CHAPTER III
POLITICAL PROCESSES

The formation of Soviet-Union after Bolshevik revolution was facilitated by the promises of national-self determination of the various nationalities. In Tsarist Russia, various nationalities enjoyed no political autonomy. But the Bolsheviks were committed to the emancipation of nationalities from the Tsarist rule. So the nationality structures such as union, autonomous republics, autonomous regions and national areas were created on ethnicity. Inspite of territorial formations by the Soviet regime, many ethnic groups were still outside their main territory. The most important of such ethnic groups were Tatars, Maris, Kazakhs and Russians.

Lenin pronounced the nationality Policy which was based on the theory of national self-determination. However, it was never sincerely implemented. Stalin, in fact, suppressed the nationalist feelings. Though in theory the nationality policy remained Leninist, but in practice it was suppressive like in the Tsarist period. It was distorted heavily during the Stalin period. He followed the policy of forced settlement of various ethnic groups like Crimean Tatars and Meskhetian Turks outside their ancient lands on various alleged grounds. The migration of Europeans, mostly Russians to other non-Russian republics was encouraged by Moscow.
In cultural sphere, Russification of various nationalities and anti-religious propaganda created alienation among the people. The cultural and language policy was totally discriminatory against non-Russian nationalities. The command and control system of soviet-authority in administration had reduced the status of various nationality formations in practice. Since the formation of USSR, the non-Russian nationalities felt dissatisfied with the Soviet nationality policy. The national aspirations of various ethnic groups remained unfulfilled.

The political processes in the Soviet Union were not democratic in character. The Bolshevik party was thoroughly new instrument of imperial formation and preservation, lacking any model in European history. Lenin’s party subjugated the state in all its manifestations, the army, police, economy, administration science etc., and placed itself at the head of the community as a kind of superstate and supreme leader. The territories of the Russian empire which had declared their autonomy or independence were reconquered by the Soviet army during the civil war and national movements were crushed by force and their remnants were co-opted into party and Soviet organization.¹

In the field of state law, Bolsheviks developed an independent instrument to hold together the multi-national state: Soviet-federalism. This was a complicated system of graduated administrative-territorial autonomies from the Union republics to the Autonomous Republics, Autonomous Regions, etc. right down to the national village Soviets, which vested the large and numerous small nations and peoples with symbols of national independence without giving them genuine self-administration. In political reality, Soviet federalism was annulled by the rigorous centralism inside the CPSU. A federalization of party was out of question. However, as all major decisions were taken by the party organs and merely executed by Soviet-organs, Soviet Federalism remained an empty shell as long as the party firmly held on to reins of power. Whereas party rule was initially reality and Soviet Federalism only an apparent phenomenon, this relationship had been reversed by the end of Eighties.2

Perhaps the central feature of the Soviet Party was that it had an official ideology that it imposed on society. The ideology provided the legitimacy for the most important institutions and structures. The monopoly of power held by the Communist Party was only ideologically justifiable; a democratic legitimacy was never sought. Marxism-Leninism

2. Ibid., pp.11-12.
ideology was major foundation of the system. Regimes that qualify for the designation "democratic", permit the legal political mobilization and articulation of the interests of ethnic group's i.e., the organization of ethnic groups as the subject of political action. The ability to articulate ethnic-group interests in the sphere of politics, culture and economy greatly reduces the probability of forced integration and directed assimilation. It eliminates one of the main causes of conflict between an ethnic community and state. Limitations on the regulatory function of the state, local self-government, and institutionalization of the electoral process aid in the formation of a self-regulating mechanism for the entire system of inter-ethnic relations.

In a sense, the political processes that characterize democratic society replicate those of market economy: demands corresponds to group interests while supply assumes the form of political know-how and transaction is profitable for both the customer-voter who get the 'goods' and the politician who receives public support. Political pluralism, which reflects the differentiation of society into various groups, also promotes cleavages and fragmentation of larger social formation (ethnic, classes, religious) at the same time it impedes or eliminates the permanent polarization of sociopolitical forces, thus strengthening the mechanism of
The indoctrination of Marxism-Leninism started declining in the 60s. Khrushchev tried to reinvigorate ideology with power of conviction. He condemned the forcible imposition of ideology for conformity to law. The party was not ready to deal with political diversity. Political party was governmental party and party in government. The various economic and political problems pressed hard on the political system and compelled the leaders of party and state to different reality and handle the problems in new ways.

Gorbachev started "Perestroika" in economic sphere. His first priority was to reinvigorate the stagnant economy by introducing "perestroika" and to check corruption and inefficiency by "glasnost" or openness. The economic crisis was all the more serious due to the fact that it was system induced. Soviet system faced mutually compounding negative experiences in many areas. Gorbachev attempted to improve the situation first through 'perestroika' and then through "glasnost" or limited freedom of expression. It was a revolution from the above which was

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started in March 1985. In 1987 after his initial economic reform had proved a failure, Gorbachev added an element of democratization to the package of his measures.

The principal result of several decades of Soviet nationality policy which directly bear on the current explosion of nationalism may be summarized as follows. Soviet nationality policy, despite its professed goal of subverting ethnic loyalties and destroying ethnic differences, promoted and accelerated the process of nation-building. During the Soviet period various populations which had not previously developed national consciousness acquired national identities and turned into nations. Initially, ethnic mobilization was one of the unintended and unforeseen consequences of diminishing role of coercion, greater freedom of expression and access to information generated by perestroika. Gorbachev's reforms created an opportunity for long suppressed grievances to surface. 4

Gorbachev did not articulate a specific nationality policy as his predecessors had invariably done, the impact of his other policies on the

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country’s various ethnic communities has been all the greater. In Central Committee Plenum in 1985, Gorbachev acknowledged importance to enhance the responsibility of republic and local agencies for economic, cultural and social affairs, but he did not elaborate it. Initially he was probably prepared to tolerate certain amount of Russian nationalism. On May 8, 1985, in his address on the 40th anniversary on the defeat of Nazi-Germany, he echoed Stalin’s famous voice of May 24, 1945 eulogizing "the leading role of Great Russian people" during World War-II. He appointed Ligachev as ideology chief who avoided of nationalities problems. He made no gestures to placate the non-Russians.

Gorbachev assumed control over non-Russian republics on the pretext of combatting economic inefficiency and corruption. National sentiments were disregarded and Russians were brought into fill the strategic post. Personnel changes took place in Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, Turkmenia and Tajik republics. The Siberian rivers-scheme was omitted, but northern Russia rivers diversion scheme was included in Twelfth Five year Plan (1986 -1990). The only exception was consideration of return of Meshkhetians to their homeland.


The "New edition" of CPSU programme, as presented in draft form to a Central Committee Plenum on October 15, 1985 conveys a variety of signal. Although few of the signals were new, they had considerable importance for two reasons. First, by having been incorporated into programme, they acquired the party's imprimatur and will therefore defined Soviet political discourse for years to come. And second, they were the most detailed expression to the date of Mikhail Gorbachev's thinking on the nationality question. Significantly, the new General secretary, who chaired the commission that rewrote the programme, came across as someone who viewed nationalities as an irrelevance at best and a nuisance at worst.

The 1985, Party programme set the following basic tasks: the all-round consolidation and development of the soviet multi-national state, to struggle consistently against any manifestation of localism and national narrow mindedness, and at the same time to concern itself continually with further enhancement of the role of republics, autonomous provinces and autonomous regions in the solution of all people's task and with the active participation of toilers of all nationalities in the work of organs of power and administration. The creative application of Leninist Principles of

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socialist federalism and democratic centralism forms inter-nationality relations. It will be enriched in the interest of entire soviet people and of every nation and nationality; the building up of the material and spiritual potential of each republic within the framework of the single economic complex.

The combination of initiative of union autonomous and autonomous republics, provinces and autonomous regions with centralized administration on all-union scale permits the rational utilization of the resources of the entire country. It is necessary consistently to deepen the division of labour among republics, to equalize their conditions of economic management, to encourage the active participation of republics in the economic development of new regions, to develop the inter-republican exchange of worker and specialist cadres to broaden and improve the preparation of skilled workers from among the citizens of all nations and nationalities living in republics; the development of soviet people's single culture, which is socialist in content, diverse in national forms, and internationalist in spirit, on the basis of best achievement and distinctive progressive traditions of the peoples of USSR. The growth and drawing together of national cultures and consolidation of their mutual ties make their mutual enrichment even more fruitful; provide Soviet-people with the broadest possibilities of coming in contact with everything
valuable that was created by the talent of each of the peoples of our country. Party put emphasis on the implementation of Leninist nationality policy by the all-round consolidation of the friendship of people. Through the implementation of Leninist Policy, the multinational socialist state would be perfect.

Less often present in the Sovietological discourse but available in the media was a liberal optimistic view that Gorbachev intended (and would be able to carry out a radical, indeed revolutionary, reform that would bring the Soviet-Union back to the tolerant pluralism of New Economic Policy and possibly further into democratic polity and market socialism.

Indeed, over the years of Soviet power, the question was repeatedly raised within the USSR whether the time had not come to dismantle the federal structure because it was initially designed to be "transitional" The version of the party programme adopted in 1961 spoke of the boundaries between the republics as losing their significance which was opposed by various nationalities. But after perestroika, many nationalities were to

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8. No 3, PP.5-6.

abandon sham promises of socialist federalism in favour of real sovereignty as Soviet scholars came to indict the old system as "fictitious federalism and factual unitarism".10

The new party programme said nothing new except dropping of a clause which praised the Russian for their fraternal aid to non-Russians as in 1961 document. It did not refer to "formerly backward peoples". The importance was given on Russian language for the non-Russian people. The more economic power to union republics were not included in the programme. So the 1985 party programme was not different from 1961 programme with some minor exception. The freedom of press was not included in the programme. The Party Programme did not give a clear-cut Nationality Policy.

At the end of 1985, Gorbachev introduced "Glasnost" in all spheres. Soviet Press then changed its role from a restricted one to somewhat free. Anxious to get his economic restructuring drive underway, Gorbachev started wooing the Soviet Union's intelligentsia, particularly the opinion makers, writers and media workers in the hope that they would not only

support back him but also influence to mobilize popular support for his policies.\textsuperscript{11}

First, "Glasnost" was utilized by Russian writers in exposing the various misdeeds of the past. Russian Poet Evgenii Evtushenko played major role in broadening the sphere of glasnost in cultural sphere. Pravada Published his poem "Don’t Rock-the- Boaters’ in which he touched on such themes as censorship in literature and collectivization. His poem "Fuku’, which appeared in "Novyi mir” dealt among other things, with Beria, the notorious Kolyma Camps of Stalin period, and even the disturbing phenomenon of young Soviet and neo-Nazis. He also made an outspoken speech at the congress of writers of the RSFSR in December 1985. Focusing on a whole series of "blank spots" in soviet history and contemporary life, ranging from "dekulkization" and Stalin terror to shortages of food and privileges enjoyed by the Soviet nomenklatura, he stressed that ‘articles rhetorically calling for publicity are not the same as publicity itself. This few and other bold passages from his speech failed, however, to appear in the Soviet Press.\textsuperscript{12} Nationalist Russian writers Yurii Bondarev, Valentin Rasputin and Sergei Zalygin expressed their feelings on northern rivers


\textsuperscript{12}. Ibid., p.238.
diversion scheme and preservation of Russian Culture. Non-Russian writers from Russian Federation expressed concern for their language due to small size of population dispersed throughout federation.

In the beginning of 1986, there was limited sphere of ‘glasnost’ at the republican party congresses before Twenty Seventh Party Congress. Estonia Party Secretary Karl Vaino, devoted his speech to the persistence of the nationalism in his republic. In Central Asian republics, concern was expressed about the resilience of religion and its links with nationalism. Uzbek Party leader, Inamzhon Usmankhodzhaev criticized severely his predecessor Rashidov on the nationality policy. He criticized Rashidov when Soviet authorities were intensifying their effort to contain the influence of religion and nationalism in Central Asia. But ant-corruption drive against some Uzbek leaders was viewed by native Uzbeks as political revenge than economic measures. They regarded Moscow as an imperial power which was out to exploit them. Tajik Party Congress stated that Islam had been activised due to incidents in Iran and Afghanistan.

So for the time being, non-Russians expressed their opinions in the atmosphere of openness. Initially, the main beneficiary was Russian intelligentsia. In the regional party Congress, the party leaders were only portraying the dangers of the nationalism from the point view of party.
Real openness was enjoyed by many Russian and non-Russian writers through various media by critically analyzing the problems independently.

I. 27th Congress of Communist Party

The Twenty-Seventh Party Congress was held in February 1986. Though Gorbachev specified that the development of national relations was of ‘enormous importance’ for the Soviet multinational state, but he did not give much attention to the nationality question. Rather he gave emphasis on economic situation in relation to manifestation of localism. The first sentence of nationality section of 1986 programme, however, reads: In its activity CPSU considers all the facets of multinational character of Soviet Society”. The second sentence of the new text also includes the assertion, in bold letters, that ‘the national question, which has remained from the past, has been solved successfully in the Soviet-Union.¹³

In language Policy, 1986 programme was terse and cold on the use of non-Russian language but dwelt at length on the constructive role played by the Russian language in bringing the Russians and non-Russians

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closer. But the document omitted the reference to the fraternal aid of
great Russian people. There was no mention of abolition of boundaries of
union-republics as in 1961 document. In Gorbachev’s speech, little was
devoted to nationality. He warned against national exclusiveness, and
parasitic altitude. He broadly hinted that all nations have right to proper
representation in the party and government. Gorbachev also hinted for
elections of more Russians in Armenia, Georgia and elsewhere in the
republic. He allowed a limited role for the republics in his new "radical
economic reforms". There was emphasis on the inter-republican exchange
of skilled workers and specialists.

So Gorbachev’s initial response to the nationalities problem
appeared to be mixed. The 27th Congress didn’t elaborate clearly the
nationalities policy. The natalities problem was given minor importance in
comparison to economic restructuring. No concrete relaxation was there for
the non-Russian people. According to Gromyko, on Gorbachev", non-
Russian Soviet-nationalities had little good to expect from the man who
smile a lot but has iron teeth. Both the 1961 and 1986 party programme,
underlined the primacy of central authorities. But the 1986 party

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15. Ibid., P.331.
programme dealt very little in nationality question to that of 1961 programme. From that section, it can be assumed the importance given by the 27th congress to the nationalities policy. In 1986 party pregame, some clauses of 1961 were dropped. But no positive policy was added for the solution of the nationalities problem. It proceeded on the assumption that nationalities problem has been solved. So the programme was set accordingly which was devoid of reality.

Impact of 'glasnost' and "perestroika" 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 setting for genuine public debate. Gorbachev himself gave explicit encouragement to the trend when he complained that for years social scientists had depicted national relations in an rosy light, that the absence of frank discussions of the problems had in fact exacerbated them. Social scientists, he asserted, should stop depicting national relations in terms "reminiscent". of complementary toasts rather than serious scientific studies.  

The various nationalities tried to make use of 'gliestnost' in ventilating their grievances. Moreover, the outburst of grievance was not confined to the non-Russian part of Soviet-Union. The revival of national self-consciousness extended to Russian themselves, and found expression in complaints that the greatest hardship in the course of development had been borne by the Russian Republic, the well-being of which had been sacrificed to the progress of the backward regions of the country. But non-Russian manifestation of nationalism was widespread throughout the Soviet Union.

Non-Russian started to make their demands. A group of Estonian Scientist sent a samizdat (secret) letter to the west reflecting the ecological concern from the mining and construction activities by Moscow authorities. Migration of Russians into Estonia had created discontent among 'Estonians. After the Chernobyl disaster, writer's Union of Ukraine held its ninth Congress in which they demanded conservation of nation's cultural and linguistic heritage with environment. On 25 June, first channel of Moscow television showed a discussion during which it emerged that there had recently been racial disturbance between Iakut and Russian students in Iakutsk. It was an exceptional programme. The free expressions of non-

17. Ibid., pp.99-100.
Russian writes about the nationalities problems during the eighth Congress of Soviet writers was symbol of 'glanost' in practice.

At party Congress, Usmankhodzhaev spoke for the Siberia rivers' scheme which was necessary for the "national economic tasks" in Uzbekistan. But academician Likhachev, a representative of liberal-wing of Russian nationalism presented Russian case against Siberian River's diversion Scheme. Later the scheme was dropped from the five-year plan. It created discontents in central Asian republics.

The suspension of the project was presented as triumph for glasnost. A commentary on Moscow's domestic radio remarked on the process by which the decision was reached. "Its development was accompanied by fairly heated debate, in which not only scientists and specialist but also the widest possible strata of the public took part. Public opinion, as we have seen, is now actively targeted on making all round assessments of the consequences of any decision that are weighed up as thoroughly as possible, regardless of whether they affect major economic projects." The final resolution was not unanimous. The Central Asian writer's were not for scrapping the project. They put forward their arguments in favour of project.


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A letter published in the Byelorussian literary weekly, *Literatura imastatstva* (19 September, 1986) has initiated a lively discussion on the status of the native language in Byelorussia. A commentary to the letter published in the same journal and responses in readers letters in subsequent issues revealed a concern for the steady decline in the language. The debate also gives a practical illustration of the past and present processes of Russification.\textsuperscript{19} Byelorussian press gave the indication of the concern for the Byelorussian national identity.

Many non-Russian nationalities showing their discontents demanded restoration of their native language. Uzbek, Georgian and Armenian writers criticized the neglect of their languages. But Gorbachev did not change any part of the old nationality policy. Alma-Ata riot was a great challenge to the Soviet-nationality policy which claimed the solution of all the nationalities problems in Soviet-Union. Because of its ethnically mixed population, the republic had long been hailed in Soviet Press as a laboratory of friendship of peoples'.

It is assumed that Gorbachev had little understanding of nationality affairs when he became leader. As a party leader, he placed the cohesion

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.4.
of the soviet empire above all else. The Kazakh riots of December 1986 shocked him, as he supported Ligachev’s proposal to remove the corrupt Kunaev and replaced him with a Russian who was amenable to central direction. Moscow was not to regard all the indigenous party elites, especially in the Muslim republics as corrupt.\textsuperscript{20} Probably, there would not have been any ethnic discontents among Kazakhs, if Kunaev would have been replaced by a Kazakh leader. The glasnost and perestroika had already promoted the articulation of old hatreds and resentment against the Moscow. The Russians were symbol of authority to Kazakhs. So the immediate spark due to replacement went against Russian population in the fearless atomosphere of post-reform period.

Initially authorities were determined in taking the firm action in Kazakhstan, but later the policy was reconciliatory. Gorbachev advocated for openness not for the change in policy after realizing the gravity of the situation. At the January plenum, Gorbachev devoted a bit of attention to the nationality policy. With the events in Alma-Ata only a few weeks behind, he acknowledged for the first time the importance of the nationalities question. There is not a single fundamental issue that we could resolve, now or in the past, he declared, “without taking into account

that we live in a multi-ethnic country". He ascribed the negative phenomenon in the areas of national relations only to the non-Russians.

Gorbachev hoped that greater participation in the political process, firmly guided by the CPSU, would greatly strengthen the Soviet Union. Instead, it blew it up. One of reasons for this was that the communist leadership in the Baltic Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and Transcaucasia-Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were gradually submerged under nationalist sentiments and found themselves following the national fronts rather than leading them.

In 1988, nationalist tensions were rising everywhere in serious proportion. In the background of mounting protests, Central Committee Plenum held its meeting where leaders felt the gravity of situation. On 23 March Presidium of Supreme Soviet of the USSR met in Moscow and rejected Armenian demand of Nagorny-Karabakh transfer. Then the Politiburo announced a broad conciliatory programme designed to improve the cultural, economic, and social conditions in Nagorny-Karabakh.

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Baltic republics led the way in demanding to redefine their relationship with Moscow and granting full and effective independence in cultural sphere. The informal groups were established to espouse the nationalist cause. Sajudis were in the forefront in the Baltic republics. There were many non-Russian news papers. Some minority nationalities were given recognition for writing in their own languages. Further, the republican commission on national relations was established. Republican commissions in Georgia and Kazakhstan were upgraded.

The institutionalization of nationality made it the only officially recognized distinction among Soviet citizens. In a situation of growing social disintegration, nationality remains a major means of psychological defense and a seemingly natural bond uniting otherwise atomized members of a decayed society into meaningful groups. While the profound social crisis intensifies competition for scarce resources, chances of achieving goals through individual effort are often diminished. Individuals resist the decline in the diminished. Individuals resist the decline in the standard of living by increasingly recurring to collective action. Activating kinship, friendship, and ethnic ties has been one of the most common modes of adaption in crisis-ridden Soviet type societies. As a result, nationality has become the most potent base of social mobilization. In the words of the Soviet philosopher "Grigoriy" Pomerants, "Nationalities have
turned into political parties"²³ The ethnic mobilization were directed against minority, imperial centre and sometimes against neighbouring ethnic group. It was manipulated by the agendas of political elites.

The combination of demographic, ecological, economic and administrative crisis in Brezhnev period resulted in considerable decline in per capita income, ecological problem and unemployment. In most cases the conflicts started over distribution of resources and privileges along ethnic lines. Due to severe scarcity, ethnic discontents were probably directed against minority group alleged to be favoured by authority. The killings of Meshetian Turks by Uzbeks was a example.

**Popular Fronts**

Perestroika came to Central Asia later than other parts of the USSR. Its visible benefit had been in public airing of environmental, economic and social problems that accumulated in the region for decades and were officially regarded as the root cause of the inter-ethnic tensions that exploded in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the Tajik-Kirghiz border. The discussion of these problems was largely a preserve of political leaders and intellectuals. But the informal groups provided an opportunity for ordinary

²³ Zaslavsky, n.4, p.107.
citizens to involve in political action on the topics of concern to them, such as environmental or language issues. Birlik was similar in objectives like other popular front in Baltic. But republican authorities encouraged the informal groups which contributed positively to the perestroika. Though, decision making was firmly in the hands of party, these unofficial groups developed new concept of public participation in political processes of Central Asia to strengthen democratization.

Press

The role of press changed in non-Russian republics after reforms. The news about republics were reported daily in the newspaper. The informal groups put their views through press. Each nationality knew about others and found the bases for co-operation. Moreover, any new policy or practice could be seen as discrimination. This development also affected Moscow's ability to cope with the periphery. It was no accident that in 1987, when the Armenians launched their drive for the transfer of Nagorno-Karabakh to their jurisdiction, few nationalities thought of making similar territorial demands. As the full extent of the Chernobyl disaster finally leaked out, it was not surprising that activists in all republics with nuclear power plants stepped up their drives to shut them

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Political Culture

Political culture in "Gorbachev period" became participatory to a great extent. However, virtually none of the nationalities except perhaps for the three small Baltic nations appeared to have a fully participatory political culture at the mass-level. Demonstration by the mass was indicator of the lack of strong participatory political culture in the past. It was a method of expressing ethnic discontents in the atmosphere of glasnost.

The double standard was followed by Gorbachev in the religious affairs. The encouragement was given to the celebration of millennium of Christianity in Russia by Soviet-Authority. But the criticism of Islam at the same time in Central Asia created a suspicion among people. The replacement of party official in Central Asian republics on the various charges was interpreted as a discrimination to the natives.

In Central Asia, elites were more assertive in raising various issues. The Uzbekistan elites demanded an end to the cotton monoculture. Kirghiz


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writers criticized role of communist party in eliminating the Kirghiz customs, and traditions because they are Islamic. Kirghiz writer, Kazat Akhmatov, pleaded for abolishing the leadership role of communist party and obligatory study of party teaching.

II. 19th All-Union Conference of C.P.S.U.

In order to arrest the rising polarization of nationalities along the national and ethnic lines, the 19th conference of CPSU was held on 28 June 1988. Its aim was to analyse the malaises in the nationalities relations objectively and suggest measure for the improvement of national relations in USSR. The non-Russians got the opportunity to advance their respective nationalist causes. Baltic delegation led the way in creating confidence among non-Russians for their cause. Though many delegates were conservative, the discussion was lively by all the nationalities.

Gorbachev made his speech to the conference regarding inter-ethnic relations "that the Union of our Country's nations and nationalities which enjoyed equal rights is one of the greatest accomplishment of socialism. Today this enables us to state with profound conviction that in future too, consistent implementation of Lenins' ethnic policy will be only sound basis
of our development.\textsuperscript{26} He tried to convey that the Leninist principle was sound for the multi-national state which had stood the test of time. He took it as an extremely important topic for lively discussion, so that real cause could be found out.

He said to work in earnest to promote and optimise the economic, scientific and technological ties existing between our republics and to make the fuller use of the advantages offered by the domestic division of labour, cooperation and scientifically sound regional policies. In this regard, Glasnost will give the clear picture. Again, in recent years, democratization and glasnost have put the spot-light on problems which were not always taken into consideration. The growth of national-self awareness is a positive phenomenon. But since the new requirements arising in these connection were not always treated with the attention they deserve, some issue began to grow more complicated and acquire a nationalistic aspect in some cases, although in principle they could have been settled quietly, without providing a pretext for all extremes.\textsuperscript{27} Gorbachev was against all sorts extreme nationalism which will create discord among various nationalists hampering ultimately the process of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika'.

\textsuperscript{26} Documents and Materials, (Moscow, 1988), P.62.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pp.63-64.
In his opinion, we should also consider the questions of inter-ethnic relations within the context of current stage in development of our multi-national Soviet State. We should sum the experience we have gained, make use of everything that is valuable and identify what we should abandon. We should assess the various regulating instruments concerning relationship between union and republics. Another question is how to protect the interest of various nationalities which has no territorial boundary. For those duties, rights of union and other republics should be enumerated. In multinational state, thee is no other way except this. Again, internationalization of the economy and of the entire social fabric is something we cannot steer clear of. And so, any obsession with national isolation can only lead to economic and cultural impoverishment.28

He advocated for special institutions which could peacefully solve the inter-ethnic problems. The major role should be given to Soviet of nationalities in USSR supreme Soviet. In the concluding remark, Gorbachev said that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic is our common home. It is our home and we must take unflagging care of it, cherish and improve it, and work in such a way that all the Soviet people who live in it can take the pride in their socialist motherland.29

28. Ibid., p.64.
The debate among delegates was in a free atmosphere which was unprecedented in the history of CPSU. It was not that Baltic representatives spoke out; the Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Uzbeks, Moldavians, Iakvts, and Komis, called for the fundamental changes in the nationalistic policy and restoration of national rights of non-Russian. There was a heated argument among Armenian Party Chief Suren Arutinium and Azerbaijan Party leader, Abdul Rakh Vezirov on the status of Nogorny-Karabakh. Azerbaijan chief supported decentralization, all forms of national statehood and autonomy. He proposed for a new executive agency for the solution of national problem. Estonian chief pleaded for restoration of Leninist principle in national relations. Lithuanian chief called for appropriate changes of constitution and to solve the language and environmental problems. Uzbek Chief Nishanov Spoke openly of the "serious Consequence for the economy and the environment" by the cotton monoculture. Ukrainians pleaded for restoration of national language and end of nuclear installation. A representative from Komi ASSR, V. Melnikov, spoke about the economic exploitation and assimilation of smaller nationalities.

Two Russian speakers argued that what was needed to counteract the growth of nationalism was to put more emphasis on internationalization. But the position taken by the non-Russian delegates
prevailed to the last. Many non-Russians were appointed as members of drafting commission. The commission tried to formulate measures after the compromise on all the issues. All-Union Conference of CPSU adopted an 8-point programme "On Relations Between Soviet - Nationalities": The Salient features of these points are as follows:

I) The Soviet Socialist state founded by Vladimir Lenin embodied the revolutionary will and aspirations of the multinational family of equal peoples. A new historical community - the Soviet people-has come into being. A natural growth of national self-awareness is underway. But in course of time, there had been distortion of nationalist policy which created discontents and also conflicts. The negative phenomena which accumulated since a long, had been neglected. The 'Glosnost and "Perestroika" revealed these phenomena and created condition for overcoming them.

II) Party Conference considered it a task of historic importance to persistently assert and creatively advance Lenin's norms and principle of nationalities policy and resolutely eliminated those artificial elements and deformation which have accumulated. It was against any sort of chauvinism and nationalism. Greater independence of Union republics and autonomous entities is seen
by party in indissoluble connection with their responsibility for strengthening the programme of our multi-national state. The socialist idea is not a detrimental to the unification but full-blooded and dynamic unity set in national diversity.

III) The Conference holds that due measures should be taken as a part of restructuring of political system to further strengthen and develop soviet federation on democratic principles. It would decentralize power from union to republic level emphasizing their independence and responsibility in economic, social and cultural spheres. So it would create conditions for greater independence of region so that comprehensive development of every region should be developed.

The work of those institutions of political system through which interests of nationalities are determined and coordinated, should be invigorated. So the importance of Soviet of People's Deputies should be enhanced. The Soviet of Nationalities of USSR supreme Soviet, its standing commission were accorded a prime position in dealing with inter ethnic relations. The question of establishing a special government body for nationalities and ethnic relations should be considered. An elaborate arrangement should be made for the self-government of various
nationalities taking into the realities. If necessary, proper amendments of the constitutions should be done.

IV) It is important that in every national region, economic and social progress should be accompanied by spiritual progress based on the cultural identity of nations. The ethnic groups residing outside their national territories or ethnic groups which have no such territories should be granted more opportunity to fulfill their national, cultural needs, especially in education, communication and folk art. They should have the opportunity to form national culture centers, to use mass media and to satisfy their religious requirements.

The most important principle of multinational state is free development and equal use by all the Soviet-citizens of their mother tongues and learning of Russian, which has been voluntary for the communication between the nations. So the language of region should be given importance in the instruction and official use.

V) There should be appreciation of roles of schools, young pioneers and young communist league in the sphere of friendship of various nationalities. The service of Soviet armed forces should be the real school of internationalism. National narrow mindedness and
chauvinistic arrogance should be combated. People must learn to distinguish between true national interest and their national perversion. So any claim to national exclusiveness should not be tolerated. One should combat his own nationalistic perversion and chauvinism.

VI) It stressed for an indepth analysis of specific situation and objective assessment of every specific situation. It should be tackled in a peaceful way within the framework of socialist democracy. It is essential to a social climate in which people of any nationality should feel at home in any part of the socialist homeland.

VII) As the nationalities policy should be formulated after the profound scientific and theoretical study, there should be a research institution. So there should be all-Union research center for this purpose.

VIII) Conference stressed the need for principle of representation of all the nationalities in all party organization and government institutions.30

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30 "Documents and Materials", (Moscow), 1988, pp.146-51.
After failing to win agreement from his own ruling party to democratize the apparatus from within through multi-candidate elections, Gorbachev proposed the such elections to new Congress of People's Deputies in the Nineteenth Party Conference. These national, and later local elections, spelled the death of the Communist Party's monopoly on political power and occurred simultaneously with the outburst of mass nationalist movements, first in Transcausasia and soon after in the Baltic republics. Gorbachev's failure to deal quickly and effectively with Armenian in Karabakh and Erevan, the escalation in to violence with Azerbaijani pogrom at Sumgait, and the apparent willingness to tolerate mass demonstrations, encouraged national opposition elites in those republics where the intelligentsia had in part wriggled free of the communist ruling groups. The intellectuals and activists in the spirit of glasnost and perestroika form ethno-cultural demands against the programmes of CPSU. But Communist parties in republics suppressed the weak "weak democratic" opposition.

The period 1985-89 saw a unleashing the revolutionary processes of the relaxation of the CPSU's total grip over society. The first signs of the emerging disintegration and nationalities troubles displayed during that

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31. Suny, No.9, pp.115.
period: the character of the problem posed by the multi-ethnic make-up of the Soviet State was transformed. Violent protests broke out in Alma-Ata in December 1986 against Gorbachev's decision to replace the republican party chief; Crimean Tatars and other deported nationalities began to claim back their rights for some territorial autonomy; a bloody conflict in and around Nogorno-Karabakh erupted in Transcaucasia; and Estonian supreme Soviet made a first move in the war of laws, declaring republican sovereignty and its right to veto all Union Laws.32

In theory, the resolution were adopted. But in practice, the policies were changed to tackle the various untoward incidents. In October, Gorbachev suddenly came out with a draft law on amendments and additions to the Soviet constitution that contained provisions which was contrary to the resolutions of 19th party conference. The revamped USSR supreme Soviet was to be accorded the power to overrule the right of union republics to secede from USSR, and to annual decisions of republican governments if these were thought to be in conflict with interest of union as a whole. Moreover, in such a case, it was to be empowered to proclaim the state of emergency in specific localities with wherever necessary of a special administration.

In order to tackle the situation arising out of Nogorny-Karabakh clashes, he issued a decree on emergency to take over the disputed enclave to the direct union administration. The change in policy was opposed by protests and demonstrations. Baltic opposed the law and declared secession from the union. They demanded withdrawal of Red-guards from their areas.

On November 1988, Estonia Supreme Soviet defiantly adopted a "declaration of Sovereignty" Lithuania used the occasion to proclaim Lithuanian as the official language of republic and designate the flag and hymn of independent Lithuania to be the official flag and anthem of that SSR. In Uzbekistan, the demonstration was organized in support of their national language.

Congress of People's Deputies

The first elections for Congress of Peoples' Deputies of USSR were held in March 1989. However, these elections had many limitations. There was no multi-party system in political process. The democratic process was in the embryonic stage. Also one-third of the seats in the 2,250 member of Congress of People's Deputies were set-aside for the communist party and its affiliated organizations. They did not face popular ratification. The highly selective 2,250 member of Congress of People's Deputies became
electoral college for indirect election to the Supreme Soviet. This indirect method of selection further weakened the electoral credibility of upper and more powerful house numerous inequities.  

Election rules varied somewhat across republics but in general they allowed republican level actors to make greater claim to legitimacy than all-Union counterparts. Each republic abolished guaranteed seats for the Communist Party and its allied organizations. Voters in most republics, the major exception being Russia, elected deputies directly to the upper house of parliament. Inequities did occur in elections to republic parliament, especially in Central Asia and in the area of rights of ethnic minorities. Yet on the whole, deputies from republic supreme Soviet could not only claim to be the defender of ethnic interests; they could also make a stronger claim to legitimacy than USSR supreme Soviet Deputies.  

On 26 March 1989, and in subsequent run-off elections, the forces for genuine democratization and radical change scored impressive victories in the elections to the new Congress of People’s Deputies. Reformist

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34. Ibid., p.132.
candidates of various popular fronts in Baltic republics won in the majority of the electoral districts. Sajudis won 31 out of 39 seats in Lithuania. In Ukraine communist party suffered a number of humiliating defeats. Five regional party secretaries were not elected. In Kiev, both mayor and regional fist secretary failed to win more than fifty percent of the votes even though they ran unopposed. In Moldavia and Byelorussia too a number of reformist and nationalist candidates defeated the communist party's candidates.

The newly elected legislatures openly challenged predominance of the centre. Republican legislatures vied with the USSR legislature on a series of issues, ranging from language, migration, economic Sovereignty, citizenship and in few cases, to the subject of political independence. The republican legislatures, began to discuss, pass, and in very rare cases, even implement, new laws, not all of which were consistent with the all-Union or even with each other.\textsuperscript{35}

Though election was not totally democratic, but it was a new beginning in the political process of the Soviet-Union. The protests of various nationalities transformed into votes against old policy. Again the

\textsuperscript{35} Gleason, n.10, p.148.
leaders from various nationalities got legitimacy in raising the various national issue. They became more assertive in expressing their view. This period was identified as period of legalization of parliamentary opposition.

The new Congress of People's Deputies opened on May 25 against the background of protest in Georgia, Moldavia and Uzbekistan, mass demonstration in Erevan and Nagorny-Karabakh, and mounting pressure from Balts. Nationalities problem remained on the top of the agenda in the discussion which got sufficient coverage in media. There was call for the creation of genuine federation. Due to pressure, a commission was setup to look into issue of the Molotov-Ribben trop pact, and another commission to investigate the civilian police clash in Georgian Capital on 9 April. Then ther was an attempt to discuss for abolition, of Article-6 of USSR constitution.

Soviet Union's new legislative bodies proved more independent in the in functioning. They immediately broke with past practice of unanimous decision. Real debate started for alternative solution of the problems. Then significant stage came with the formation of new parliamentary bodies.
In July 1989, 250 deputies formed on "Inter-Regional" Group which included Andrei Sakharov and Boris yelstin. Sakharov called for the 'dismantling' of the Soviet Union's imperial structure and its replacement by a voluntary confederation based on new Union Treaty. It was the first organized opposition group in seventy years. The other group Rossiya Club was set up in October 1989.

Islam and Nationalism in Central Asia

Despite division of Central Asia into separate republics, Islam remains a potential binding force. Many people still consider religion and nationalism as similar and looks at religion as being part of national life. There are many historical reasons why for a Turkestani the nations of Islam and notion are intertwined. Suffice to say that for centuries, since earliest years of Islam, Turkestan was the cradle of the greatest Muslim dynasties, brilliant theologians, philosophers, saints, poets and sufis. The rediscovery of past offer Stalin has helped to enhance the prestige of ancestor's religion among the modern Soviet intelligentsia. The fierce resistance by Sufi-triya to Russian Conquest in 19th Century gives to Islam a strong mobilising appeal for those who oppressed or resent Russian domination. The fact that Islam, unlike communism, especially in its popular Sufi form so perfectly adapted to local conditions, has not insisted on the total destruction of the social and cultural originality of the Central
Asian Societies, but instead has tried to accommodate them accounts for not only for its persistent vitality but for its continuous role in custodian of national rules.36

Islam created solidarity among Soviet Muslim. It heightens national awareness. There was a expression that "You cannot be a Kazakh or Uzbek or Kirghiz without being a Muslim". The realisation by Soviet experts that in the USSR, Islam and nationalism are closely linked is not itself a dramatic discovery. It would have been naive to expect that a mere sixty years of rather simplistic and alien propaganda would have managed to eradicate the ideas, beliefs and the way of life resulting from centuries of a most sophisticated and rich civilization, but will have important impact on the policies applied by the Moscow in the native Muslim territories and in the future relations between the Russian and their Muslim Comrades in the Communist Party.37

The politinisation Islam was a new subject among the Soviet scholars after reforms. They called "Wahabism" in Tajikistan as a religious political movement. Which was extremely reactionary and nationalistic.


37. Ibid., p.285.
Some also believe that the hand of Sufis in Alma-Ata riots. The group demanded Islamic republic based on Sharia. In 26 September, 1992, Muslim Samizdat Secret letter was known. It was highly politicized work of the Mowdudi, Said Qotb. etc.

**Nishanov’s Programme**

In 1989, Central Committee First Secretary R.N. Nishanov acknowledged the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism. The unrest and mass gathering in Ferghana, Tashkent, Namagan and other cities justified his observation. He admitted the inability of the party to face challenge from the Islamic fundamentalism. He set four recommendations. First, bureaucratic approach to religious freedom is useless. The steps should be taken to realize the freedom of conscience. Secondly working group should be established within party to study the religious situation and overcome the negative tendencies. Thirdly, atheistic work should include efforts to improve public services and standard of living. Fourthly, meeting should be held in all primary party organizations to ensure the proper dissemination of knowledge on appropriate methods at work. Reduced to its essentials, Nishanov’s programme represents cautious attempt to contain the influence of Islam without confronting it directly.38

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38. Robert F. Baumann, "National Movements in Transcausus and Central Asia: Moscow’s Dillemma" in Uri Ra’an’an, ed. *The Soviet*
III. Party's Draft Platform on Nationalities Policy

As the latest crisis was unfolding, the party leadership finally unveiled its "proposals for improving inter-ethnic relations in the USSR and renewing nationalities policy". The lengthy document was published in Pravda and Izvestia on 17 August and entitled "The Party's Nationalities Policy Under Present Conditions (Platform of CPSU)" which reads.

The nationalities question in the Soviet Union has become exceptionally acute recently. The party recognizes that a solution to the problem that have arisen in the connection is of enormous importance for the fate of restructuring and future of our country. Such a solution can and must be found only in the course of revolutionary renewal of Soviet-Society. The transformations that are being carried out at the present stage of reform in economic and political system of socialism in the USSR will be of key importance in this respect. Fundamental approaches to the accomplishment of this task are contained in the 19th All Union CPSU conference's resolution "On relation-Between Nationalities". With the holding of First Congress of USSR People's Deputies and subsequent formation of new union, republic and local bodies of power, a political

mechanism was taking shape within the framework of which urgent questions of the development of Soviet nations and of relations between nationalities and its standing committees were called upon to especially concern themselves with these questions.

The CPSU Central Committee deemed it necessary to define the party's present-day policy on the nationalities question as one of the most important component part of the overall conception of restructuring, a policy that, taking into account Soviet and world experience, would ensure conditions for the free development of all the peoples of our country and for the strengthening of their friendship and co-operation in accordance with the principles of an organic combination of the principles of an organic combination of the equality of peoples and equality of individuals, regardless of their nationality. The platform that is proposed is the result of an analysis and comparison of the opinions of the party committee, Soviet agencies, scientific institutions, general public and various public movements, scholars and press materials. It is a result of the consideration of new ideas put forth at the Congress of USSR People's Deputies. It is also a reflection of the opinion of Soviet people of various nationalities as contained in letters received by CPSU central committee.39

The CPSU platform described in detail the past of the USSR. How Soviet-Union was formed? Soviet Union was considered as a 'voluntary association' of independent partners. So the formation of Soviet-Union was totally acceptable to all the nationalities. They were given equal rights by Lenin in the time of creation of Soviet Union. Lenin's nationality policy was the ideal for the various nationalities. But in practice, according to platform, some distortion occurred which created the present problems.

As the time passed, the administrative-command system, which needed highly centralized, uniform structures, increasingly ignored the requirements of national development. A departmental, standardized-bureaucratic approach prevailed, and this had an effect on every thing, from setting of productive forces to the problems of language, education and culture. The sovereignty of republic remained in theory. The mass repressions, especially relocation of entire peoples from the places where they had traditionally lived to other republics and regions, were a serious factor making for the exacerbation of nationalities problems. The fate befel the Kalmyks, the Karachai, the Balkars, the Chechens, the Ingush, the Crimeans Tatars, the Meskhetian Turks, the Germans, the Koreans, the Greeks, and the Kurds. Many party and state officials of the republics and representatives of national intelligentsia were unjustly accused of
nationalism and persecuted.\textsuperscript{40} So all the people have suffered due to the violation of Lenin's principle on nationality policy.

Now Soviet Society, having embarked on a path of radical reforms, is critically reconsidering its past. The task is, while preserving everything that is valuable to eliminate injustice, to pour new energy into economic, political and spiritual life of every people in our country, and to open up scope for national development. And at the same time, to build up and augment the internationalist unity of socialist society and to consolidate multinational Soviet State.

The harmonization of relations between nationalities on a new foundation is one of the highest goals of party's nationalities policy. In this connection, following guidelines for nationalities policy come to the fore:

- effecting transformation in the Soviet federation, and filling it with real political and economic content;

- expanding the rights and possibilities of all forms and types of national autonomy;

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., p.3.
ensuring equal rights for every people, and satisfying the specific interests of every nationality;

- creating conditions for the free development of national cultures and languages:

- strengthening guarantees that will rule out the nationality based infringement of the rights of citizens;

- updating all ideological-political and upbringing work in the sphere of nationality relations.\(^{41}\)

According to the party, the durability of federation is voluntary. The position of Congress of People's Deputies in calling for the restoration of the Leninist principle of national self-determination should be ensured in true sense by adhering to legal guarantee. So for this CPSU has paramount task.

An optimal relationship between the rights of the Union republics and those of USSR as a whole is a condition for the stability and successful development of our federation. In this connection, several key questions have come to the fore, questions to which an agreed upon resolution must be found. Firstly, the main idea on which the soviet federation is based is

\(^{41}\) Ibid., P.4.
expressed in the universally recognized formula; without strong union there can be no strong republics, and without strong republics there can be no strong Union. In accordance with this, the jurisdiction and mutual obligations of the Union and the republics should be clearly defined. Secondly, the economic content of self-determination and sovereignty in today's conditions find expression in the changeover of the republics to economic accountability and self-financing. Thirdly, the question of citizenship is closely linked to sovereignty of republic. Fourth, in entering USSR, the republics turned over the implementation of the basic tasks of the country's foreign policy to the jurisdiction of central agencies. Fifthly, one of the main purpose in uniting the republics into union is to safeguard the country's security and the peaceful labour of Soviet People. Sixthly, in connection with transformation of the Soviet-Federation, questions of the status and activity of the public organizations that play an important role in the USSR's political system are being raised in new way. CPSU resolutely rejects all national narrow-mindedness and fragmentation of party on national lines. Seventhly, within the framework of the restructuring of the Soviet-federation, problems of the legal status of the Russian republic and its national state structure should be resolved. Eighthly, how can transformation in the Soviet federation be conducted? The question of drafting a new treaty in place of 1922 Treaty should be considered as an part of USSR constitution. As for a new treaty is
concerned, the constitution of the Soviet federal state itself is treaty document, since it establishes the basic rights and mutual obligations of the Union and its constituent republics. As is known, the 1922 Treaty is open and retains its legal force to the day.42

The 'Platform' however, contained some positive programmes for the smaller national minorities, and nationalities having no territorial boundary. It elevated the legal status of the peoples living in autonomous republics, provinces and regions. It advocated for the creation of the atmosphere where every citizen can feel at home irrespective of his nationality. It strongly opposed national chauvinism. A clear line of demarcation must be drawn between the growth of national self awareness and while opposing all manifestations of nationalism, it is important to be sensitive and responsive to all legitimate demands and aspirations of national nature. What is necessary is to understand actual processes of development of relations between nationalities. No 'blank spot' should be left here, either. According to 'Platform' a special role today belongs to the mass media; Hence the growing responsibility of communists working in radio and television and in the central and local press. Only deep respect for the national feelings of every people and, at the same time, utmost

42. Ibid., pp.4-6.
devotion to principle in assessing the events that are taking place can facilitate the overcoming of contradictions that arise, the calming to people's mind and a retain to the traditional norms of socialist communal life.\textsuperscript{43} The role of media was emphasized for the first time after the reforms. The free press was encouraged to assess the situation objectively without any bias.

The platform didn't mention any concrete proposals which can solve the unfolding nationalities problem. Much of the declarations were rhetorical in nature. It has elaborated the history of formation of Soviet-Union as voluntary act by various nationalities. It pointed the distortion of Leninist Nationality Policy as the major cause in creating nationalities problem. Though it was trying to make some adjustment in policy, but did not try to put 'radical-transformation in nationalities policy. Idea of renegotiating the national contract was rejected. It still considered the role of Russian people as vital in the formation of Soviet-Union.

The Platform declared that the republics must be entitled to decide all political and social matters, except those which they voluntarily delegate to the Union. But in many cases, Baltic republics have been

\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibid.}, p.8.
rebuffed in this regard. So where was the case Sovereignty of Union republics. The strong center and strong republics could not work. Center had been always strong at the cost of republics. So the idea of strong center and strong republic was totally confused. So the founder of Azeri Popular Front, Dr. Cskhibar Mamedov, called it "half-Sovereignty". Azerbaijani Sociologist Eldar Nozamov was quoted as declaring that it was a "totally conservative, self-contradictory document" and that the authorities in Moscow were "trying to draw up all-encompassing policy to deal with a multi-faceted problem."44

The publication of 'platform' made no difference. Azerbaijan popular front started demonstrations. Lithuanian Supreme Soviet declared Nazi-Soviet agreement illegal and invalid. Then the human chain was formed in Baltic republics against pact. Moldavian protested against neglect of their language. In Ukraine, Rukh (Movement), condemned against Ruassification.

The Special Central Committee Plenum

The plenary session of the Central Committee took place on 19-20 September 1989. Though the topic of the discussion was nationalities

problem, the perestroika overshadowed it. But, Gorbachev delivered speech on the nationality issue after the confrontation with the conservatives. There was expectation from him something new regarding change in policy. He did not interfere in the federal structure of the existing constitution, unity of Party and equality of citizens. In his opinion, self-determination should not amount to secession. According to him, the solution in large measure lies in the reconstruction of the USSR as a whole and the consequent extension of economic well-being, while in the case of the republican party organizations they were to be given greater freedom to set out their own programmes, make their own appointment and determine their priorities within the general framework set by the Communist Party of the Soviet-Union.45 The final document contained apparent contradictions of the draft with its mixture of the conditional concessions to the minorities. Once again, no secession was permitted but even the degree of autonomy for minorities appeared to have been watered down.

There were modifications of the 'platform policy' by Committee. In the first place contradiction between republican and union law will be decided by Supreme Soviet instead of constitutional commission. Secondly,

it condemned the attempts in Lithuania to establish autonomous communist party. Thirdly, it enshrined Russian as the official state language and for political discourses in the union as. Inspite of declarations by Committee, nationalities problem did not subdue. Most of the suggestions by the regional leaders were not accepted by the plenum. Rather they tried to interpret and modify the draft from the official viewpoint. So after the end of plenum, non-Russian nationalities became dissatisfied with the modification.

Gorbachev’s preferred solution for the “national question” was a return to Lenin’s nationality Policy, a genuine federalism to replace the Stalinist emasculation of the federation. He spoke of restoring violated rights of ethnic minorities, but rejected the redrawing of the administrative boundaries in the USSR. Though he opted Lenin’s policy for solution, but was confronted with problems of national self-determination to the point of separation, the provision enshrined in a constitutional guarantee of a right of secession from the Union, a time bomb lay dormant through the years of Stalinism only to explode with Gorbachev reforms.46

In the face of declaration of sovereignty by many republics in summer of 1990, there was a need for restructuring of the federation. First, most scholars would agree that genuine federation must be based on approximation of multiparty democracy which can guarantee rights of republics. The Soviet Union, by contrast, was a de jure one party state until early, 1990, when the article proclaiming the communist party's leading role in the political system was removed from the constitution. Third, there should be an arbitrating body to mediate between centre and periphery. Lastly, federations are based on shared values. The ideological base of the Soviet Union was exposed after introduction of reforms. So there was not a single feature of the federal system in the Soviet-Union like other democratic countries.

IV. 28the Congress of the Communist Party of Soviet Union

At the end of 1989, the Leninist principle was openly challenged in the new session of the Congress of People's Deputies. Then Lithuanian communist party decided to separate from the CPSU. In the nineties, nationalities problem became too much intense with the deteriorating economic condition. The non-Russians pressed for more concession in the

economic and political sphere. Baltic republics challenged the authority of Moscow. Then Gorbachev promised concrete measures for solution of the nationalities problem by drafting a new union treaty.

The 28th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party took place in Moscow from 2-13 July 1990. The section on nationalities policy met on 5 July. Its main programme was to draft a new treaty which could solve the nationalities problem. The new Treaty would be a totally different from that 1922 Treaty which formed USSR. The 28th Party Congress unanimously resolved to adopt the following measure.

The CPSU believes that the development of centrifugal trends can be prevented only on the basis of democratization of the relations among nations and national state formation of the Union of Soviet socialist republics, and the successful economic development of all region and of integral nation-wide market system. The party proceeds from recognition of the right of nations to self-determination, including secession, but does not confuse the right to withdrawal from the USSR with the expediency of such withdrawal. It considers that, bearing in mind the interests of the people themselves and tendency of world processes towards integration, it is important to preserve the integrity of the renewed union as a dynamic multinational state. The CPSU advocates the friendship and international unity of all nations and ethnic groups in the country.
The party will pursue the policy of strengthening the sovereignty of union republics. It proposes the political and legal multiplicity of relations among the republics themselves and with the union as a whole and their diverse economic relations on the basis of economic independence of enterprises.

The CPSU is in favour of raising the constitutional status and expanding the rights of autonomous republics, regions and areas. The party deems it necessary to provide favourable condition for the development of all nations and ethnic groups:- to strengthen legal guarantees for cultural and ethnic communities with no administrative or territorial status, as well as their right to table draft law in state organs of USSR and republican authorities and to have a quota representation in them;

- to take urgent economic legal and ecological measures to preserve environment and reproduce conditions ensuring the normal development of ethnic minorities;

- to confirm the right of peoples deported in the past from their historical homeland on traditional place of residence to return to them, and also citizen's right to return to their historical homeland

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from abroad.\textsuperscript{48}

The draft of the Union Treaty was approved by the upper house of USSR parliament, USSR supreme Soviet, on 3 December 1990. It was introduced into lower house, the Congress of People’s Deputies at its opening session on 17 December 1990. Many deputies were not satisfied with the treaty. Latvia’s delegation refused to attend the congress. Estonia’s delegation refused to attend the Congress. Estonia’s delegation attended but marched out in protest. In the face of the opposition to his version of Union Treaty, Gorbachev attempted to under cut his opponents by holding referendum on March 1991. Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia and Moldavia boycotted the referendum. The two-third majority came out in favour of continued existence of the union.

The new courses was reflected in joint declaration of the Soviet President and leaders of new republics-excluding Baltic states, Moldavia, Georgia and Armenia on 23 April 1991. The declaration envisaged “resolute measures” for the restoration of the constitutional order and strict observation of existing laws until a new treaty and a new Union constitution had been adopted. In the second draft, the Union constitution

\textsuperscript{48} Documents and Materials (Moscow), 1990, PP. 88-89.
had been adopted. In the second draft, the Union Sovereign Soviet republics" was not only described as a "sovereign" and "federal" but also "democratic "state, "which was formed as a result of voluntary union of republics with equal rights and which exercises the authority of state within the framework of the power given it by the contractual partners"."49

The congress maintained that treaty should be based on the idea of Union of Sovereign States, which presupposed in effect equal rights of all parties to the treaties, a clear-cut definition of status of every member, the differentiation between the Jurisdiction of union and union-republics, multiple contracts among them, voluntariness and mutual benefit. All the national state formations including the autonomous one, should be equal partner in the process.50

The Fourth Congress of the Soviet People's Deputies appointed a "Preparatory Committee," which began work on the Union treaty on 24 May 1991. With participation of Gorbachev, Yelstin and other representatives from the republics. The draft was completed on 17 June 1991, which was submitted a little later for consultations to the Supreme Soviet of the Republics and Union Parliament.


Then majority of the republics agreed on July 23, 1991 about "Treaty on the Union of Sovereign State" According to the proposed Treaty, each republic would have enjoyed the status of sovereign state thus transforming the centralized Soviet-State into confederatio federatuib. Consequently, new Soviet political system would have comprised of sovereign republics formed as a result of association of equal republics empower to full sovereign rights which are voluntary vested in it by the parties to the Treaty. Every republic could have been a member of United Nations and it could have acted as an independent entity in relations with other republics.

A bicameral system was planned, formed from a Council of the Republics with delegations of the republics and a Union Council, elected by the population of the entire country in a proportional constituencies. Two chambers would decide on joint constitutional amendments, admit new states to the union, determine's domestic and foreign policy. It will also deal with rights and liberties. The laws of the Union council would require approval by the council of the Republics before coming into force. In the opinion of Ukraine, this draft contradicted their declaration of sovereignty. So Ukraine parliament, therefore, deferred the draft until September 1991 for examination. Most of the supreme Soviets of the other republics agreed " in principle," they reserved the right to make demands
for amendments and additions.\textsuperscript{51} Though, treaty was agreed but, it could not be adopted due to the abortive coup. Which led to the disintegration of Soviet Union.

So the political process in the Soviet Union had not been successful to the solution of the nationalities problem. The introduction of glasnost created free atmosphere for discussion. The most important feature of the result of political processes had been increasing role of Soviet Press. But the organization feature of the Soviet-Press was structured along the ethno-territorial lines rather than functional lines. As a result, press tends to provide each national group with what can only be described as a national perspective on events. In this way, press often became a stimulus of national activism by providing details on demonstrations and their successful consequences. The press in non-Russian republics changed dramatically within decade. Due to increasing number of papers and magazines, each nationality knew far more about other and could more easily find the bases for co-operation. The role of press had become pivotal in creating awareness among various groups.

Since 1988, Gorbachev's professed goal in the nationality sphere has been to transform Soviet-Union into some approximation of genuine

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., pp.57-58.
federal system. By devolving greater economic authority to the republics and to enterprises within the republics, by increasing republican and local responsibility for social and cultural policies, and by accepting republican demands for greater autonomy, the Kremlin hoped to inject some genuine federal context into bogus federal forms. But even if we assume that Gorbachev genuinely intended to turn Soviet Union into a real federation, there was never much chance that, he would succeed.

It was ultimately impossible for Gorbachev to persuade non-Russians that they share a "common home" with a giant the size of Russia, that the mutual resentments stirred up by glasnost and perestroika should be forgotten, and that the interests of center and periphery or for that matter of periphery and periphery - are identical. Inevitably, the system will continue to retain the very imperial overtones that its non-Russian population have come to reject with such intensity. The virtual absence of separatist claim has been one of the most intriguing features of the situation in Soviet Central Asia. During the period of perestroika, local intellectuals and politicians continued to rely on state intervention, asking for massive investment needed to stave off the region's economic decline and prevent the further growth of unemployment and other social

dislocations. The Central Asian republics were staunch supporters of perestroika. But there were few religious groups who demanded separation of their republics from Soviet Union. The December 1991, decision by the Slavic republics to dissolve the Soviet Union has imposed independence on Central Asian republics. Gorbachev's inability or unwillingness to reform the command economy before central political authority collapsed, produced economic chaos. Then republics were compelled to find solution from the chaos by opting for the political independence.

Then campaign against communist party's hegemony by Gorbachev was idealistic in nature. He was probably in confused in determining the clear cut role of communist party. He did not provide any substitute for communist party. So there grew number of various informal and formal groups based on ethnic and national lines. The Congress of People's Deputies, the Supreme Soviet could not get the legitimacy under the ideological confusion and economic disarray. The defeat of many party candidates in the election showed the trend in the semi-free election in 1989.

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53 Zaslavsky, n.4, p.108.
The Gorbachev’s inability to formulate clear cut-satisfactory nationalities policy for the non-Russians since 1985 have mattered to a great extent. The non-Russians nationalities alienated themselves from the insensitive central authorities. At the same time appeasing the Russian by Gorbachev allowing celebration of millennium of orthodox Christianity angered non-Russians. The ‘glasnost’ provided the atmosphere in which non-Russians started to take the political decisions into their own hands. As Soviet values have been replaced with national values, decaying center with a vibrant periphery, cultural stultification with national rebirth, and frustrated expectations with separatist hope it is only rational for the republics to desire to abandon what they rightly perceive as a sinking ship. 54

So the political processes of the Soviet-Union in dealing with the nationalities problem had been very slow devoid of any concrete measures in the beginning. The various measures by Communist parties were not sufficient for the solution of the problem. The 28th congress of CPSU was delayed. Still there was hope for the survival of USSR as a united mutli-national states in the opening of congress. But coup dashed the slim hope in survival of Soviet Union. There was no hope for the signing the Treaty

54 Ibid, P.811.
after the August Coup. So the declaration of independence by the republics was the only last resort. Though, Central Asian republics were not initially for the complete independence, but circumstances forced to declare the independence.