev and Faizullah Khojaev believed in the message of communism.

For Bolshevik leaders like Lenin the ideals of Marxism left no room for the recognition of national identities. They were strongly in favor of countering the force of national identity in their communist state. But they had to bow before the force of nationalism. Therefore, they created a federation of national states rather than a unitary communist state (d'Encausse, 1978, p.39).

The beginning of Bolshevik Soviet era in the October of 1917 bode ill for all ethnicities as the civil war and the push for collectivizing land and asset unfolded. The local reaction emerged in the form of Basmachi raids. Russian ethnic group lost their wealth and land to the Soviet system, and they lost lives as Basmachi raids targeted them (1919-1933). However, the political power of Russian remained intact and as the new system took form, they dominated the locals once again.

The language policy of communist center in the beginning promoted localization of communist ideology. They promoted local languages during 1921-1937. Kazakh language was supported in this period, which alienated the Russian

settlers in these regions. However, later the Russian language was re-introduced when the argument of language policy was won by the supporters of Russian language as a faster route to introduction of industrial revolution. Russian boundary settlement was also used as an instrument of realizing demographic shift in Muslim Central Asia when the Russian majority regions were shifted from Russia to make part of Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the wake of second world war, when Hitler's blitz was feared in Soviet Union, the authority decided to move away important strategic assets (military and industrial) along Russian population (affected by war) to Kazakhstan. Mining for important mineral increased due to the migrants to Muslim Central Asia. The emergence of industrial hubs like Karaganda, Dzhezkazgan, Temirtau and Ekibastuz and the aerospace station at Baikonur are the results of this policy.

At the end of Second World War, Soviet policy makers decided to explore fresh grounds for exploration, industrialization and agricultural development. The "Virgin Lands Campaign" of 1950s was inaugurated by Nikita Khrushchev. This incentivized fresh waves of migration to Muslim Central Asia in sixties and seventies. Coal, oil and gas discovery resulted in enhancing Russian population in Muslim Central Asia, for example in Kazakhstan they were more than forty percent in 1980.

Russification of Muslim Central Asia as Protection of Russian Colonies and Interests

Russian authorities were always concerned about a permanent solution to the problem of control of multitude of nationalities in central Asia. As Britain sought to introduce westernization and English language for the purpose of sustaining political influence, Russia started to introduce its own version of exerting pressure to produce a favorable political and cultural environment in the form of Russification.

General Trends: "Russification is a policy designed to strengthen the position of the Russian language and nationality in the borderlands of the empire." (Russia, 2003). Beginning with Russian expansion in Muslim Central Asia, the planned and unplanned management of Muslim Central Asia effectively promoted Russian language and culture. The focus of this russification hinged on cultural and linguistic domination of Russian language and assigning it greater power (as compared to local languages of Muslim Central Asia) in the domains of power. Demographic shift of Muslim Central Asia, marginalization of local languages and cultures, making Russian official in government communication, offices, education, publication media were some of the measures that helped in russification of Muslim Central Asia.

It was the heartfelt desire of Russians dominated Communist party to dissolve national boundaries in the Soviet Republics. They introduced the concept of "Soviet Man" (Bennigsen & Broxup, 1983, p.3) who will inherit the best from all nations and be loyal only to the ideals of communism. With every new regime in USSR the idea to relate failure of communism to the presence of nationalism and faith became a strong motive.

In sociological sense it is imperative to have some new ethics in order to remove former ethics. Communists saw in internationalism a system of ethics which was more conducive to the ideals of communism. This they thought would ultimately replace the nationalist feelings ostensibly responsible for the resistance to conversion to communist culture.

The standard code for the internationalism was found in the culture of Russians. Zinoviev gave voice to this attitude when he stated in 1922, "We cannot do without the petroleum of Azerbaijan or the cotton of Turkestan. We take these products which are necessary for us not as the former exploiters, but as older brothers bearing the torch of civilization." (Rywkin, 1963, p.154).

Soviet cultural policy in Muslim Central Asia was summed up by Kalinin in 1929 as "teaching the people of the Kirghiz steppe, the small Uzbek cotton grower, and the Turkmenian gardener the ideals of the Leningrad worker." (Rywkin, 1990, p.112).

Implementation of Language Policy as a Tool of Russification: At the beginning of twentieth century, Russian population was predominant illiterate. The census of 1897 shows abysmally low literacy in Muslim Central Asian regions. The overall literacy in Russia regions was 29%. It was one of the lowest in comparison to European nations. However, in comparison to Muslim Central Asia it appears outstanding, for example literacy ratio of Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tajiks, Turkmen, and Uzbeks the literacy rates were respectively 8%, 3%, 2%, 8% and 4% (Allworth, 1964) At the time of the October revolution this scenario was almost the unchanged.

Russian language was chosen as medium of instruction and learners were encouraged to learn Russian language. This started extensive Russification of local culture through language learning. 77.4 million non-Russian used Russian as their first or second language in 1979. Non-Russian speakers achieved this goal due to emphasis of Russian authorities on Russian language learning. The critical point in the USSR was inclined to promote russification at the cost of the core ideals that Lenin and Marx supported. Mass campaign for literacy program during 1921-1937 proved an effective tool in cultivation of Russian language. Introduction Cyrillic script, Russian technical terminologies and standardization of the lexicon of local languages maximized the influence and presence of russification in Muslim Central Asia. Russian language thus became the lingua franca of USSR and it promoted bilingualism where the non-Russian people had to learn Russian along

their mother tongue in order to survive in Soviet system. The theme of disconnecting Russian people from the rest of Muslim world in the neighboring states and integrating them into the Soviet cosmos was a goal that was effectively achieved by such policies.

Changes after the Breakup of Soviet Union

According to Russian government data, there are almost ten million Russians in Muslim Central Asian countries. Over half of these live in Kazakhstan. The percentage of Russian population in 1994 was as below:

Kazakhstan 37.5 % of 16.9 million

Kyrgyzstan 21.5 % of 4.5 million

Tajikistan 6.6 % of 5.7 million

Uzbekistan 8.3 % of 22.2 million

Turkmenistan 9.8 % of 4.4 million (CIS, 1994)

A brief overview of the changes and modification of this policy in Muslim Central Asian states after the fall of Soviet Union is provided in the following subsection.

Situation in Kazakhstan

The census of 1999 revealed that in terms of numbers Russians are the second largest ethnic group after Kazakhs. Their number has significantly decreased from the peak 40% to about 25%, still they are in majority in the north and in urban areas (Kazakhstan, 2007).

Nazarbayev has successfully maintained peace in the multi-ethnic Kazakhstan after the initial turmoil of the collapse of Soviet Union, when mass reverse-migration of Russian from Kazakhstan to Russian territories took place as they lost jobs and faced marginalization. The current Russian community in Kazakhstan has assumed a broader ethnic identity that include Russian speaking people of other ethnicities as well e.g. German, Ukrain and Kazaks who are Russified.

Russian people and their language are still influential in Kazakhstan as they form an important part of the state bureaucracy, military, business community and technical experts. Though the current government favors local languages and cultures and promote non-Russians in jobs etc., the ratio of Russian is still higher as compared to their ethnic population for example among athletes attending the Olympic games, as well as nominees for international beauty pageants Russian were more than other ethnic groups.

Russians were mostly skill workers in industrial urban locations of Muslim Central Asia. They acted as the supervisors and bosses of factories and farms. Muslim Central Asia being mostly laborers under them. Their treatment and aloofness from the non-technical indigenous workers made them an object of hate and awe.

Situation in Uzbekistan

Russian with a six percent population form a significant minority. This count was much higher in 1970s at the peak of Russian immigrants. After the fall of Soviet Union most of Russian left Uzbekistan to go back to Russian territories. A major reason for this evacuation from Uzbekistan arises out of the policy to not allow keeping citizenship of Russia and Uzbekistan at the same time. Marginalization is the second reason as the Uzbek president and his party are pursuing a nationalist agenda where Russian influence is resisted. In 2005 the population of Russian in Uzbekistan was 620,000 (Russian diaspora, 2007).

Situation in Turkmenistan

The treaty of 1993 allowed Russian living in Turkmenistan dual citizenship in Turkmenistan. The census of 1995 shows them to be seven percent of total population. However, due to lack of economic incentives Russians kept on leaving Turkmenistan. When the government of Turkmenistan ended the concession of dual citizenship to Russian living there in 2003, most of Russians decided to leave for Russian territories. According to the estimate of 1999 the Russian population was 142,000 in Turkmenistan.

Situation in Tajikistan

The estimate of 1999 shows there were 69,000 Russians in Tajikistan. After Tajik and Uzbek Russians constitute the third most numerous ethnic group in Tajikistan. Like other Muslim Central Asian Republics in 1980s Russian population in Tajikistan was at its peak. When the fall of Soviet Union was imminent in 1990, their majority decided to migrate back to Russian territories. Therefore, by 1995 Russian were only 4% of the total population down from 6%.

Situation in Kyrgyzstan

Most of the Russian living in Kyrgyzstan concentrate in industrial urban center like Bishkek. They constituted around 12 percent of the total population with a count of 604,000 according to the estimate of 1999. As compared to other Muslim Central Asian Republics, the political situation remained volatile after the fall of Soviet Union. This forced a large number of minority ethnicities (including Russian) to leave Kyrgyzstan out of their fear for facing dire consequences to their rights and property. It is estimated that since 1992 about 0.2 million Russians and 0.6 million Germans have abandoned Kyrgyzstan. This has brought a demographic shift in favor of Kyrgyz whose numerical strength has increased by ten percent.

Ethnic Relation between Russians and Muslim Central Asians: Trends

Despite the fall of Soviet Union, its legacy continues in the contemporary Muslim Central Asian Republics (CARs). During the turmoil after 1991, the Russian influence significantly decreased in the CARs, however, after 1998 Russia has again started to regain control of Muslim Central Asia and has expressed its intention to reassert its influence in CARs. Despite the local nationalism, the population in CARs still look to Moscow as protector and patron and desire friendly relations with Russian federation. Tsarist Russian empire, the Soviet Russian and currently the nationalist Russia maintains a colonial attitude towards CARs and follow nowadays a policy of carrot and stick. During Soviet and Tsarist period, the colonial apparatus was developed along the major strategic areas to keep the local population in control. The influence of cultural and linguistic mixing was better than the British colonies in India, however, it failed to produce a complete transformation/russification of the local languages and cultures. The Russian settlers largely remained segregated from the locals, thereby, they remained alien to the local people.

As compared to the imperial Russia, Soviets had adopted a more inclusive approach to the mixing of Russians with locals. They built integrated housing spaces where a mixing of local with Russians resulted. However, due to imbalance in the linguistic and cultural capital of Russians and the locals, local language and culture remained marginalized and thus this system failed in creating a melting pot for Russian and local cultures. Due to marginalization, the local culture remained preserved largely in the remote rural areas. In one study the researcher observed that in the mixed housing system of Muslim Central Asia, local children were more ready to mix with Russian children as compared to adults (Montgomery, 1983).

Another indicator of this intercultural barrier was lack of courtship between cultures. Montgomery, found in his field study that adult males and females were hesitant in establishing marital and pre-marital relations across ethnic boundaries (Montgomery, 1972). Intercultural marriages were more common in urban areas as compared to far off rural areas. Even in urban communities such occurrence were not frequent (Montgomery, 1979). Like Montgoery, Kozlov also reached the same conclusion. He states, "In the Muslim Central Asian republics....among the indigenous peoples of this part of the country and especially in rural areas single-ethnic marriage is the norm; there are some mixed marriages between these peoples (Uzbeks and Tadzhiks, Uzbeks and Turkmen etc.), and also marriages between the local peoples and Russians, mostly between indigenous men and Russian women." (Kozlov, 1988). The lack of mixture of Russian with local people may be ascribed to lack of understanding of the local culture by the superior Russians. Such lack of interest in the local culture stems from sense of superiority among Russians and their understanding that local cultures are not worth their interest. Montgomery reports some comments in Tashkent area, where the Russian

noted that, "All the men do is sit in the courtyards or in the teahouses." (Montgomery, 1972, p.37) Religiosity in Muslim Central Asian people was considered dangerous to the communist ideology, "A Russian can't go in; he would be noticed and not welcome; and besides, they use a different language and [Arabic] alphabet there. How can we really know what goes on?" (Montgomery 1972). The Russians also suspected the source of funding for the Islamic gatherings.

The policy of going to the roots or *korenizatsiya* (in 1920s) promoted localization of Soviet system by promoting the local elite into the administrative system of USSR. This policy helped in advancement of political careers of some of the local leadership. This policy while encouraging the local elite produced a tension between the Russians who were considered the representatives of center and the emergent local elite. The policy produced resentment among Russian settlers who were expecting the center's preferential treatment in appointment against key administrative posts in Soviet bureaucracy in Muslim Central Asia. While Russian considered themselves more skilled and qualified for technical appointments, they were not ready to accept the same attributes in Muslim Central Asian people. For example, the Russians in Uzbek SSR complained that Uzbeks use the harvest permits for getting admission in technical programs like medicine and engineer despite their lack of competence to clear an entry examination. Russians also blamed the local elite in key administrative position of indulging in nepotism and favoritism. (Montgomery, 1972) The same situations were observed by non-Central Asian settlers in other Central Asian republics during Soviet period (Karklins, 1981). The last days of Soviet era were marked by such reactionary nationalism among the people of Muslim Central Asia, that they would often retort to their Russian colleagues and boss (when they were rebuked or corrected) by exclaiming that the non-Central Asian settlers were parasites of Central Asian resources (Gitelman, 1983).

The behavior of Muslim Central Asian underwent a reactionary transformation towards Russians after the fall of Soviet Union. They were generally skeptical about the intentions and motivations of the Russians who chose to stay in CARs." (Montgomery, 1983). They also cite lessons from the history to justify their hostility to Russians: "Most of the history which I had in school was about the Russians. I wish that they taught more about our people" (Montgomery, 1979, p.38). Even during Soviet era, the hostility of the locals towards Russian settlers became a cause for violence such as the one happened in Tashkent in 1969. During these riots the protesters chanted slogans like, "Russians out of Uzbekistan" and "Russians go home" (Azrael, 1978, p.389).

Similar sentiments were expressed when Soviet center removed a Kazakh first secretary from his job due to corruption in 1986. When Soviet Union decided to invade Afghanistan, most of the armed personnel were from Muslim Central Asia. The Muslim Central Asians were considering it an imposed war on them where

they were used as fodder for Russian interests. The invading army had Russians in officer ranks while the foot soldiers were normally from Muslim Central Asia. "One of the most serious outbreaks occurred earlier this year [1982] at one of the main Soviet bases in northern Afghanistan when Tajik and Turkoman truck drivers, incensed by the 'apartheid' attitude of their white comrades took revenge by setting fire to trucks driven by Russians. The Russians retaliated and fighting broke out." The defected officers and soldiers of red army report that the disgruntled armed personnel from Muslim Central Asia would often defect and sabotage (Ivanonova, 1987).

Muslim Central Asian Reactionary Nationalism

Increasingly we see news headlines like this: "Kazakh National Patriots urge ethnic Russians to go home." (FIA, 2007) This appeal was released by the Kazakh Republican Movement *Ult Tagdyry* [Fate of the Nation]. Their advice stems from animosity and hatred that Muslim Central Asian felt towards Russian. So, they here suggest that it is better for the Russians to leave so Kazakhstan may prosper as they (Russian) are a hurdle in realizing this dream.

The rise of Islamic sentiments (and memory of Russians trampling their sacred places, rites and identity) remains a fledgling in CARs. However, the Islamic militant emphasize these points when they justify their violence and appeal to Muslim Central Asian people for help and ask them to join militancy. The claim of Abd al-Qadir, a Soviet Turkmen, may illustrate this simmering point of Muslim Central Asian aversion for Russians.

Soviet Muslims have not forgotten their past and remember their lost liberty. They also remember the lives they gave to defend that lost liberty. The Russian occupiers have seized our lands, have exploited them without pity. But the Muslim peoples all aspire to liberty and wish to free themselves from the communist yoke and the Russian tyrants. Communists often pretend to be the defenders and partisans of religion. They pretend to respect religion, especially Islam, but informed people know that communism and religion are incompatible. I have fought with the Afghan mujahidin against the Russian occupation forces. I consider it my duty to fight until the last drop of the Russian invader's blood. I am a former citizen of the USSR, but I am going to avenge myself on the Russians. I will fight my former fellow citizens (al-Qadir, 1988, pp.434-436).

The reactionary nationalism of Muslim Central Asians against Russian domination exemplified in this excerpt connote a paradigm shift in Russia/Muslim Central Asia relation. The Muslim Central Asian people were for a long time dispossessed of their identity. Forced Russification had created in their mind strong resentment against Russian ideology. Soon after the fall of USSR the newly independent Muslim Central Asian states started derussification. This was done in a mixed way. The force behind this process was the possession of a history and

cultural heritage which reinstated itself after the disappearance of the artificially created culture (Ben, 2002).

Clash of Civilization?

In the nineteenth century Alexis de Tocqueville accurately foresaw the clashes of civilization that would mark Russian society for a century and a half: “There are, at the present time, two great nations in the world, which seem to tend towards the same end. . . I allude to the Russians and the Americans. Both of them have grown up unnoticed...but these are still in the act of growth...the principal instrument of the former (America) is freedom; of the latter (Russia), servitude. Their starting-point is different . . . yet each of them seems to be marked out by the will of Heaven to sway the destinies of half the globe” (Tocqueville, 1835, 521-22).

Russian xenophobia (Sinyavsky, 1988) was a powerful element in characterizing their ethnic attitude in Muslim Central Asia. They seldom mixed with local people. Their presence was due to economic incentives from the central government. Their settled life style suited them to live in urban industrialized locations. They took to the profession of farming and mining in tsarist era and later to industry in Soviet phase. On the other hand, local Muslim Central Asian were always nomadic people who preferred free life of the rural areas. Economic difference and the support of Russian center kept the spark of resentment always alive in the hearts of local people who saw in Russians illegal occupiers of their land and exploiters of their resources. They waited silently after the failure of Basmachi struggle for an opportunity to avenge. This moment came in the form of the fall of the USSR. The reaction that was expected did not happen but the fear in the hearts of Russian and withdrawal of former incentives and privileges in the new formed Muslim Central Asian states made them nostalgic for their motherland in Russia. Many Russians have gone back and many more await repatriation to Russia.

Demographic situation in Muslim Central Asia is rapidly changing. Discrimination against ethnic Russians, revival of national languages, trend of higher birth rate in local population and interruption in privileges are acting as force to expel Russians from Muslim Central Asia.

The leaving Russian left behind them a vacuum which could not be filled immediately in the beginning of 1990s. Kazakhstan had to suffer specially, and special incentives were offered to keep the skilled Russian back until the transition from them to local people is ready.

Therefore, an increased risk to the stability of Muslim Central Asia exist as most of the Muslim Central Asia states possess a sizeable population of Russia. The autocratic government of these states look on these population with suspicion.

Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan have made reversals in their policy of incentives for the Russian people.

Conclusion

The process of colonization of Muslim Central Asia is reversing after the rise in nationalism in the Muslim Central Asian states. Annexation and colonization of Muslim Central Asia had a manifest destiny from the start. To be sure, attempts to construct an inclusive "Russian" identity in the nineteenth century, and a "Soviet" identity in the twentieth, had some success. But within the boundaries of the Russian empire (and the Soviet Union), linguistic diversity in particular and national diversity more generally remained and even prospered.

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