

Soviet Union or Soviet Russia Patterns of Russian Colonialism in the U.S.S.R.

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Inhabited by 122 national groups speaking 114 different languages, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.) is, according to the Soviet leadership, a voluntary federation of fraternal nations. It is further claimed that, as a result of the official *nationalities policy* pursued by the Communists Party of the Soviet Union (C.P.S.U.) – of promoting the cultural identities of ethnic minorities in accordance with the principle of "national in form, socialist in content" – all forms of national inequality have been eliminated. This, in turn, is officially declared to be but a transitional step toward the final goal of *slivanie* – the fusion of all ethnic groups into a single, new community, the Soviet people.

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But is the U.S.S.R. a federation of fraternal nations, or a highly centralized Russian state? Have the cultural identities of ethnic groups and Indigenous Nations been respected and permitted to flourish? And, is the effect of *slivanie* the creation of a Soviet people, or the *Russification* of non-Russians?

The desire of a dozen nations for political independence following the fall of the Czar threatened to leave the Bolshevik regime in Moscow with control of a shrunken state, militarily vulnerable and economically crippled, if not actually viable. To prevent such a possibility, Lenin was reluctantly forced, as a matter of political necessity, to advocate a system he had previously opposed — a federation based on *ethnic units*. By successfully combining appeals to *national self-determination* and working-class solidarity with superior military might, Lenin was able to establish such a federal union.

Soviet "federalism"

However, the U.S.S.R. which Lenin founded is a federation in name only. By definition, a federation is a coordinated division of political powers between the central government and the federated units, each sovereign in its own recognized sphere of jurisdiction. Such a system is the exact opposite of the workings of the U.S.S.R., where the central authorities dominate and the constituent republics act merely as administrative units transmitting and implementing policies decided by Moscow.

The *federal* system of the Soviet Union consists of 53 ethnic units arranged in a five tier hierarchy. At the pinnacle is the U.S.S.R. Next, and unique among the federated units in alone possessing the legal right of secession, are the 15 union republics — Armenia,

Azerbaijan, Byelorussia, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldavia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan and, the very core of the *federation*, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (R.S.F.S.R.). These are followed by — in declining order of status — 20 autonomous soviet socialist republics, 8 autonomous regions, and 10 national regions. The pillars on which this complex and highly centralized edifice rests are: the state, the party, and the military. Of this triad, only the state apparatus offers the diverse national groups political structures which legally recognize their national identities and, theoretically, enables them to participate as equal partners with the Russians in the governing of the U.S.S.R., at both the republican and federal levels.

In accordance with the slogans of federalism and respect for national differences, posts in the governments of the federated and autonomous republics are held by representatives of the local national groups. But, only national groups which officially *exist* can *possess* such republics, and have members of their community fill such government positions. This recognition is conferred solely by Moscow, and is subject to adjustment and/or revocation. Furthermore, the powers which are exercised by the republics are severely restricted and subordinated to the central authorities. Within these bodies, the federal government exerts its control through the activities of the union-republic ministries and the local branch of the all-union state committees. Governmental responsibility for commerce, communications, culture, education, finance, health and justice, for instance, are the concerns of the centrally dominated union-republic ministries, while the republican governments have jurisdiction over such innocuous matters as social security and municipal services. Even these limited functions accorded the

local governments are carefully supervised by the federally controlled state committees, whose operations parallel those of the republican ministries.

The comparable situation prevails at the federal level. While smaller nations are given visibility, and even over-represented in the Supreme Soviet, theoretically the highest organ of state authority, this bi-cameral assembly does not exercise any real power. Since it convenes only a few days twice a year, the actual running of the day-to-day affairs of the U.S.S.R. is delegated to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, the Council of Ministers, and the All-Union state committees. The ethnic composition of these institutions diverges greatly from that of the Supreme Soviet. With one brief exception, the Presidium has always been chaired by Slavs, while approximately 90% of the posts in the Council of Ministers and the state committees are filled by Slavs, principally Russians.

Unlike the formal structure of the U.S.S.R., the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is officially constituted as a unitary entity representing the centralizing forces of integration, not ethnic diversity. Despite the demographic shifts in favor of the Soviet Muslims, which have occurred during the last decade, the organs of power within the C.P.S.U., which decide what constitutes integration and how it should be achieved (the Central Committee, the Politburo, and the Secretariat), remain in the control of the Slavic nations, principally the Russians. During the 1970s, Slavs constituted 73% of the total population, yet the formed 82% of the Central Committee. In the Politburo, only 2 of 16 members and 3 of 6 candidates were non-Slavic, while the Secretariat was exclusively Slavic in composition.

Also serving as a tool of political centralization, and as an engine of national integration, is the Soviet

military. But, are the indigenous nations, the non-Slavs, treated by this institution as trusted citizens of the U.S.S.R.? Judging by the composition of the senior military hierarchy, the answer is "no".

The leadership of armed forces of the Soviet Union — that body of individuals who exercise ultimate decision-making within the military and who also influence the decisions adopted by the party and the state — is virtually monopolized by the Slavic populations in general, and the Russians in particular.

Between 1940 — 1970, of all officers promoted to the rank of general, 91% were Slavs. Of the general officers, who are members of the Supreme Soviet — a government body which otherwise displays sensitivity for ethnic appearances, 95% are Slavs, the vast majority being Russians. Among the 101 general officers elected to the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., between 1952 — 1976, 97 have been Slavs.

This lack of representation of the non-Slav nationalities in the upper echelons of the Soviet military command structure is even more striking in the case of the Muslim Nations. This community, the fastest growing in the Soviet Union, is not only virtually excluded from the senior military staff, but recruits, especially from the Central Asian republics, are generally relegated to construction battalions and rear support services.

The political reality, then, of the governmental structures of the U.S.S.R. is that of a highly centralized state where political power, including the power to decide which nations will be permitted to officially exist, and how, is in the hands of the Russian Slavs.

The non-Russian Slav components of this Slavic-dominated Soviet leadership — Ukrainians, Byelorussians, and Poles — however, are unrepresentative of their respective national communities

and of the place which their peoples occupy with the U.S.S.R. Such individuals are entrusted only with important posts in the ruling hierarchy because they have been effectively *de-nationalized*. They are politically reliable because their identities have been "Sovietized", or *Russified*.

As the constitutional reality of the U.S.S.R. does not reflect political reality, so the official *nationalities policy* of the Soviet Union does not reflect actual governmental practices toward indigenous nations embraced by the Soviet shroud.

Nationalities Policy – "sliyanie"

Officially, the U.S.S.R. promotes the cultural identities of *minorities*, but within the strict guidelines of *national in form, socialist in content*. This sponsorship is expressed by providing recognized *ethnic groups* with a territorial administrative unit, schools which teach subjects in the national language, the publication of books, journals and newspapers in national languages, and, in some cases, the establishment of a territorial research institute bearing the name of the particular national group.

This policy, however, is acknowledged to be a temporary measure defined by and subordinated to the overriding goals of the Soviet ideology, Marxism–Leninism, which views indigenous nations, and all expressions of national distinctiveness, with suspicion and hostility. In practice, the Soviet nationalities policy functions in accordance with the following premises: Ethnicity is transient and retrograde by nature; ethnic differences are historically destined to wither away as all nations will fuse, creating a new single community; large centralized states are more efficient engines for promoting economic and social change; Marx's view of a recognized inequality among ethnic populations, and

Lenin's assertion that the aim of socialism was not to make life happy and comfortable for ethnic communities.

To that end the general features of Soviet *ethnic affairs* take on the aspects of Russification, since the nationalities policy consists of actions taken, or inaction decided upon, by the central U.S.S.R. authorities (Russians and *Russified* ethnics), which have the specific short and long-range purpose of promoting "sliyanie", as the solution to the nationalities question. These features have a significant impact upon – if not all – at least a major category and number of national groups in certain ways, but not affecting the Russians in either the same manner or degree.

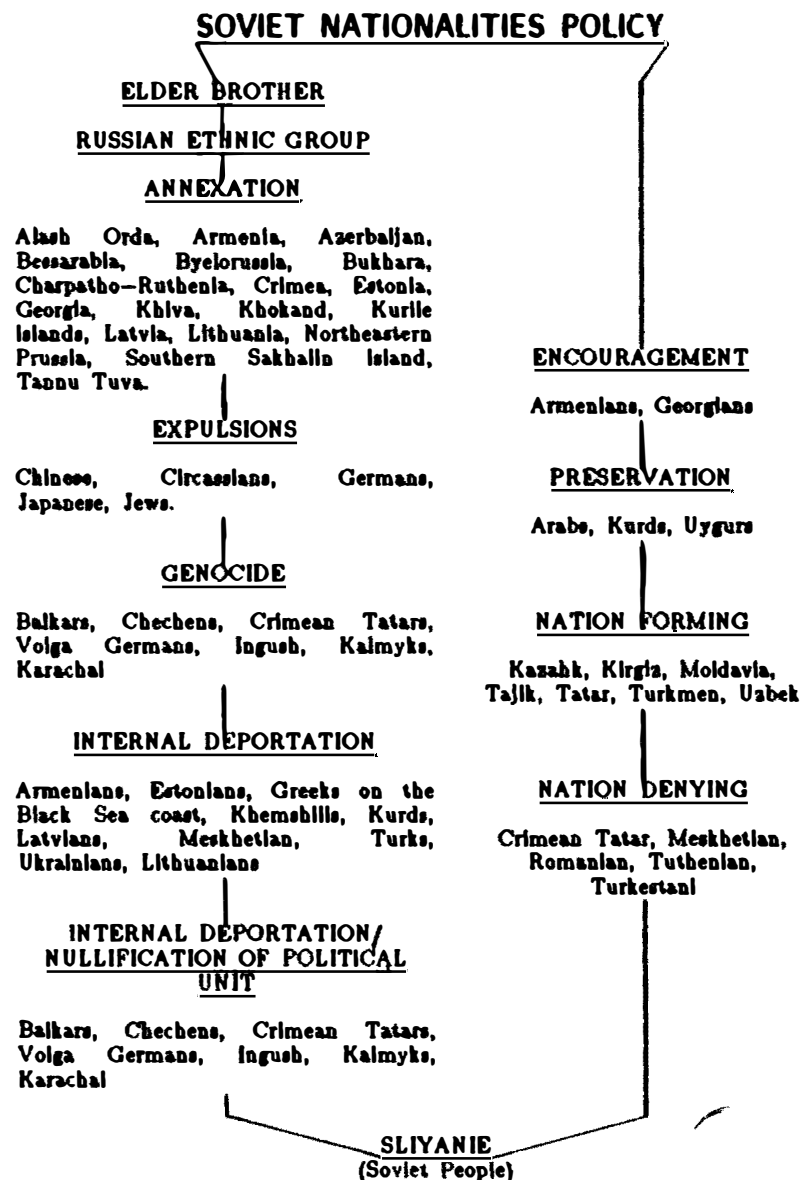
Important nuances exist with regard to the nationalities policy and how this policy is applied, as the diagram below illustrates.

After emerging victorious from the civil war which had been unleashed by the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks, under the banner of international working-class solidarity, successfully engaged in acts of military conquest.

Russian Colonial Conquest

Annexation to this new "Soviet" state, however, (which was essentially ethnic Russia) amounted to little more than the political Russification of the neighboring nations. Despite pronouncements in support of national self-determination for oppressed peoples, the Red Army was hurled against those independent states established by indigenous nations after the fall of the Czar. And, they smashed them. These included Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Bukhara, and Khiva – countries ruled by fraternal socialist governments with whom Moscow had earlier signed treaties recognizing their independence. For the next three decades the Soviet Union continued this policy of aggression against its

non-Russian neighbors.



Aside from rhetoric, Soviet policy differed little from that policy pursued by its imperial predecessor. Annexation violently denied one form of legitimacy to ethnic identities, and was a prelude to other more direct attacks on national distinctions.

For some ethnic communities, like the 500,000 Japanese on southern Sakhalin Island, annexation culminated in their physical expulsion from the land. For others, like the Ukrainians, forcible incorporation into the Soviet Union was eventually followed by genocide. During 1932 - 33, the government of the U.S.S.R., in an attempt to break Ukrainian nationalism, manufactured the first man-made famine in history. Approximately 10% of the entire Ukrainian Nation, 3 - 7 million people, were starved to death. All during this period, Moscow continued to export foodstuff to Western Europe.

When perceived by Soviet authorities as constituting effective public relations tools with which to advance foreign policy objectives, the cultural identities of specific indigenous nations (i.e. Arabs, Kurds, Uygurs) have been preserved. This is a safe policy. These are numerically small national communities, whose primary homelands (where the vast majority of their peoples reside) lay outside of the U.S.S.R. By preserving the identities of these populations, the Soviet Union improves its image and influence among Arab states, and the stateless peoples inhabiting strategic border areas of the Middle East (i.e., Kurds) and China (i.e. Uygurs).

Unlike other Russian controlled indigenous nations, the cultural identities of Armenians and Georgians have been encouraged by central government authorities. Such a unique situation stems from Soviet perceptions about its *national* interests. Soviet leaders hold a firm conviction that neither Armenia nor Georgia can exist

as viable entities outside of a Russian state, and that most members of these two communities realize this. Their reasoning is that, independent of Russia, these countries would be too small in territory and population to continue the level of economic development that they have enjoyed as a part of a larger economic unit: The U.S.S.R. More importantly, surrounded as they are by numerically larger Muslim Nations (nations with whom they hold historic animosities), an independent Armenia and Georgia would be most likely *gobbled-up* by Turkey or Iran, which would jeopardize the very existence of their cultural identities and threaten Russian state security. The Soviet leadership, therefore, believes that most Armenians and Georgians accept the fact that in today's world political union with Russia is a necessity. The Russian State, of course, regards such a union as essential.

By supporting the nations of Armenians and Georgians, the Soviet Union is encouraging their loyalty to the U.S.S.R., thus strengthening Moscow's position in the sensitive southern frontier of the Caucasus mountains. This is a strategic region, rich in petroleum, which borders a NATO member state — Muslim Turkey, and it is also inhabited by millions of Soviet Muslims, whose loyalty might be suspect.

The establishment of distinct Armenian and Georgian soviet socialist republics, in which national identities are encouraged, serves as a focus of interest, concern and sympathy for the dispersed community of these nations the world over. Thus, the Soviet leadership improves its image with the members of this diaspora, winning qualified support from some quarters, while *showcasing* both republics as examples of the success of the official nationalities policy.

However favorable the positions of Armenia and Georgia appear in relation to that of the other nations,

their national status, like all others, is determined by Moscow. Both communities are vulnerable, therefore, to fluctuations in Soviet foreign and domestic policies. As a result, they have been subjected to deportations and Russification. The attempt by the Russian leadership, during the 1970s to have both republics withdraw the constitutional recognition accorded their respective national languages highlighted, for many Armenians and Georgians, the threat of Russification to their national identities.

After World War Two, the government of the U.S.S.R. initiated a program of the most unabashed *Russian colonialism* as a means of securing its political and military control of those strategic areas inhabited by non-Russians. Specific indigenous nations were falsely accused by Soviet authorities of belonging to *fascist* organizations and/or having been Nazi collaborators. Using this as a pretext, the central government relocated many thousands from their homelands, while encouraging an influx of foreign settlers, principally ethnic Russians. Numbered among these victims were: More than 10,000 Armenians, 100,000 Estonians, 100,000 Latvians, 200,000 — 300,000 Lithuanians, and 500,000 Ukrainians.

In many respects, these communities were the *lucky* ones. Entire nations were deported. The territorial administrative units were permitted to remain intact, thereby, ensuring that these national enclaves continued to officially *exist*.

For the Volga Germans, Crimean Tatars, Meskhetans, Kalmyks, and peoples from the North Caucasus (Balkars, Chechens, Ingush, Karachai), deportation was a sentence to oblivion. They became (and some remain to this day) nonexistent nations, *unpeoples*.

Despite the findings of an official investigation, conducted by the Crimean regional committee of the

C.P.S.U. in 1942, which confirmed and documented their loyalty, Moscow nevertheless declared the entire Crimean Tatar nation (a Muslim Turkic people) guilty of collaboration with the Nazis. On May 18, 1944, a week after the last German troops had retreated from the peninsula, the government of the U.S.S.R. deported 200,000 – 250,000 men, women, and children, scattering them across Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia.

Their only crime was in being Crimean Tatars. Tens of thousands died either in transit or during their first year of exile. The exact number is in dispute. While the Crimean Tatar people claim that 46% of their entire nation died, the Soviet government insists it was a mere 22 percent.

"While acknowledging a gross error in its nationalities policy, Soviet leaders refuse to take corrective action."

The Crimean Tatars, liberated by the Western Allies in Central Europe (prisoners of war and civilians forcibly transferred there by the retreating German army), were repatriated to the U.S.S.R. at the insistence of Moscow. Upon their return, those not executed were sent to slave labor camps. They were never heard from again. Repeating the pattern established with the Soviet Germans, deportation was accompanied by attempts to deny the physical existence of the Crimean Tatars. The Crimean ASSR was abolished. Within the peninsula, Tatar place names, as well as those derived

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from German and Greek, were replaced by Russian ones. Historical monuments, even cemeteries, were destroyed. The literary works of Crimean Tatars were burnt. Their history was rewritten to depict them as bandits and aliens; their homeland described as *historically* a part of Russia. In Soviet publications dealing with ethnic affairs, the name of Crimean Tatars ceased to appear. At the same time, the Soviet government vigorously encouraged further Russian colonization of the Crimean peninsula.

After the death of Stalin, some improvement in the conditions of the exiled Crimean Tatars occurred. By 1950, restrictions to *special settlements* had been lifted. The following year official permission was granted for the publication of a newspaper and several books in Crimean Tatar language. Political rehabilitation occurred in 1967. In a decree, the Soviet government admitted that charges of treason against the entire Tatar nation, which formerly resided in the Crimea, were false. The wording of the decree, however, was itself an attack on the national identity of Crimean Tatars. They were no longer officially Crimean Tatars, but "*Tatars formerly resident in the Crimea*", a people who had *taken root* in the Soviet Asia republic.

While acknowledging a gross error in its nationalities policy, Soviet leaders refuse to take corrective action. Despite the fact that five other relocated nations have had their republics re-established within the framework of the Soviet political system, the Crimean ASSR remains abolished. Crimean Tatars are effectively barred from returning to the Crimea – although as Soviet citizens they possess the legal right to reside anywhere within the U.S.S.R. Nor have the cultural rights of Crimean Tatars, including the use of their language, been fully restored to the pre-1944 status. Their *official* history is still falsified and vilified, while

the government continues the practice of not referring to them as Crimean Tatars.

Claiming that it was a temporary evacuation necessitated by the approaching German army (an army a hundred miles away and in retreat), on November 16, 1944, the Soviet government deported several Muslim communities who lived near the strategic border between the U.S.S.R. and Turkey. Two hundred thousand people whose loyalty Moscow doubted, principally Meskhetians — ethnic Georgians who profess Islam and speak Turkish, but also including local Turkmen, Turkic Karapapakhs, Azeris, Turkified Kurds, and Khemshilis — Turkish-speaking Armenian Muslims, were shipped in cattle cars to Kazakhstan and Central Asia. As a result of the harsh conditions to which they were subjected, between 30,000 and 50,000 died in Uzbekistan alone during the first months of internal exile. Sharing the same suffering, these different nations, who possessed a common religion and language, soon came to think of themselves as one people — Meskhetians.

Released from the restrictions of the *special settlements* in 1956, it was not until May 30, 1968 that the leadership of the Soviet Union published an official decree restoring the legal right of Meskhetians to reside anywhere in the U.S.S.R. This decree, however, was worded like earlier ones. The victims were *former residents* of their homelands who had *taken root* in the Soviet republics of Asia to which they had been relocated. Denied financial compensation for the property which had been confiscated from them in 1944, the Meskhetians were barred from returning either to Meskhetia or to any other part of the Georgian SSR. Remaining as a diaspora, the community was being forcibly assimilated into Russian society.

False accusations of collaboration with the Nazi

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occupation were leveled against five other non-Russian nations. Using such lies as a pretext, the Soviet government also forcibly relocated these peoples to Siberia, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia, abolished their territorial administrative units, and expunged their names from official publications.

The deportation of the Kalmyks, a Buddhist-Mongol people living on the northwest shore of the Caspian Sea, occurred on December 27, 30, 1943. This action was not confined to the 107,000 Kalmyks of the Kalmyk ASSR, but to all 134,000 people residing in the European part of the U.S.S.R.

In the strategic Northern Caucasus, all 70,900 Karachai, a Muslim Turkic nation, were deported in November 1943. This was followed by the forced relocation of all 368,100 Chechens and 56,500 Ingush, and two non-Turkic Muslim peoples, on February 23, 1944. The policy ended on March 8, 1944, with the relocation of the entire Balkar nation, another Muslim Turkic people number 39,000.

Beginning in 1956 (with Krushchev's secret speech before the Twentieth Party Congress attacking Stalin and his policies), a process was set in motion by the Soviet government to rehabilitate these nations. Unlike that accorded Germans, the Crimean Tatars, and Meskhetians, however, the political rehabilitation of the Kalmyks, Karachai, Chechens, Ingush, and Balkar nations went beyond an official admission by the leadership of the U.S.S.R. that all charges of treason were false; they reinstated their respective homelands. By 1958, all the territorial administrative units of these five nations had been re-established to their pre-1943 status — a Kalmyk ASSR, a Karachai-Cherkess Autonomous Region, a Chechen-Ingush ASSR, and a Karbardino-Balkar ASSR.

As the table below illustrates (constructed by Dr.

Aleksandr M. Nekrich (Nekrich:1978:138), fifteen years of relocations and exile took a terrible toll on these nations.

**Net losses suffered by Deported Peoples
between 1939 and 1959**
(After Allowance for wartime losses [in thousands])
1939 = 100%

	Population Growth normally expected as of 1959		Net Losses	
	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Absolute</u>	<u>%</u>
CHECHENS	590	38	131	22
KALMYKS	142	7	22	14.8
INGUSH	128	38	12	9
KARACHAI	124	63	37	30
BALKARS	64	49	17	26.5

Professor Nekrich emphasizes that these figures are minimal, not maximal, estimates.

Although less draconian than that suffered by the Crimean Tatars, Soviet Germans, Meskhetians, Kalmyks, Karachai, Chechen, Ingush, and Balkars, the national identities of many other national group have also been, and continue to be, attacked by the Soviet government. One of the most important weapons at the Soviet leaders' disposal for pursuing such assaults is their power to decide which communities constitute nations and which do not.

The population of the Moldavian SSR is Romanian.

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Leaders of the U.S.S.R., however, reject this reality and, instead, have proclaimed the existence of a distinct Moldavian "nation". History is rewritten to *prove* that Moldavians are not Romanians. In an attempt to permanently divide the people, regional differences, however slight, between the Romanians of Romania and those in Moldavia SSR, are reinforced and exaggerated, with new artificial ones also being created. To this end, Moscow has declared the Romanian dialect spoken in Moldavia to be a separate language — Moldavian, and has instituted policies, including replacing the Latin alphabet with Cyrillic, and introducing a Russification of the vocabulary, to insure that the *Moldavian* and Romanian languages become as mutually unintelligible as possible.

Meanwhile, in the north, the Carpatho-Ruthenia territory ceded to the U.S.S.R. by Czechoslovakia after World War II (a land whose distinct political and cultural identity Moscow originally pledged to respect), has been undifferentially incorporated into the Ukraine SSR.

Despite a shared sense of national identity, and possessing a common history (which included periods of political independence and later of local self-government), the U.S.S.R. refuses to establish a territorial administrative unit for the Cossacks, or officially recognize them as a separate community. Interestingly enough, between 1917 — 1920, Soviet Russia did establish Soviet Cossack republics as a political tactic in its war against Cossackia, an independent state created by Cossack nationalists following the overthrow of the Czar. Once the nationalists were defeated, however, all recognition was withdrawn. In addition to the liquidation of the state of Cossackia, Moscow abolished all of its own Soviet Cossack republics as well.

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Then there is the case of "Russian" Turkestan. At the time of the Russian Revolution this immense territory, covering approximately four million square miles, consisted of land annexed directly to Russia by the Czars between 1715 and 1897, and two Russian protectorates — the emirates of Bukhara and Khiva. After coming to power, the Soviets waged a ten-year war against these indigenous people to retain physical control of Turkestan. This land is of vital importance to Moscow. It constitutes 19% of modern Russian territory, and possesses a strategic location from which Moscow seeks to extend its influence throughout the rest of Asia. The principle reason is the richness of its natural resources. The mineral wealth currently extracted from Turkestan is a major factor in the overall Soviet economy: coal — 45%, petroleum — 60%, natural gas — 50%, iron ore — 70%, copper — 76%, mercury — 90%, zinc — 86%, chrome — 80%, nickel — 80%, and phosphorus, sulfur, potassium, and antimony — 75% each. There are also extensive deposits of uranium, gold, silver, and platinum. Turkestan's agricultural output supplies further evidence of the economic and strategic importance of the region to the Soviet Union: cotton — 95%, raw silk — 75%, fruit — 60%, rice — 65%, jute — 100%, natural rubber — 100%, and Karakul furs — 100%.

State Domination and "nation killing"

To maintain effective domination, the Soviet leadership has had to attack and suppress the political and cultural identity of Turkestan. Attempts at national self-determination by the indigenous governments of Alash Orda (southern Kazakhstan) and Khokand (Ferghana Valley) were violently crushed by Soviet Russia in 1918. The lengths to which Moscow was prepared to go in order to defeat Turkestani

nationalism included the imposition of food blockades. Applied against Khokand, it resulted in the death of 900,000 people.

The ruthless attack on Turkestani identity extended to the two protectorates as well. Although treaties of friendship were signed by the Soviet leadership with emirates of Bukhara and Khiva, in which the political independence of both was recognized, each country was invaded by the Red Army in 1920. The monarchies were replaced by pro-Soviet *socialist* regimes. Four years later, both *progressive* and theoretically independent states were abolished by Moscow. These two countries, which had existed for centuries, were reorganized, along with the rest of "Russian" Turkestan, into five *nationally* delineated republics — Kazakh SSR, Kirgiz SSR, Tadjik SSR, Turkmen SSR, and Uzbek SSR.

Although repeatedly proclaimed a federation of fraternal nations, the official history of the U.S.S.R. centers on Russia emphasizing its achievements to the virtual exclusion of all others. When the histories of non-Russians are presented, they are distorted and demeaned. Even their annexations by the Czars are hailed as having been progressive acts. If not for the Czars, it is asserted, these nations would have fallen victim to the retrogressive imperialism of others — the British, the Chinese, the Ottomans, the Swedes, etc. By being annexed to Russia, on the other hand, they became part of a future revolutionary state which was to produce Lenin and the October Revolution. They were absorbed by an emerging Russian state which was neither progressive nor revolutionary in its dealings with neighboring indigenous nations. Soviet Russia proved to be as "imperialistic" as the empire it replaced.

The most effective Soviet instrument for Russification of neighboring indigenous nations remains the policy pursued for centuries by the Czars — internal Russian

migration. This *internal colonization* centers on the rich and strategic border lands in the west, and in *Kazakhstan and Central Asia*. Unless this massive attempt at demographical engineering is halted, the future outlook for the preservation of the cultural identities of the small nations, especially those in the western republics and in Siberia, is dismal indeed.

Of all the indigenous nations inside the Soviet Union, the Turkic Muslims have been one of the few to successfully resist this aspect of Russification. With a rapidly expanding population (a phenomenon project to continue for the foreseeable future), which is concentrated in their respective republics, the Muslims should be able to preserve their cultural identity. In Kazakh SSR and Kirgiz SSR they should be able to even reestablish themselves as the majority population. If present demographic trends among Muslims and Europeans continue, by the year 2000 Muslims could very well represent one-quarter of the entire Soviet population. But, can a Russian leadership of a U.S.S.R. in the process of being Russified tolerate such a threat? "No." Colonization by way of the Russian language and Russian migration is being intensified. To counteract the effects of Muslim population growth, Moscow has proposed certain policies (including longer-paid maternity leave, increased child support grants, preferential housing, and additional child care facilities) as incentives for the Europeans (Russians), specifically, to have large families.

Moscow is intent upon preventing non-Russians from evolving into a rival source of power to the Russian and Russified leadership of the Soviet Union. Official rhetoric of fraternal solidarity aside, the U.S.S.R. like its imperial predecessor, is a *prison of nations*. In its quest for *slivanie*, the Soviet leadership is pursuing a policy of nation killing.

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Bangladesh's Genocidal Crimes

An Appeal to Save the Chakma and other Tribe

Dr. Ramendu S. Dewan

Spokesman

Jana Samhati Samiti

Central Committee

Chittagong Hill Tracts

May I present to you the following evidence regarding the genocidal policy of the Bangladesh Government against the indigenous nationalities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

A full scale invasion of tribal lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) by Bengali settlers has been actively promoted by successive regimes in Pakistan and Bangladesh since the late 1960s. Growing tribal resistance has been met with a hardening of official policy, the closure of the entire CHT beyond Rangamati to foreigners and journalists, and an increasing militarization of the Region.

The scale of the ensuing conflict, between the tribal peoples defending their territorial rights and the military backed invasion, can be measured in thousands of lives. Some estimates place the number of tribal deaths since the late 60s as high as 100,000. Yet the total tribal population of the CHT is only some 600,000. According to some reports, there may be as many as 85,000 military personnel currently in the CHT.

Faced with a continual and accelerating dispossession