Chapter-III
Identity, Nation and Citizenship in Uzbekistan:  
*Ethnic Role Reversals*

**Background**

Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan was the third largest Soviet Republic by population and the fourth largest in territory. Because it has a population that is more than 40 percent of the combined population of the five Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union, and because it has rich natural resources, there is tremendous scope to believe that Uzbekistan is likely to emerge as the dominant new state in Central Asia. But Uzbekistan's history also has given rise to serious problems: deeply rooted ethnic tensions; serious economic, political, and environmental challenges; and an uncertain security and foreign policy environment. Like its neighbours in Central Asia, Uzbekistan emerged suddenly from more than seventy years within a highly structured, and in many ways protective, political and economic system. In the years following that emergence, survival has depended on the development of new international relationships as well as on solutions to the dilemmas of the Soviet era.

In this chapter attempt is made to identify how Uzbek identity has been cultivated latently during the Soviet period and more manifestly in the since independence, (1991) leading to nation building and state-territorial consolidation. In the process how majority (Russians during Soviet period) turned in to minority due to role reversals is traced. At the same time how the newly formed majority (Uzbeks) and minorities are coping with new situations and challenges such as language policy, cultural issues, education, employment and overall share in resources with in the framework of state with equal citizenship rights are analysed.
Historical Account

It is quintessential to have glimpse of history in order to trace and understand the origins of each nation in Central Asia and Uzbekistan in particular. Central Asia is one of the oldest centres of civilisation. Here, Soviet archaeologists have unearthed a large number of relics belonging to the early Palaeolithic age.¹

The Rule of Timur

Following the death of Chinggis Khan in 1227, his empire was divided among his three sons. Despite the potential for serious fragmentation, Mongol law maintained orderly succession for several more generations, and control of most of Mawarannahr stayed in the hands of direct descendants of Chaghatai, the second son of Chinggis. Orderly succession, prosperity, and internal peace prevailed in the Chaghatai lands, and the Mongol Empire as a whole remained strong and united.²

In the early fourteenth century, however, as the empire began to break up into its constituent parts, the Chaghatai territory also was disrupted as the princes of various tribal groups competed for influence. One tribal chieftain, Timur (Tamerlane), emerged from these struggles in the 1380s as the dominant force in Mawarannahr. Although he was not a descendant of Chinggis, Timur became the de facto ruler of Mawarannahr and proceeded to conquer all of western Central Asia, Iran, Asia Minor, and the southern steppe region north of the Aral Sea. He also invaded Russia before dying during an invasion of China in 1405.³

Timur initiated the last flowering of Mawarannahr by gathering in his capital, Samarqand, numerous artisans and scholars from the lands he had

³ Devendra kaushik. op cit., p.86
conquered. By supporting such people, Timur imbued his empire with a very rich culture. During Timur's reign and the reigns of his immediate descendants, a wide range of religious and palatial construction projects were undertaken in Samarqand and other population centers. Timur also patronised scientists and artists; his grandson Ulugh Beg was one of the world's first great astronomers. It was during the Timurid dynasty that Turkish, in the form of the Chaghatai dialect, became a literary language in its own right in Mawarannahr—although the Timurids also patronised writing in Persian. Until then only Persian had been used in the region. The greatest Chaghataid writer, Ali Shir Nava'i, was active in the city of Herat, now in north-western Afghanistan, in the second half of the fifteenth century.  

The Timurid state quickly broke into two halves after the death of Timur. The chronic internal fighting of the Timurids attracted the attention of the Uzbek nomadic tribes living to the north of the Aral Sea. In 1501 the Uzbeks began a wholesale invasion of Mawarannahr.

By 1510 the Uzbeks had completed their conquest of Central Asia, including the territory of the present-day Uzbekistan. Of the states they established, the most powerful, the Khanate of Bukhoro, centred on the city of Bukhoro. The khanate controlled Mawarannahr, especially the region of Tashkent, the Fergana Valley in the east, and northern Afghanistan. A second Uzbek state was established in the oasis of Khorazm at the mouth of the Amu Darya. The Khanate of Bukhoro was initially led by the energetic Shaybanid Dynasty. The Shaybanids competed against Iran, which was led by the Safavid Dynasty, for the rich far-eastern

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4 Ibid., p. 91  
5 V.V. Barthold, 1968, op cit. n.3  
6 Ibid., p.112

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territory of present-day Iran. The struggle with Iran also had a religious aspect because the Uzbeks were Sunni Muslims, and Iran was Shia.

Near the end of the sixteenth century, the Uzbek states of Bukhoro and Khorazm began to weaken because of their endless wars against each other and the Persians and because of strong competition for the throne among the khans in power and their heirs. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Shaybanid Dynasty was replaced by the Janid Dynasty.  

Another factor contributing to the weakness of the Uzbek khanates in this period was the general decline of trade moving through the region. This change had begun in the previous century when ocean trade routes were established from Europe to India and China, circumventing the Silk Route. As European-dominated ocean transport expanded and some trading centres were destroyed, cities such as Bukhoro, Merv, and Samarqand in the Khanate of Bukhoro and Khiva and Urganch (Urgench) in Khorazm began to steadily decline.

The Uzbeks' struggle with Iran also led to the cultural isolation of Central Asia from the rest of the Islamic world. In addition to these problems, the struggle with the nomads from the northern steppe continued. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Kazak nomads and Mongols continually raided the Uzbek khanates, causing widespread damage and disruption. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Khanate of Bukhoro lost the fertile Fergana region, and a new Uzbek khanate was formed in Quqon.

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Arrival of the Russians

The following period was one of weakness and disruption, with continuous invasions from Iran and from the north. In this period, a new group, the Russians, began to appear on the Central Asian scene. As Russian merchants began to expand into the grasslands of present-day Kazakhstan, they built strong trade relations with their counterparts in Tashkent and, to some extent, in Khiva. For the Russians, this trade was not rich enough to replace the former transcontinental trade, but it made the Russians aware of the potential of Central Asia. Russian attention also was drawn by the sale of increasingly large numbers of Russian slaves to the Central Asians by Kazak and Turkmen tribes. Russians kidnapped by nomads in the border regions and Russian sailors shipwrecked on the shores of the Caspian Sea usually ended up in the slave markets of Bukhoro or Khiva. Beginning in the eighteenth century, this situation evoked increasing Russian hostility toward the Central Asian khanates. 8

Meanwhile, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries new dynasties led the khanates to a period of recovery. Those dynasties were the Qongrats in Khiva, the Manghits in Bukhoro, and the Mins in Quqon. These new dynasties established centralised states with standing armies and new irrigation works. But their rise coincided with the ascendance of Russian power in the Kazak steppes and the establishment of a British position in Afghanistan. By the early nineteenth century, the region was caught between these two powerful European competitors, each of which tried to add Central Asia to its empire in what came to be known as the Great Game. The Central Asians, who did not realise the

8 Ibid., p. 94
dangerous position they were in, continued to waste their strength in wars among themselves and in pointless campaigns of conquest.

In the nineteenth century, Russian interest in the area increased greatly, sparked by nominal concern over British designs on Central Asia; by anger over the situation of Russian citizens held as slaves; and by the desire to control the trade in the region and to establish a secure source of cotton for Russia. When the United States Civil War prevented cotton delivery from Russia's primary supplier, the southern United States, Central Asian cotton assumed much greater importance for Russia.

As soon as the Russian conquest of the Caucasus was completed in the late 1850s, therefore, the Russian Ministry of War began to send military forces against the Central Asian khanates. Three major population centres of the khanates—Tashkent, Bukhoro, and Samarqand—were captured in 1865, 1867, and 1868, respectively. In 1868 the Khanate of Bukhoro signed a treaty with Russia making Bukhoro a Russian protectorate. Khiva became a Russian protectorate in 1873, and the Quqon Khanate finally was incorporated into the Russian Empire, also as a protectorate, in 1876.\(^9\)

By 1876 the entire territory comprising present-day Uzbekistan either had fallen under direct Russian rule or had become a protectorate of Russia. The treaties establishing the protectorates over Bukhoro and Khiva gave Russia control of the foreign relations of these states and gave Russian merchants important concessions in foreign trade; the khanates retained control of their own internal affairs. Tashkent and Quqon fell directly under a Russian governor general.

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During the first few decades of Russian rule, the daily life of the Central Asians did not change greatly. The Russians substantially increased cotton production, but otherwise they interfered little with the indigenous people. Some Russian settlements were built next to the established cities of Tashkent and Samarkand, but the Russians did not mix with the indigenous populations. The era of Russian rule did produce important social and economic changes for some Uzbeks as a new middle class developed and some peasants were affected by the increased emphasis on cotton cultivation.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, conditions began to change as new Russian railroads brought greater numbers of Russians into the area. In the 1890s, several revolts, which were put down easily, led to increased Russian vigilance in the region. The Russians increasingly intruded in the internal affairs of the khanates. The only avenue for Uzbek resistance to Russian rule became the Pan-Turkish movement, also known as Jadidism, which had arisen in the 1860s among intellectuals who sought to preserve indigenous Islamic Central Asian culture from Russian encroachment. By 1900 Jadidism had developed into the region's first major movement of political resistance. Until the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the modern, secular ideas of Jadidism faced resistance from both the Russians and the Uzbek khans, who had differing reasons to fear the movement.\(^\text{10}\)

Prior to the events of 1917, Russian rule had brought some industrial development in sectors directly connected with cotton. Although railroads and cotton-ginning machinery advanced, the Central Asian textile industry was slow to develop because the cotton crop was shipped to Russia for processing. As the

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p.132
tsarist government expanded the cultivation of cotton dramatically, it changed the balance between cotton and food production, creating some problems in food supply—although in the pre-Revolutionary period Central Asia remained largely self-sufficient in food. This situation was to change during the Soviet period when the Moscow government began a ruthless drive for national self-sufficiency in cotton. This policy converted almost the entire agricultural economy of Uzbekistan to cotton production, bringing a series of consequences whose negative impact still is felt today in Uzbekistan and other republics.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the Russian Empire was in complete control of Central Asia. The territory of Uzbekistan was divided into three political groupings: the khanates of Bukhara and Khiva and the Guberniya (Governorate General) of Turkestan, the last of which was under direct control of the Ministry of War of Russia. The final decade of the twentieth century finds the three regions united under the independent and sovereign Republic of Uzbekistan. The intervening decades were a period of revolution, oppression, massive disruptions, and colonial rule.

After 1900 the khanates continued to enjoy a certain degree of autonomy in their internal affairs. However, they ultimately were subservient to the Russian governor general in Tashkent, who ruled the region in the name of Tsar Nicholas II. The Russian Empire exercised direct control over large tracts of territory in Central Asia, allowing the khanates to rule a large portion of their ancient lands for themselves. In this period, large numbers of Russians, attracted by the climate and the available land, immigrated into Central Asia. After 1900, increased contact with Russian civilisation began to have an impact on the lives of Central Asians in the larger population centres where the Russians settled.
The Jadidists and Basmachis

Russian influence was especially strong among certain young intellectuals who were the sons of the rich merchant classes. Educated in the local Muslim schools, in Russian universities, or in Istanbul, these men, who came to be known as the Jadidists, tried to learn from Russia and from modernising movements in Istanbul and among the Tatars, and to use this knowledge to regain their country's independence. The Jadidists believed that their society, and even their religion, must be reformed and modernised for this goal to be achieved.\(^{11}\) In 1905 the unexpected victory of a new Asiatic power in the Russo-Japanese War and the eruption of revolution in Russia raised the hopes of reform factions that Russian rule could be overturned, and a modernisation programme initiated, in Central Asia. The democratic reforms that Russia promised in the wake of the revolution gradually faded, however, as the tsarist government restored authoritarian rule in the decade that followed 1905. Renewed Tsarist repression and the reactionary politics of the rulers of Bukhoro and Khiva forced the reformers underground or into exile. Nevertheless, some of the future leaders of Soviet Uzbekistan, including Abdur Rauf Fitrat and others, gained valuable revolutionary experience and were able to expand their ideological influence in this period.

In the summer of 1916, a number of settlements in eastern Uzbekistan were the sites of violent demonstrations against a new Russian decree cancelling the Central Asians' immunity to conscription for duty in World War I. Reprisals of increasing violence ensued, and the struggle spread from Uzbekistan into Kyrgyz and Kazak territory. There, Russian confiscation of grazing land already had

\(^{11}\) Ibid, p. 139
created animosity not present in the Uzbek population, which was concerned mainly with preserving its rights.

The next opportunity for the Jadidists presented itself in 1917 with the outbreak of the February and October revolutions in Russia. In February the revolutionary events in Russia’s capital, Petrograd (St. Petersburg), were quickly repeated in Tashkent, where the Tsarist administration of the governor general was overthrown. In its place, a dual system was established, combining a provisional government with direct Soviet power and completely excluding the native Muslim population from power. Indigenous leaders, including some of the Jadidists, attempted to set up an autonomous government in the city of Quqon in the Fergana Valley, but this attempt was quickly crushed. Following the suppression of autonomy in Quqon, Jadidists and other loosely connected factions began what was called the Basmachi revolt against Soviet rule, which by 1922 had survived the civil war and was asserting greater power over most of Central Asia. For more than a decade, Basmachi guerrilla fighters (that name was a derogatory Slavic term that the fighters did not apply to themselves) fiercely resisted the establishment of Soviet rule in parts of Central Asia.12 However, the majority of Jadidists, including leaders such as Fitrat and Faizulla Khojayev, cast their lot with the communists. In 1920 Khojayev, who became first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, assisted communist forces in the capture of Bukhoro and Khiva. After the amir of Bukhoro had joined the Basmachi movement, Khojayev became president of the newly established Soviet Bukhoran People’s Republic. A People’s Republic of Khorazm also was set up in what had been Khiva.

The Basmachi revolt eventually was crushed as the civil war in Russia ended and the communists drew away large portions of the Central Asian population with promises of local political autonomy and the potential economic autonomy of Soviet leader Vladimir I. Lenin's New Economic Policy. Under these circumstances, large numbers of Central Asians joined the communist party, many gaining high positions in the government of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (Uzbek SSR), the administrative unit established in 1924 to include present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The indigenous leaders cooperated closely with the communist government in enforcing policies designed to alter the traditional society of the region: the emancipation of women, the redistribution of land, and mass literacy campaigns.\textsuperscript{13} The Central Asian indigenous people slowly settled and started getting acclimatised to the new situation.

**Nation and Self-Determination**

Lenin had written in 1915 itself: "...We must link the revolutionary struggle for socialism with a revolutionary programme on the national question."\textsuperscript{14} The Soviet Union was trying to solve the complex national-colonial question of all parts with right kind of socio-economic development. Due weight was given by the Bolsheviks to the national question in the wake of the October Revolution, the unqualified recognition by them of the nation's right to self determination and the abrogation of all national privileges and disabilities was an important factor in the multi-national Soviet System. The term *Narodnost* (national group) is used in the Russian language for the community of people in the pre-capitalist society. *Narodnost* is based on social ties, which arise on the basis of a common territory,

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid. p.152

\textsuperscript{14} V.I. Lenin, Collected Works, vol. I, Moscow, 1950, P.48
language and culture. Lenin has mentioned that ‘nations’ are an inevitable form of the bourgeois epoch of social development.\textsuperscript{15} Like a national group, a nation possesses such features as a common territory, language, and culture. A community of economic life is possessed by a nation in a degree unknown to a national group. In the perception of Stalin, a nation is, “a historically evolved stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make up manifested in common culture”.\textsuperscript{16} Later among the policy making intellectuals the debate revolved around the inclusion of ‘self-consciousness of ethnic identity’. M.A. Sverdlin and P.M. Rogachev thus defined a nation: “...an historically evolved community of individuals, characterised by stable community of economic life, territory, language and self-consciousness of ethnic identity as well as by some specific features of psychology and traditions of everyday life, culture and struggle for liberation.”\textsuperscript{17} However Marxist-Leninist approach to nation considered the community of \textit{economic life} as the most decisive factor.

Nation is prevalent form of social collective in the capitalist as well as socialist epoch.\textsuperscript{18} The nation’s right to self-determination emanates from the Marxist-Leninist socio-historical theory of nation. It was argued that formation of groups of people in to a national community being an objective law of social development, all attempts to hinder this process by assimilation, racial discrimination, or forcible retention of one state by another are quite unjustifiable.

\textsuperscript{15} V.I. Lenin, \textit{Soch}, T. 21, p.56
\textsuperscript{16} J.V. Stalin, \textit{Marxism and the National Question}, Moscow, 1950, p.16
National-State Delimitation of 1924

In 1924, national Soviet Socialist Republic were formed as a result of the national-state delimitation of the Turkestan ASSR and Bukara and Khwarezm SSR. The Uzbek SSR was formed as Union Republic within the USSR; the Tajik came in to existence as an autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic with in the Uzbek SSR. These national Soviet Socialist Republics and autonomous oblasts united the principle peoples of Central Asia into their national state forms for the first time in history.\textsuperscript{19} The national-territorial delimitation plan which envisaged the creation in Central Asia of separate national republic for each main nationality of the region in place of the then existing multi-national Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva has been the object of criticism in many quarters. Thus, Mustafa Chokayev, one time President of Kokand “autonomous” government called this scheme a plan for “division of Turkestan into tribal states” invented by Bolsheviks as counter weight to the efforts made by the Muslim communists” to achieve the unification of all the Turkic tribes around the nucleus of Soviet Turkestan.\textsuperscript{20} Others argued that the delimitation plan was less concerned with the ethnographical puzzle than with the political aspect arising from the problem and it was merely the Bolshevik reply to the Basmachi uprising. Hugh Seton-Watson argued that the national delimitation “...a clear purpose to manufacture a number of different nations, which could be kept apart from each other...and linked individually with the Russian nation.”\textsuperscript{21} Otherwise it has been defended that such allegations ignore the complexity of

\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., p.100


national problem in Central Asia and deny the existence of a well worked out Soviet nationality policy.22

Before the 1924 delimitation a large part of Uzbeks, 66.5 percent lived in the Turkestan ASSR but comprised only 41.4 percent of the entire population of that Republic. After the delimitation 82.6 percent of all Uzbeks in Central Asia entered the composition of the Uzbek SSR where they formed an absolute majority-76.1 percent. 23 In the same way other nationalities in Central Asia were also consolidated which otherwise were scattered.

Post-Delimitation Developments

In 1929 the Tajik and Uzbek Soviet socialist republics were separated. As Uzbek communist party chief, Khojayev enforced the policies of the Soviet government during the collectivisation of agriculture in the late 1920s and early 1930s and, at the same time, tried to increase the participation of Uzbeks in the government and the party. Soviet leader Joseph V. Stalin suspected the motives of all reformist national leaders in the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union. By the late 1930s, Khojayev and the entire group that came into high positions in the Uzbek Republic had been arrested and executed during the Stalinist purges. Following the purge of the nationalists, the government and party ranks in Uzbekistan were filled with people loyal to the Moscow government. Economic policy emphasised the supply of cotton to the rest of the Soviet Union, to the exclusion of diversified agriculture. During World War II, many industrial plants from European Russia were evacuated to Uzbekistan and other parts of Central Asia. With the factories came a new wave of Russian and other European workers.

22 Devendra Kaushik, op cit., n.1. p 101
23 Ibid., p.105-6
Because native Uzbeks were mostly occupied in the country's agricultural regions, the urban concentration of immigrants increasingly Russified Tashkent and other large cities. During the war years, in addition to the Russians who moved to Uzbekistan, other nationalities such as Crimean Tatars, Chechens, and Koreans were exiled to the republic because Moscow saw them as subversive elements in European Russia.

Following the death of Stalin in 1953, the relative relaxation of totalitarian control initiated by First Secretary Nikita S. Khrushchev (in office 1953-64) brought the rehabilitation of some of the Uzbek nationalists who had been purged. More Uzbeks began to join the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and to assume positions in the government.

As Uzbeks were beginning to gain leading positions in society, they also were establishing or reviving unofficial networks based on regional and clan loyalties. These networks provided their members support and often-profitable connections between them and the state and the party. An extreme example of this phenomenon occurred under the leadership of Sharaf Rashidov, who was first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan from 1959 to 1982. During his tenure, Rashidov brought numerous relatives and associates from his native region into government and party leadership positions. The individuals who thus became "connected" treated their positions as personal fiefdoms to enrich themselves.24

In this way, Rashidov was able to initiate efforts to make Uzbekistan less subservient to Moscow. Rashidov's strategy had been to remain a loyal ally of Leonid I. Brezhnev, and thus, the Uzbek government was allowed to merely feign compliance with Moscow's demands for increasingly higher cotton quotas.

During the decade following the death of Rashidov, Moscow attempted to regain the central control over Uzbekistan that had weakened in the previous decade. In 1986 it was announced that almost the entire party and government leadership of the republic had conspired in falsifying cotton production figures. Eventually, Rashidov himself was also implicated (posthumously) together with Yurii Churbanov, Brezhnev's son-in-law. A massive purge of the Uzbek leadership was carried out, and corruption trials were conducted by prosecutors brought in from Moscow. In the Soviet Union, Uzbekistan became synonymous with corruption. The Uzbeks themselves felt that the central government had singled them out unfairly; in the 1980s, this resentment led to a strengthening of Uzbek nationalism. Moscow's policies in Uzbekistan, such as the strong emphasis on cotton and attempts to uproot Islamic tradition, then came under increasing criticism in Tashkent.25

In 1989 ethnic animosities came to a head in the Fergana Valley, where local Meskhetian Turks were assaulted by Uzbeks, and in the Kyrgyz city of Osh, where Uzbek and Kyrgyz youth clashed. Moscow's response to this violence was a reduction of the purges and the appointment of Islam Karimov as first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. The appointment of Karimov, who was not a member of the local party elite, signified that Moscow wanted to lessen tensions by appointing an outsider who had not been involved in the purges.26

Resentment among Uzbeks continued to smolder, however, in the liberalised atmosphere of Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev's policies of perestroika and glasnost. With the emergence of new opportunities to express

25 Giles Whittell, op cit., p.157
dissent, Uzbeks expressed their grievances over the cotton scandal, the purges, and other long-unspoken resentments. These included the environmental situation in the republic, recently exposed as a catastrophe as a result of the long emphasis on heavy industry and a relentless pursuit of cotton. Other grievances included discrimination and persecution experienced by Uzbek recruits in the Soviet army and the lack of investment in industrial development in the republic to provide jobs for the ever-increasing population.

By the late 1980s, some dissenting intellectuals had formed political organisations to express their grievances. The most important of these, Birlik (Unity), initially advocated the diversification of agriculture, a programme to salvage the desiccated Aral Sea, and the declaration of the Uzbek language as the state language of the republic. Those issues were chosen partly because they were real concerns and partly because they were a safe way of expressing broader disaffection with the Uzbek government. In their public debate with Birlik, the government and party never lost the upper hand. As became especially clear after the accession of Karimov as party chief, most Uzbeks, especially those outside the cities, still supported the communist party and the government. Birlik's intellectual leaders never were able to make their appeal to a broad segment of the population.27

The attempted coup against the Gorbachev government by disaffected hard-liners in Moscow, which occurred in August 1991, was a catalyst for independence movements throughout the Soviet Union. Despite Uzbekistan's initial hesitancy to oppose the coup, the Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan declared the republic independent on August 31, 1991. In December 1991, an independence referendum

27 Ibid.
was passed with 98.2 percent of the popular vote. The same month, a parliament was elected and Karimov was chosen the new nation's first president.

Although Uzbekistan had not sought independence, when events brought them to that point, Karimov and his government moved quickly to adapt themselves to the new realities. They realised that under the Commonwealth of Independent the loose federation proposed to replace the Soviet Union, no central government would provide the subsidies to which Uzbek governments had become accustomed for the previous seventy years. Old economic ties would have to be re-examined and new markets and economic mechanisms established. Although Uzbekistan as defined by the Soviets had never had independent foreign relations, diplomatic relations would have to be established with foreign countries quickly. Investment and foreign credits would have to be attracted, a formidable challenge in light of Western restrictions on financial aid to nations restricting expression of political dissent. For example, the suppression of internal dissent in 1992 and 1993 had an unexpectedly chilling effect on foreign investment. Uzbekistan's image in the West alternated in the ensuing years between an attractive, stable experimental zone for investment and a post-Soviet dictatorship whose human rights record made financial aid inadvisable. Such alternation exerted strong influence on the political and economic fortunes of the new republic in its first five years.

Ethnic Composition of Uzbekistan

Population pressures have exacerbated ethnic tensions. In 1995 about 71 percent of Uzbekistan's population was Uzbek. The chief minority groups were Russians (slightly more than 8 percent), Tajiks (officially almost 5 percent, but believed to be much higher), Kazaks (about 4 percent), Tatars (about 2.5 percent), and Karakalpaks (slightly more than 2 percent). In the mid-1990s, Uzbekistan was
becoming increasingly homogeneous, as the outflow of Russians and other minorities continues to increase and as Uzbeks return from other parts of the former Soviet Union. According to unofficial data, between 1985 and 1991 the number of non-indigenous individuals in Uzbekistan declined from 2.4 to 1.6 million.

From the following table, one can understand the change in population statistics in 2002 compared to 1995; in which the Uzbek population has increased from 71 percentage to 71.4, whereas the other ethnic groups are in a decline. This has definite connotation in which the socio-economic situation is having effect on the ethnic composition.

**Table: V**

**Ethnic Configuration in Uzbekistan, 2002**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbeks</td>
<td>71.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajik</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazak</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tatar</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karakalpaks</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others*</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Including Crimean Tatars, Koreans, Kyrgyz, Ukrainians, Turkmen and Turks.


**Ethnic Role Reversals- ‘New Russian Diaspora’**

After acquiring its independence unexpectedly and with little, if any, preparation, the Uzbekistan State is in transitional period searching for new formulae and socio-political foundations of national development. Over the past seventy years, this diverse cultural realm underwent ethnographic processing, followed by an extremely intensive process of nation-building. Radical changes
attended the nation-building process: economic modernisation, mass education, prestigious institutions of 'national statehood' based on a new powerful stratum-the administrative, creative and scientific-technical intelligentsia. Finally, the 1960s-1980s saw a noticeable shift of the demographic balance in favour of the titular nations. By the late 1980s they comprised the majority in all states except Kazakhstan.28

According to the 1989 USSR census, the Russian population in the Central Asian region numbered 9,500,000 and constituted 19.3% of the overall population. Detailed break up of Russian diaspora is given in the table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Asian States</th>
<th>Russians (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from the USSR 1989 census data

Many of the Russians who settled here were old timers, their origins dating back to the 17th-18th centuries when Russian peasants fled religious persecution and feudal rule.29 Later on they came to comprise a major pool for the Russian government’s colonisation projects, especially under Stolypin’s reforms of the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Back in 1917 there were 1,500,000 Russians in the region,30 slightly less than half of these Russians had settled in rural areas; rest were town dwellers.

29 Ibid., p.116
30 Ibid., p.117
Under Soviet rule, the influx of migrants from Russia increased. The reason was the Soviet doctrine of accelerated industrialisation, in which the new arrivals; specialists and workers were largely instrumental. Engineers and technicians, scientific and medical personnel, professionals in education and the arts arrived in the towns and cities. In 1949, there were about 800,000 'special settlers' (spezposelentsy) in the region. During the war of 1941-45 a great many factories, complete with personnel, were evacuated to Central Asia: 90 large factories with some 1,000,000 people were moved to Uzbekistan alone.\textsuperscript{31}

The stream of immigrants continued throughout the post-war decades. In Uzbekistan for instance, they accounted annually for 8-9% of the urban population growth.\textsuperscript{32} In large measure the influx to the cities and industrial regions was generated by extensive industrial development and housing construction especially after the devastating earthquake in Tashkent and the workforce recruiting campaign for the new industries.\textsuperscript{33} In the 70's and 80's have seen a steady decrease in the absolute number of Russians and their share in the overall population in Uzbekistan.\textsuperscript{34} Compared with the 1960s, the migration balance for the five republics was clearly negative in the 1980s (Table VII)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table: VII Balance of Migration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from USSR census data, 1989.

\textsuperscript{31} Ibid., p.116.
\textsuperscript{32} Lubov Maksakova, \textit{Migration of People in Uzbekistan}, 1986, p.53
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p65
\textsuperscript{34} Valery Tishkov p.118
According to 1989 data, slightly less than half the Russians living in the region had been born there (from 43.3% to 48.3% depending on the republic) and about 30% of the newcomers had lived there for more than ten years. Changes in the population pattern since the 1970s were primarily result the result of the high birth rate among the titular population, particularly in Uzbekistan. The proportion of Russians who are urban dwellers varies from 70 percentage to 97 percentage as seen in table 4., where as the titular population ranges from 20.5 percentage to 34 only as seen in table 5.

Table : VIII
Russian Settlers in Urban Areas (1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Russian Urban Dwellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table : IX
Titular Population in Urban Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Titular Urban Dwellers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>26.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Socio-Economic Situation

While the USSR existed, Russians in Central Asia were employed primarily in the development of industry, transport and urban construction. The basic social and professional pattern of Central Asia's Russian is different from the employment pattern of local nationalities as seen in Table:6

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Table: X

Participation Index* for Urban Russians in Higher positions: 1979-1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workers</th>
<th>Specialists and Senior Managers</th>
<th>Highly skilled</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1979 1989</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>98 99</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>107 106</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>125 122</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>128 129</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekistan</td>
<td>128 121</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The participation index is calculated by the formula \( \frac{\% \text{ of Russians in this category of manpower}}{\% \text{ of Russians in the gainfully employed population}} \times 100. \) The higher the participation index, the greater the Russian representation in the given category.

Source: Sociological survey carried out by Alla Ginzburg and Sergei Savoskul (Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology), 1992.

Among the intelligentsia Russians comprise the majority of specialists in the technical field and hard sciences.\(^{36}\) Only in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan has the percentage of Russians employed in agriculture remained high. In the cities, Russians work mostly in trade and services; among the white-collar workers they comprise the majority of managerial personnel, cultural workers and the professional intelligentsia.

The knowledge of Russian language is poor among the Central Asians, even the functional utility of learning Russian language was negligible owing to the extremely low level of rural to urban mobility.\(^{37}\)

According to 1979 data, the share of Russians employed in industry ranged from 22.4% to 32.6% of the entire working population in Uzbekistan, and in construction from 12.2% to 18.2%. For the titular nationalities the figures were

\(^{36}\) Ibid., p.52

\(^{37}\) Ajay Patnaik, “Russians in Central Asia” from R.R. Sharma, Shashikant Jha, eds. Reform, Conflict and Change in the CIS and Eastern Europe, New Delhi, 1999, p.249
from 9.2% to 11.1% in industry and from 4.8% 8.4% in construction. The share of Russians engaged in agriculture is on the decline; 0.6% in Uzbekistan, on the other hand 4.2% as farm managers and agriculture specialists and 1.3% as machine operators.

Social and professional differentiation along the ethnic lines was and has remained greater in Central Asia than elsewhere in the former USSR. The Uzbeks stay within its traditional village farming economy niche, although in recent decade it has made dramatic break through in to more prestigious spheres of management, public education, public health and law and now also in to trade and commerce, light industry and urban services. Even before the perestroika era, there was inadequate representation of Russians in the service sector (teachers, doctors, lawyers and non-scientific intelligentsia) and in the power structure, especially in the court of law, the militia and administration.

The Russian population in Central Asian Republics and Uzbekistan in particular has been facing serious problem of finding a niche in the changing economic and socio-cultural situation. The situation is especially complicated for those of the Russian intelligentsia whose work involves contacts with the local population and use of the language of the titular nationality. Insufficient language knowledge is a formidable obstacle for Russians working in public health, education, culture and administrative work, often cited as principal argument in favour or their dismissal.

Although there is very little direct threat to the Russians, the psychological atmosphere of uncertainty and the adoption of new language laws prompted a large

38 R.N. Narzikulov, Seventy Years of the Republic of Central Asia, Vostok, no.5
39 Arutunyan., p. 113
40 Valery Tishkov, p.122
41 Ibid., p.128
number of Russians and other European Population to leave Central Asia in the
wake of ethnic riots in Ferghana (1989), in Dushanbe (1990) and in Osh (1990).\textsuperscript{42}

With the introduction of titular languages and religious revivalism the
Russians in general and Russian women (relatively less familiar with titular
language compared with Russian men) in particular were facing the difficulties in
coping with employment and education.\textsuperscript{43} The Uzbekistan decreed that the
knowledge of only one language-state language- is obligatory for persons
occupying certain positions such as state apparatus, institutions, economic and
cultural enterprise in 1997 in Uzbekistan. For others such as Turkmenistan it is
1996, Tajikistan it is 1997, Kyrgyzstan it is 1999. Could the adoption of language
laws be the reason for mass exodus of Russians? Though there seems to be some
linkage as seen in 1989 when the new language law was adopted, 44,000 Russians
left Dushanbe.\textsuperscript{44}

During the years 1991-94 the situation deteriorated seriously, in the states
where there was still a significant presence of Russians. In Uzbekistan, over 37% of
Russians of working age do not have permanent jobs.\textsuperscript{45}

The Ethno-Cultural situation

In the former USSR, Russians enjoyed for decades the comfortable status
of dominating all the major areas of socio-cultural life. Russian language and
culture were reference points for national (state) culture that was transmitted from
the centre to the periphery via educational system, the mass media, party and

\textsuperscript{42} Ajay Patnaik., p.251
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., p.124
\textsuperscript{44} The Current Digest of the Post-Soviet Press, vol.XLVI, no.18, 1994, p.13
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., p.121
government structures. Under such circumstances, Russians residing in the Union republics had no strong motivation to learn the languages of the titular nationalities or become integrated in to the non-Russian ethno-cultural environment. Moreover, local Russians generally enjoyed good possibilities for meeting their cultural requirements in Uzbekistan up until the disintegration of the USSR. Education at all levels was available in Russian and the media and cultural activities were predominantly Russian. Russian was the language for all official and social activities. As a result Russians (about half of whom were first generation settlers) basically retained their cultural profile, even though it was influenced to a certain extent by some of local population's values. As far back as the 1970s, for instance, analysts noted that Russians in Central Asia tended to marry at an earlier age than in other, especially as compared to Baltics. This undoubtedly was influenced by the traditions of the local nationalities. Central Asian Russians especially old settlers, had long since absorbed some local work traditions and living customs, including preferences in food and clothing.

Uzbek Nation Building

The increase in the indigenous population and the emigration of Europeans have increased the self-confidence and often the self-assertiveness of indigenous Uzbeks, as well as the sense of vulnerability among the Russians in Uzbekistan.

The irony of this ethnic situation is that many of these Central Asian ethnic groups in Uzbekistan were artificially created and delineated by Soviet fiat in the

46 Ibid., p.125
47 Ibid., p.127
first place. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, there was little sense of an Uzbek nationhood as such; instead, life was organised around the tribe. Until the twentieth century, the population of what is today Uzbekistan was ruled by the various khans who had conquered the region in the sixteenth century.

But Soviet rule, and the creation of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic in October 1924, ultimately created and solidified a new kind of Uzbek identity. At the same time, the Soviet policy of cutting across existing ethnic and linguistic lines in the region to create Uzbekistan and the other new republics also sowed tension and strife among the Central Asian groups that inhabited the region. In particular, the territory of Uzbekistan was drawn to include the two main Tajik cultural centres, Bukhara and Samarqand, as well as parts of the Fergana Valley to which other ethnic groups could lay claim. This readjustment of ethnic politics caused animosity and territorial claims among Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, and others through much of the Soviet era, but conflicts grew especially sharp after the collapse of central Soviet rule.50

So also the Tajiks in recent years in order to protect themselves and their identity in the post-independence phase formed a number of organisations. An organisation called national Cultural Centre of Tajiks and Tajik speaking people, based in Samarkand, has been continuously struggling to protect the identity and cultural heritage of Tajik people. Despite the Tajik television channel being terminated several years ago, Ovozi Samarqand runs regular column in Persian Tajik language, culture and history.51 In order to protect the Tajiks interest, an organisation called National Cultural Centre for Tajiks was formed. In a letter to

Boutros Boutros Ghali, then UN General Secretary in 1993, it argued that today the Tajiks, the largest ethnic minority of Uzbekistan are still discriminated which threaten the stability of the whole area. Secretary of the Samarkand Tajik Cultural Association Uktam Bekmuhammedev was convicted on false evidence in June 1991.

It argued that UN should examine and verify the observation of civil rights and freedom by the state and the presence of necessary conditions for the national cultural development of the ancient ethnic groups on the territory of the contemporary sovereign republic of Uzbekistan. Conflict among the Tajiks and Uzbeks on the sharing of ancient historical heritage has taken place. In October 1997, when the Tajikistan government requested support from UNESCO to celebrate in 1999, the 1100th anniversary of the Samanid line of rulers, which Tajiks regard as "their" dynasty. As the Samanid capital was in Bukhara, Karimov is reported to have protested against the plan in a letter to UNESCO's Director on the ground that the festivities could incite "Tajik nationalist feeling".

The problem associated with determining who is an Uzbek and who is a Tajik is an important factor in Tajik-Uzbek ethnic relations. During Soviet period, most of the Tajik residents of Bukhara and Samarkand, in order to facilitate their professional career, they identified themselves as Uzbek rather than Tajiks. Similarly, the inter-marriage between Tajiks and Uzbeks also makes it difficult in determining their identity as Tajiks or Uzbeks. According to the latest figure Tajiks constitute around 5 percent of the total population of Uzbekistan. Many Kyrgyz

52 Central Asia Monitor, p. 19.
complaining about their existence alike; and lack of permission for them to use Kyrgyz nationality for their passport creates some form of hostile environment not so conducive for ethnic harmony in a nascent state like Uzbekistan. In the same manner, the Tajiks in order to protect themselves and their identity in the post-independence phase formed an organisation called ‘National Cultural centre for Tajiks’. In a letter to the then UN Secretary General, Butros Butros Ghali, in 1993, it argued that the Tajiks, largest minority of Uzbekistan are still discriminated which threatened the stability of the whole region.

Two ethnic schisms may play an important role in the future of Uzbekistan. The first is the potential interaction of the remaining Russians with the Uzbek majority. Historically, this relationship has been based on fear, colonial dominance, and a vast difference in values and norms between the two populations. The second schism is among the Central Asians themselves. The results of a 1993 public opinion survey suggest that even at a personal level, the various Central Asian and Muslim communities often display as much wariness and animosity toward each other as they do toward the Russians in their midst. When asked, for example, whom they would not like to have as a son- or daughter-in-law, the proportion of Uzbek respondents naming Kyrgyz and Kazaks as undesirable was about the same as the proportion that named Russians. (About 10 percent of the Uzbeks said they would like to have a Russian son- or daughter-in-law.) And the same patterns were evident when respondents were asked about preferred nationalities among their neighbours and colleagues at work. Reports

described an official Uzbekistani government policy of discrimination against the Tajik minority.\textsuperscript{56}

**Demographic Trends**

The population of Uzbekistan is exceedingly young. In the early 1990s, about half the population was under nineteen years of age. Experts expected this demographic trend to continue for some time because Uzbekistan's population growth rate has been quite high for the past century: on the eve of the collapse of the Soviet Union, only Tajikistan had a higher growth rate among the Soviet republics. Between 1897 and 1991, the population of the region that is now Uzbekistan more than quintupled, while the population of the entire territory of the former Soviet Union had not quite doubled. In 1991 the natural rate of population increase (the birth rate minus the death rate) in Uzbekistan was 28.3 per 1,000—more than four times that of the Soviet Union as a whole, and an increase from ten years earlier.\textsuperscript{57}

These characteristics are especially pronounced in the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan (the Uzbek form for which is Qoroqalpoghiston Respublikasi), Uzbekistan's westernmost region. In 1936, as part of Stalin's nationality policy, the Karakalpaks (a Turkic Muslim group whose name literally means "black hat") were given their own territory in western Uzbekistan, which was declared an autonomous Soviet socialist republic to define its ethnic differences while maintaining it within the republic of Uzbekistan. In 1992 Karakalpakstan received republic status within independent Uzbekistan. Since that

\textsuperscript{56} Valery Tishkov, p. 125
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., p.128
time, the central government in Tashkent has maintained pressure and tight
economic ties that have kept the republic from exerting full independence.

Today, the population of Karakalpakstan is about 1.3 million people who
live on a territory of roughly 168,000 square kilometres. Located in the fertile
lower reaches of the Amu Darya where the river empties into the Aral Sea,
Karakalpakstan has a long history of irrigation agriculture. Currently, however, the
shrinking of the Aral Sea has made Karakalpakstan one of the poorest and most
environmentally devastated parts of Uzbekistan, if not the entire former Soviet
Union.

Because the population of that region is much younger than the national
average (according to the 1989 census, nearly three-quarters of the population was
younger than twenty-nine years), the rate of population growth is quite high. In
1991 the rate of natural growth in Karakalpakstan was reportedly more than thirty
births per 1,000 and slightly higher in the republic's rural areas. Karakalpakstan is
also more rural than Uzbekistan as a whole, with some of its administrative regions
(rayony; sing., rayon) having only villages and no urban centres—an unusual
situation in a former Soviet republic.\(^{58}\)

The growth of Uzbekistan's population was in some part due to in-
migration from other parts of the former Soviet Union. Several waves of Russian
and Slavic in-migrants arrived at various times in response to the industrialisation
of Uzbekistan in the early part of the Soviet period, following the evacuations of
European Russia during World War II, and in the late 1960s to help reconstruct
Tashkent after the 1966 earthquake. At various other times, non-Uzbeks arrived
simply to take advantage of opportunities they perceived in Central Asia. Recently,

\(^{58}\) Ibid., p.132
however, Uzbekistan has begun to witness a net emigration of its European population. This is especially true of Russians, who have faced increased discrimination and uncertainty since 1991 and seek a more secure environment in Russia. Because most of Uzbekistan's population growth has been attributable to high rates of natural increase, the emigration of Europeans is expected to have little impact on the overall size and demographic structure of Uzbekistan's population. Demographers project that the population, currently growing at about 2.5 percent per year, will increase by 500,000 to 600,000 annually between the mid-1990s and the year 2010. Thus, by the year 2005 at least 30 million people will live in Uzbekistan.\(^\text{59}\)

High growth rates are expected to give rise to increasingly sharp population pressures that will exceed those experienced by most other former Soviet republics. Indeed, five of the eight most densely populated provinces of the former Soviet Union--Andijon, Farghona, Tashkent, Namangan, and Khorazm--are located in Uzbekistan, and populations continue to grow rapidly in all five. In 1993 the average population density of Uzbekistan was about 48.5 inhabitants per square kilometre, compared with a ratio of fewer than six inhabitants per square kilometre in neighbouring Kazakhstan. The distribution of arable land in 1989 was estimated at only 0.15 hectares per person. In the early 1990s, Uzbekistan's population growth had an increasingly negative impact on the environment, on the economy, and on the potential for increased ethnic tension.\(^\text{60}\)

Other social factors also define the identities and loyalties of individuals in Uzbekistan and influence their behaviour. Often regional and clan identities play an important role that supersedes specifically ethnic identification. In the struggle

\(^{59}\) Ibid., p.139
\(^{60}\) Ibid., p.145

140
for political control or access to economic resources, for example, regional alliances often prevail over ethnic identities. It has been identified five regions—the Tashkent region, the Fergana Valley, Samarkand and Bukhoro, the northwest territories, and the southern region—that have played the role of a power base for individuals who rose to the position of first secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan. Often clan-based, these regional allegiances remain important in both the politics and the social structure of post-Soviet Uzbekistan.

Linguistic Identity

Uzbek is a Turkic language of the Qarluq family, closely related to Uighur and Kazak. Although numerous local dialects and variations of the language are in use, the Tashkent dialect is the basis of the official written language. The dialects spoken in the northern and western parts of Uzbekistan have strong Turkmen elements because historically many Turkmen lived in close proximity to the Uzbeks in those regions. The dialects in the Fergana Valley near Kyrgyzstan show some Kyrgyz influence. Especially in the written dialect, Uzbek also has a strong Persian vocabulary element that stems from the historical influence of Iranian culture throughout the region.

Uzbek has a relatively short history as a language distinct from other Turkic dialects. Until the establishment of the Soviet republic's boundaries in the 1920s, Uzbek was not considered a language belonging to a distinct nationality. It was simply a Turkic dialect spoken by a certain segment of the Turkic population of Central Asia, a segment that also included the ruling tribal dynasties of the various states. The regional dialects spoken in Uzbekistan today reflect the fact that the Turkic population of Southern Central Asia has always been a mixture of various Turkic tribal groups. When the present-day borders among the republics
were established in 1929, all native peoples living in Uzbekistan (including Tajiks) were registered as Uzbeks regardless of their previous ethnic identity.

Until 1924 the written Turkic language of the region had been Chaghatai, a language that had a long and brilliant history as a vehicle of literature and culture after its development in the Timurid state of Herat in the late fifteenth century. Chaghatai also was the common written language of the entire region of Central Asia from the Persian border to Eastern Turkestan, which was located in today's China. The language was written in the Arabic script and had strong Persian elements in its grammar and vocabulary. Experts identify the Herat writer Ali Shir Nava'i as having played the foremost role in making Chaghatai a dominant literary language.

In modern Uzbekistan, Chaghatai is called Old Uzbek; its origin in Herat, which was an enemy state of the Uzbeks, is ignored or unknown. Use of the language was continued by the Uzbek khanates that conquered the Timurid states. Some early Uzbek rulers, such as Mukhammad Shaybani Khan, used Chaghatai to produce excellent poetry and prose. The seventeenth-century Khivan ruler Abulgazi Bahadur Khan wrote important historical works in Chaghatai. However, all of those writers also produced considerable literature in Persian. Chaghatai continued in use well into the twentieth century as the literary language of Central Asia. Early twentieth-century writers such as Fitrat wrote in Chaghatai.

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, Chaghatai was influenced by the efforts of reformers of the Jadidist movement, who wanted to Turkify and unite all of the written languages used in the Turkic world into one written language. These efforts were begun by the Crimean Tatar Ismail Gaspirali (Gasprinskiy in Russian), who advocated this cause in his newspaper Terjuman.
(Translator). Gaspirali called on all the Turkic peoples (including the Ottoman Turks, the Crimean and Kazan Tatars, and the Central Asians) to rid their languages of Arabic, Persian, and other foreign elements and to standardise their orthography and lexicon. Because of this effort, by the early 1920s the Turkic languages of Central Asia had lost some of the Persian influence.

Influences in the Soviet Period

Unfortunately for the reformers and their efforts to reform the language, following the national delimitation the Soviet government began a deliberate policy of separating the Turkic languages from each other. Each nationality was given a separate literary language. Often new languages had to be invented where no such languages had existed before. This was the case for Uzbek, which was declared to be a continuation of Chaghatai and a descendant of all of the ancient Turkic languages spoken in the region. In the initial stage of reform, in 1928-30, the Arabic alphabet was abandoned in favour of the Latin alphabet. Then in 1940, Cyrillic was made the official alphabet with the rationale that sharing the Arabic alphabet with Turkey might lead to common literature and hence a resumption of the Turkish threat to Russian control in the region.

Because of this artificial reform process, the ancient literature of the region became inaccessible to all but specialists. Instead, the use of Russian and Russian borrowings into Uzbek was strongly encouraged, and the study of Russian became compulsory in all schools. The emphasis on the study of Russian varied at various times in the Soviet period. At the height of Stalinism (1930s and 1940s), and in the Brezhnev period (1964-82), the study of Russian was strongly encouraged. Increasingly, Russian became the language of higher education and advancement in society, especially after Stalin orchestrated the Great Purge of 1937-38, which
uprooted much indigenous culture in the non-Slavic Soviet republics. The language of the military was Russian as well. Those Uzbeks who did not study in higher education establishments and had no desire to work for the state did not make a great effort to study Russian. As a result, such people found their social mobility stifled, and males who served in the armed forces suffered discrimination and persecution because they could not communicate with their superiors. This communication problem was one of the reasons for disproportionate numbers of Uzbeks and other Central Asians in the non-combat construction battalions of the Soviet army.

Language Policy and Citizenship

The official linguistic policy of the Karimov government has been that Uzbek is the language of the state, and Russian is of inter-ethnic communication. In September 1993 Uzbekistan announced plans to switch its alphabet from Cyrillic, which by that time had been in use for more than fifty years, to a script based on a modified Latin alphabet similar to that used in Turkey. According to plans, the transition was to complete by the year 2005. The primary reason for the short deadline is the urgent need to communicate with the outside world using a more universally understood alphabet. The move also has the political significance of signalling Uzbekistan's desire to break away from its past reliance on Russia and to limit the influence of Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, which use the Arabic alphabet. A major project is under way to eradicate Russian words from the language and replace these words with "pure" Turkic words that have been borrowed from what is believed to be the ancient Turkic language of Inner Asia. At the same time, Uzbekistan's linguistic policies also are moving toward the West. In the early 1990s, the study of English has become increasingly common, and many
Policy makers express the hope that English Literature will replace Russian as the language of international communication in Uzbekistan. The percentage of Russians fluent in the language of the titular nationality is insignificant—from 4.4% in Uzbekistan to 0.9% in Kazakhstan, as compared with 38% and 34% respectively in Lithuania and Armenia. Uzbekistan, under a resolution passed by the parliament, the deadline for a complete switch of the Uzbek alphabet from Cyrillic to Latin script has been pushed back by five years to 2005 AD. While this could be for material technical reasons, the use of Cyrillic might help Russian-speakers to learn the local language.

Language has proved an especially sensitive issue for local Russians. A vigorous manifestation of sovereignty in the realm of language has served as a major instrument in the titular group's assertion of its dominant political and socio-cultural status. Regarding the law on state language, the overwhelming majority of Russians in Tashkent (79%) said they would prefer to have two state languages: Uzbek and Russian. The Russian population was deeply worried at the speed with which the new law has been implemented—signboards with public transport timetables, street signs and office work in public institutions (the medical, educational and industrial establishments) are now in Uzbek. Further in an survey, over a quarter of those polled in Tashkent (27%) said it was necessary to have more Russian-Language theatres; one third believed that opportunities for receiving higher education in Russian must be augmented; more than two thirds (68%) said that television broadcasting time in Russian should be increased. A vast

61 Valery Tishkov, p.126
62 Ajay Patnaik, p.256.
63 Ibid.
majority 992%) favoured resuming broadcasts of the Russian TV channel, which had been discontinued in August 1991.\footnote{Valery Tishkov, p.127}

The fall in status of the Russian language and Russian culture does not mean that the Russian population of Central Asia is unwilling to master the language of the titular groups. There is indeed, a growing awareness among Russians that, if they want to stay in the newly emergent states of Central Asia, they must know the local languages much better than they do now. This is corroborated by the answers given by the Russians living in Tashkent to the question: what is the best way of improving inter-ethnic relations in Uzbekistan-(I) that Russians learn Uzbek, or (II) that Uzbeks learn Russian better? Thirty six percent favoured the first as opposed to only half as many who favoured the second.\footnote{William Fierman, p.210}

Most of the Russians in Tashkent are realistic in assessing the negative consequences of their inadequate knowledge of the Uzbek Language. Russians polled in Tashkent said that not knowing local language complicated communication in the social sphere and in everyday life (54%), created career difficulties (26%) or limited their opportunities of receiving higher education (8%). All this demonstrates that challenges are enormous for minorities in the new transitional environment. At the same time Russians as minorities are coping with all these challenges.

Uzbekistan's literature suffered great damage during the Stalinist purges of the 1930s; during that period, nearly every talented writer in the republic was purged and executed as an enemy of the people. Prior to the purges, Uzbekistan had a generation of writers who produced a rich and diverse literature, with some
using Western genres to deal with important issues of the time. With the death of that generation, Uzbek literature entered a period of decline in which the surviving writers were forced to mouth the party line and write according to the formulas of socialist realism. Uzbek writers were able to break out of this straitjacket only in the early 1980s. In the period of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, a group of Uzbek writers led the way in establishing the Birlik movement, which countered some of the disastrous policies of the Soviet government in Uzbekistan. Beginning in the 1980s, the works of these writers criticised the central government and other establishment groups for the ills of society.

A critical issue for these writers was the preservation and purification of the Uzbek language. To reach that goal, they minimised the use of Russian lexicon in their works, and they advocated the declaration of Uzbek as the state language of Uzbekistan. These efforts were rewarded in 1992, when the new national constitution declared the Uzbek language to be the state language of the newly independent state.

In the course of identity formation and nation building, the majority-Uzbeks have a due role to protect the rights of minorities as well. There has to be equal citizenship rights for all with certain safeguards for minorities in the linguistic rights, cultural rights, education and employment in order to uphold democracy and human rights.