

CHAPTER 1

Perceptions of Ethnic and All-national Identity in Kazakhstan

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In the contemporary world, interethnic relations have taken on a special significance. Frequently, they are a greater priority than socio-economic processes, and they occupy a more important place in social consciousness than problems of state and politics. On many occasions in the second half of the twentieth century, conflicts in interethnic relations have placed states and entire regions on the brink of war and utter crisis. This has been the case, for example, in the Caucasus and the Balkan peninsula. In the view of the world community, interethnic discord was what destroyed the giant Soviet empire.

Consequently, it is entirely appropriate that this problem, which plays such an important role in the modern world, attracts so much scholarly interest in the context of concrete historical and practical research as well as in determining general principles of human development in space and time.

Interethnic relations became especially significant in the twentieth century. In the past, interethnic relations were always an local phenomenon very closely tied to place; only in very rare cases did they cross the boundaries of locality or clan.

After the huge Soviet state (since 1922, the USSR) was organized territorially and administratively along ethnic lines, and the entire population was strictly segregated according to ethnic affiliation [po svoei etnicheskoi prinadlezhnost’], the system of so-called interethnic relations acquired an independent meaning. In an analogous manner, during the post-war period, a number of countries of the so-called socialist camp were established (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, the People’s Republic of China). In this way, an effort was made to give ethnic relations universal meaning with respect to state-building.

The new drive toward “ethnicization” [etnizatsiia] of the state-building and civic consciousness was tied to the collapse of the colonial world. The great powers, particularly Great Britain and France, confronted the difficult choice of determining the criteria that should govern the independence of their former colonies. As a rule, the ethnic factor was not ignored, but it was not a dominant consideration, either. Their calculations took greater account of confessional, territorial-administrative, and political factors. Still, the virus of ethnicity was firmly rooted in the consciousness of local authorities and cultural-educational elites of society, as they all belonged to the tribal world. In the end, there occurred an infection of the barbaric ethnic virus against modern civilization.

For their part, it was those who believed in the new (for most of liberated states) idea of a sovereign state — they were in fact traditionalists and “marginals” [see authors explanation

on page 33] — that began to “ethnicize” everywhere, that is, gradually to privatize the state and government [vlast’] in the interests of their own ethnic group. Hence the general tribalism of the so-called indigenous population. As a result of tribalism and ethnic discrimination, a growing wave of interethnic conflicts has occurred.

For example, Cyprus’s political and state system was created and originally divided along ethnic and religious-confessional lines: the president, thirty-five members of parliament, seven ministers, and 70 percent of the local administration and police were to be Greek-Cypriots; the vice-president, fifteen members of parliament, three ministers, and 30 percent of the local administration and police were to be Turkish-Cypriots. Consequently, the system almost immediately broke down; it led to an increased emphasis on the ethnic factor and, as a result, to total conflict, civil war, military intervention, and finally the state’s de facto collapse.

Events of the mid-1960s have had an especially strong effect on the growth and significance of ethnicity. In the United States, the struggle by African-Americans for civil and political rights played an important role in reifying ethnicity. In Western Europe, the ethnic question was exacerbated by the influx of immigrants: in particular, Indians and other peoples of the British commonwealth into England, and Turks, Croats, and others into Germany. There has also occurred a serious breach in civic consciousness. Among other factors, this is due to the political emancipation of colonized peoples in many Afro-Asiatic countries; the crisis in the Middle East; the permanent interethnic conflicts of Africa; and worsening relations between India and Pakistan.

In the majority of these recently liberated countries, the conflict between metropole and colony in the struggle for independence has been imperceptibly transformed into a conflict among ethnic communities in the struggle for power. Conflict could have been eliminated only through social justice and liberal-democratic values. But only an urbanized and individualized population call for such values; the deeply traditional, agrarian, and archaic population of the Afro-Asiatic world was never and until now is not urbanized or individualistic.

The world community, therefore, has been sentenced to an epoch of “ethnic renaissance.” If the archaic Afro-Asiatic world was unaware of or incapable of proposing other ways and means of state development, the West was fated to transfer and to impose ethnicity. Every new wave of immigrants is destined to explain its marginality, its alienation [ottorzhennost’], and its status on the periphery through ethnic stereotypes, just as the Western world continues to attribute the “backwardness” of immigrants or Afro-Americans to the reification of past “ethnic nightmares,” to their ethnic demonization, etc.

Subsequent events of the 1970s and ’80s only magnified the ethnic factor in the consciousness of millions of people and made it a terribly important, independent aspect of what was already world politics. Ethnocratic regimes of post-Soviet and post-socialist countries (China, Russia, the Baltics, the Caucasus, Central Asia) were completely and without any consideration supported by the world community, the United States, the West, and East, the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the Organization for

Security and Cooperation in Europe, the European Union, the European Parliament. All of this has further reified the ethnic consciousness of humanity.

The ideology of ethnicity, together with interethnic wars and conflicts, has given birth to a new ethnicized [ethnizirovanny] world: the collapse of the Soviet Union and ethnic conflicts in Karabakh, the Dniester region, Tajikistan, Chechnya; the collapse of Yugoslavia, war and ethnic cleansing in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo; the unceasing conflict in Ulster, which long ago acquired an ethnic character; the recurring tensions of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East; the problems of Kurdish and Uighur separatism; the never-ending Lebanese crisis; Cyprus; Rwanda; Congo; Africa... The list could go on forever.

Consequently, ethnic consciousness has come to occupy a prominent place, not only in individual countries but on a global level. It has become firmly regarded as a constant, natural historic right rather than as something archaic. Today, the deethnicized approach of France to nation- and state-building seems strange, as do the “melting pot” theory and other nonethnic schools of thought. The hymn of the twentieth century’s end has become the slogan “a state for every ethnic group.”

In fact, we can assert that ethnicity has entered in an increasingly global and all-embracing manner all levels of the world order. If in the past, there were no ethnic states, then today ethnicity has penetrated like rust the very conception of statehood and government. Ethnicity has become the main destabilizing factor in contemporary world politics.

An important role in actualizing the ethnic factor has been played by pseudo- and quasi-scientific research in ethnology, ethnography, social anthropology, history, sociology, and political science. Since the mid-twentieth century at least, a widescale scientific discussion has been conducted everywhere that has given rise to millions of “ethnic-based investigations,” the basic conclusion of which has been the idea that ethnic interests and rights have a legitimacy, regularity, and historical basis. Many quasi-scientific ideologues have inculcated in the popular consciousness the idea that ethnicity is universal. A strongly ideologized communist community not only actively sought to realize the priority of ethnicity but became international transmitters of this idea.

Especially in recent times, with respect to politics on the international level, discussion and defense of the rights of so-called ethnic minorities and various diaspora have become an important channel for articulating and actualizing ethnicity. Ethnic minorities and diasporas have become a kind of “trump card” [razmennaiia karta] of modern global politics, a powerful battering ram, through which ethnicity inevitably clears a path to the minds and hearts of humanity.

What is it that this global chimera of ethnicity conceals? What phenomenon is it? Absolute truth? Natural law? Political interests? A theory of government and state? Or is it complete confusion, similar to the ideas of communism? A total clouding of reason? A global mutation? A political version of AIDS? The devil’s work? The end of the world? Death and calamity as foretold by Nostradamus? What is it that drives millions of people and in the struggle of which they are compelled to give their lives?

Ethnicity

The idea of ethnicity is rather simple. In its most common form, ethnicity is the priority of the ethnic consciousness of the individual or society over other means and forms of social and individual consciousness. In this case, ethnicity is the dominant qualitative positioning of the whole social space through ethnic categories and values.

Strictly speaking, ethnic consciousness is the consciousness that occurs when all events that occur in the world; when historical, political, socio-economic, cultural processes, rights, and interests; when actions of individuals and society are considered mainly from the perspective of one's ethnic affiliation [prinadlezhnost'] or that of the ruling elite.

An individual's affiliation, in the view of advocates of the ethnic approach, is predetermined by an individual's ethnic origin and his ancestor's ethnic history. It is independent of an individual's personal qualities, education, upbringing and cultural background, and interests. Even before birth, ethnicity predetermines a person's set of positive and negative qualities; it determines his interests, tastes, the character of his relations with other people and even his level of intellectual and cultural development. Ethnicity, in the view of these advocates, creates the person as such.

Such a blatant exaggeration of the significance of ethnicity in the view of the advocates of this approach can be nicely illustrated by such widespread clichés as “all Jews are rich and educated,” or “all Jews support and help one another,” “all Russians are bearers of high spiritual values and are idealists,” “all Germans are pedants and hard-working”; “all Italians are gregarious but lazy,” and so on, ad infinitum.

Advocates of a scholarly approach will tell you that ethnicity is based not on real communal origins but on the myth of communal origins.¹ This, however, does not change the heart of the matter, for any reflection, ideology, or social interpretation is always mythologized or made up. It is another matter when a so-called national entomology or, to put it simply, a folk or archaic stereotype takes on the character of a state ideology.

In the Soviet Union, “ethnization” penetrated, in a totalitarian way, every aspect of society and social consciousness, infecting it with the virus of ethnicity. Career advancement, success in life, relations with other people, education, whether or not one had property, the ability to obtain it — practically everything was instilled with the spirit of ethnicity. If the entry for ethnicity on the employment and party application occupied the fifth line, then in everyday life it was the window, the “visiting card,” an individual's face.

The clothes didn't make the man, as the saying goes, but rather his ethnic identity did. Certain daily stereotypes became widespread: the person of “Asian” nationality, “Caucasian” nationality, “Chechen” nationality, “Jewish” nationality, and so on. So, for example, I was one

¹ See, for example, V. A. Tishkov, *Ocherki teorii i politiki etnichnosti v Rossii* [Moscow, 1997], p. 93.

of the few Kazakhs in old Almaty in the 1950s and '60s. As a child, I was called a "little Kazakh" by the marginal working-class Russians. But there were a number of other, much cruder names that were common.

Relations followed from this. Mistrust mixed with scorn and surprise. There was always the question of why the hell I spoke Russian so well and intelligently. And since we were always playing war, the most horrible thing for a blond- or light-haired boy was to be suspected of being of German ethnic extraction and for him to be called a Kraut, Hans, or Fritz. We were always fighting to the death. After one well-known film, the boys started calling all the Jews "Pinia, king of the suspenders" [Pinia is a name of a Jew who wished to become rich. "King of the suspenders" (korol' podtiazhek) is a symbol of the rich], and the conflicts and animosity on this basis were overwhelming.

In any social environment, similar oppositions, which are typical of human nature, have existed from time immemorial: good and bad, ours and others, clean and dirty, locals and outsiders, natives and immigrants, ours and not ours, legitimate and illegitimate children. Practically everywhere and always, social groups have, to some degree, been infected by the virus of exclusivity and ethnic extremism. They consider themselves better or higher than other groups; they easily ridicule them and sometimes hate and curse them. In some cases, such behavior leads to serious social conflict; in other cases, it does not. Why is this so?

As a rule, government institutions or representatives play the decisive role in provoking such conflict or, what is worse, institutions and representatives of the state. It is enough for people to suspect the government or the state of sympathy for one group or contempt for another for a certain kind of conflict to become unavoidable. It is good if borders are open and there are no arguments over territory and historical rights. In this case, those who are driven out and discriminated against can leave land that has become "foreign" [for them]. Those remaining must reconcile themselves, at least temporarily, to the idea that they are second-class citizens. They either assimilate or wait until the time comes for their revenge.

The situation is different when both sides are convinced of their historical rights. In such a situation, for example, in Kosovo, Bosnia, or Karabakh, conflict would be unavoidable. Frequently, external interference plays the role of incitement. This can occur when another state directly or through the mass media or representatives of the "national" intelligentsia sets off the interethnic problems of its neighbors, accuses them of violating the historic rights and interests of minorities and native peoples and thereby announce their secret territorial claims.

What is worse is when ethnicity directly stimulates confrontation and struggle for power by various groups, which are consolidated along ethnic lines. It is practically impossible in this case to avoid bloodshed. Leaders who are given to reacting in ethnic terms, especially the marginal sector of the intelligentsia, have a hard time engaging in dialogue. They have an even harder time finding a common language with representatives of another ethnic community. For them, rather than engaging in interethnic discourse or dialogue, it is easier to mobilize a group for a propaganda struggle or even military action or deepening a conflict. This is how conflicts arise.

So, up until the time when states were empires (right up to the beginning of the twentieth century), and they numbered no more than about a dozen in the entire world, interethnic problems were practically nonexistent, insofar as empires integrated and consolidated hundreds of ethnic communities on the basis of a single state. Meanwhile, as a rule, the political elite was supra-ethnic, nonethnic, sometimes even of a different ethnicity: the Chingids, the Rurikoviches, the Platagenets, the tsar's family after the death of Peter I and his grandson Peter II, etc. They were never associated with any ethnicity.

In such circumstances, internal conflicts or those among states did not have an ethnic character. If ethnicity was involved, it was strictly of a local variety. Usually, conflicts on confessional, ethnic bases hardly ever acquired empire-wide status, let alone international status.

It was only after the collapse of empires in the early and in the mid-twentieth century that the significance of ethnicity sharply increased. The Versailles Peace Treaty led to the collapse of Austria-Hungary and the Russian empire and to the dismantling of Germany. After World War II, the British and French empires collapsed, and in the 1970s, Portuguese colonial rule ceased to exist. The collapse of the Soviet empire and Yugoslavia led to the last great outburst of ethnicity in the twentieth century. As we can see, ethnicity always blooms on the ruins and remains of empires. Ethnicity follows empires.

This development of state and political processes was connected to the fact that the end of empires, in each case at the beginning and middle of the twentieth century, led to the transformation of the political elite, which ceased being supra-ethnic. In the postimperial new orders, ethnic, or more precisely, ethnicized or ethnically oriented elites always came to power. They began actively to implement an apartheid policy in ethnic relations.

History provides us with hundreds of examples of this kind. It is enough to remember Germany after the Versailles settlement and Adolph Hitler's coming to power. The collapse of the Russian empire, the destruction of the previous political elite, and the Bolshevik seizure of power led, in the end, to totalitarianism, deportations, and the ethnocide of whole nations: the massive social and ethnic purges of the 1920s and '40s in the Soviet Union. Ethnic purges in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, China, and other countries of the socialist camp are well known and have been described in the scholarly literature. In African countries, the coming to power of tribal leadership and a marginal political elite has led to countless interethnic conflicts and wars.

The history of the twentieth century testifies, therefore, to the fact that ethnicity is used as an effective means for mobilizing crowds and the masses in the struggle for power. Most frequently of all, this occurs in the postimperial period, in the process of nation- and state-building, the goal of which is the subjugation of one's political opponents or the distraction of the masses from their true interests in the struggle for redistributing possessions and wealth by the new political elite.

Basic terms and concepts

It is evident that the fundamental concepts and terminology of ethnos, ethnicity, and ethnic relations took shape in Kazakhstan in the Soviet period on the basis of an all-Soviet Marxist-Leninist party ideology. A lexicon for Kazakhstan and a socio-political conceptual apparatus concerning interethnic relations, in their basic parameters, were completely comprehended and adapted from Soviet tradition and Stalinist lexicon.

Ethnos (from the Ancient Greek, meaning nation [narod]; tribe; crowd; group of people; class of people; tribe of a different country; pagan; herd; family) is a term that is widely used in Soviet, post-Soviet, and primarily Russian-language ethnology for indicating various nations and ethnic communities. Soviet historiography, relying on Iosef V. Stalin's famous works, asserted that ethnoses were historically occurring compact groupings of people in a particular territory who spoke a single language and shared some relatively stable cultural and psychic attributes as well as self-consciousness (that is, consciousness of their unity and difference from other such formations) that is fixed in an ethnonym.²

According to the Soviet theory of ethnos, which, in its most essential form is stated in the works of Iu. V. Bromlei and L. N. Gumilev, ethnos was a territorially unlimited phenomenon Mankind has always taken the form of ethnoses. Ethnos was a basic element of the social organization of society. In primitive civilization, ethnos took the form of tribe; in slave-owning and feudal times, it took the form of nationality [narodnost']; under capitalism and socialism, it took the form of the nation [natsiia].

Iu. Bromlei, who understood the limitations of this construction, attempted to give it greater sophistication in his assertion that ethnos exists as though in two hypostases: in the form of an *ethnikos*, that is, essentially as an ethnic community, and in the form of a ethnosocial organism (ESO), which comes into being in the framework of a single state.³ In other words, in Bromlei's theory, all Russians living in various countries of the world constitute an *ethnikos*; when Russians live in the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and have their own state, this is an ESO.

If Bromlei's views are hypothetical and of a rather scholarly character, L. N. Gumilev, in his deductions about ethnos as a biosocial system, has taken his theory of ethnos to complete absurdity and unsustainability.⁴

On this "theoretical" basis in Soviet historiography, there existed a strict arrangement of all ethnoses into nations, nationalities, and so on, depending on the system of the territorial-

2 See, for example, [Author missing] *Sovremennye etnicheskie protsessy v SSSR* [Moscow, 1977], p. 12; S. I. Bruk, *Naselenie mira. Etnodemograficheskii spravochnik* [Moscow, 1986], p. 73.

3 Iu. V. Bromlei, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* [Moscow, 1983].

4 L. N. Gumilev, *Etnogenez i biosfera zemli* [Leningrad, 1989]; L. N. Gumilev, *Geografiia etnosa v istoricheskii period* [Leningrad, 1990].

administrative order to which they belonged. Thus, nations were considered the fifteen peoples who possessed their own national-state formations: the so-called union republics. The majority of them gained union republic status in the 1920s-30s; the Baltic republics did so only in the prewar period.

Representatives of these fifteen nations on the territory within their state-administrative borders were designated titular nations. On this basis, Russians who lived in Russia were considered a nation, as were Ukrainians in Ukraine; Belorussians in Belorussia; Latvians in Latvia; Lithuanians in Lithuania; Estonians in Estonia; Moldavians in Moldavia; Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan; Georgians in Georgia; Armenians in Armenia; Kazakhs in Kazakhstan; Kyrgyz in Kyrgyzstan; Uzbeks in Uzbekistan; Turkmen in Turkmenistan; and Tajiks and Tajikistan.

Besides union republics, there existed within their ranks autonomous republics, *krais*, *oblasts*, and *raions*. Representatives of ethnic groups, given the names of autonomous state formations, acquired the status of so-called socialist nations. All other peoples who lacked statehood were usually termed “nationalities” [narodnost’].

The massive employment of the term nation with respect to all ethnic groups having a union or autonomous republic led to the complete distortion of the concept of nation; this is against the general trend in the rest of the world to signify as nation not individual ethnic groups but all citizens of a country, regardless of their ethnic descent. The Soviet Union, in complete contradiction of the tendency throughout the rest of the world, termed ethnic groups, rather than communities of citizens, “nations.” These were ethnic groups, moreover, the majority of which had been artificially created by the Soviet nomenklatura in the 1920s.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, ethnic communities were in and of themselves insignificant structures, which never had any political significance. Organizers of the first Universal Census of the Russian Empire, conducted in 1897, confronted a difficult problem: how to differentiate among various groups of the population. In the end, language was chosen as the single possible reliable criterion. In all, one hundred and forty-six languages and dialects were identified and, consequently, the same number of peoples [narody].

In the first All-union Census of 1926 [in the USSR], ethnicity was singled out as an identifying characteristic, yet this factor was complicated by many other criteria and means of self-identification. In the documents for the 1926 census, there were established one hundred and ninety-four nationalities, of which today some one hundred are no longer even remembered. In the documents concerning the 1959 census, there are only one hundred and nine nationalities. The majority of ethnic communities were artificially and arbitrarily established in the 1920s and ’30s; they never were outcomes of historical processes. In order, however, to understand the essence of this question, we have to analyze the theory and methodology of the problem.

Problem and method

Interethnic relations remain one of the most complex and contradictory problems of the twentieth century. In its most general form, ethno-cultural differences, which lie at the basis of interethnic relations, constitute one of the many universal patterns of asynchronous cultural development and results of the asynchronous development of countries, regions, continents, peoples, communities, individuals, etc. They are the result of asynchronous adaptation of various groups to the natural, anthropogenic, technopogenic and civilizational conditions of mankind's development in time-space.

Culture is always discrete in space (that is, local), and it is adapted to the greatest possible extent to the conditions and resources of a particular ecosystem. Innovations that occur in a particular milieu can be adapted only with great difficulty to other ecological circumstances. Dissonance inevitably arises among various groups of people who live in different territories and in accordance with their mastery of new technologies, be they socio-economic technologies or state-political technologies.

There arise, consequently, peculiar communities of persons as gatherers of specific information, knowledge, experience, and sociocultural customs and stereotypes. In this way, clearly, mankind's ethnocultural mosaic is born largely as a result of different methods in employing natural resources and the asynchronous acquisition of other people's innovations.

The problem of interethnic relations — that is, relations among various peoples — has been reified by the tremendous break or gap in the level of development among different communities. Though they existed previously, peoples who lagged behind from a socio-cultural perspective have become fully recognized only in twentieth century with the help of a single, universal informational space.

The universal transition from the agrarian stage of development, through the utilization of natural biological resources, to an industrial, urbanized civilization based on city life and the use of non biological [vnebiologicheskije], industrial technology, has become the main paradigm of world historical development. A natural consequence has been the complete statization of civic life, a tremendous growth in labor productivity, and, consequently, a great improvement in people's standard of living.

All of this has given birth, on the one hand, to intimately connected, parallel, and mutually influential processes, and, on the other, to discrimination and even genocide with respect to various autochthonous types: aborigines, Indians, nomads, Asiatics [derogative expression for Asians], blacks, and other so-called barbarians of underdevelopment. Discrimination has been carried out by more-developed societies, which, in managing the resources on territory that aborigines considered to be their ethnic territory, advocated pragmatism and a missionary debt.

On the other hand, consequently, it became quite commonplace for dependent, colonized people to believe that the unique character and interests of their people and their group could be practically defended and preserved only by means of political-state domination of other communities of people. Under the banner of this mythology, many political doctrines

of the twentieth century were born: nationalism, chauvinism, ethnocentrism, ethnocracy, racism, fascism, colonialism, negritude, ad infinitum.

What is especially odious is that this was accepted literally by the leaders of national-liberation movements, the marginal intelligentsia, and the political establishment of countries hovering on the stage of the transition from barbarism to civilization — that is, from agricultural to urban living. They mythologized the ethnic idea as a higher order of life, as a general and universal truth, as a principal ideological dogma. It was at that time that the leader of the world proletariat, V. Ulianov-Lenin, issued his sacramental phrase: “Every nation has the right to self-determination.” This became the guiding star for all nations, large and small, that had been stripped of independent statehood.

Quite naturally, socialist countries made the greatest contribution to the mystification of ethnicity, taking to absurd lengths ethnic delimitation [natsional’no-gosudarstvennoe razmezhevanii]. The main slogan of modern life became “To every ethnic group, its own state formation.” Ideas of national statehood and ethnic sovereignty (ethnocracy) sharply increased with the collapse of the colonial system, when for many groups, not yet having emerged from their original tribal formations, statehood literally fell to them from the sky. It provoked, and continues to provoke, competition among various ethnic and tribal formations for power and statehood.

Later, the collapse of the socialist camp and the crisis of the African model of sovereignty catalyzed the phenomenon of ethnicity, which gained new force in all of continental Eurasia and Africa. Even Americans, even the integrationists, began to criticize the idea of the nation-state. Despite their history, they cast doubt on the theory of the melting pot and spoke increasingly of a multiethnic America.

In this explosion of ethnicity, the Czechs and Slovaks proved the exception. Rather than losing their senses, they split amicably. Similarly, without any hostility, Slavic Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus parted with the Baltics, the Caucasus, Moldova, and Central Asia. The ethnoses that had in the past been expropriated, having freed themselves from the control of the “Center,” now made appeals to the idea of indigenous exclusivity and sought to inculcate in civic consciousness their ethnic supremacy and “historic,” “natural” right to political domination in their respective historic homelands.

Here, of course, we must analyze the many-faceted cultural-historical phenomenon that is concealed by such concepts as people [narod], ethnos [etnos], ethnic group [etnicheskaia gruppy], nation [natsiia], etc. In other words, we acknowledge the existence of a special type, a class of social communities, if you will, which are integrated on the basis of a particular type of social ties and which had specific form of civic consciousness (self-consciousness expressed as group consciousness).

As we have already noted, interethnic relations are the result of asynchronous civilizational development, during which a host of integrating factors arise in a completely spontaneous manner; these rest at the basis of the processes of ethno-cultural unification and

aggregation of the state of various human societies. From here we discover many varied, asynchronously developing groups, adapted in time and space in different ways, reacting differently to socio-economic and political processes.

In other words, the human world can be compared to billions of molecules, which from time to time, by biomechanical processes, attach themselves to the most varied communities and groupings. In the end, a huge number of societies of various kinds arise, which form the body of human society. This diversity of aggregate human states functions on the basis of a large number of different kinds of social connections.

Thus, all efforts by some scientists and, especially, politicians, to create a theory of a unified, inseparable, universal, global ethnos cannot be sustained from scientific point of view. Such efforts are unavailing and vulgar from general humanitarian position. It is quite evident that a universal ethnic group of this kind never existed anywhere in nature.

A host of structured organizations arose in a completely spontaneous way in real historical processes (territorial-community; political; military; genealogical; and others). Among the most important is a whole class of communities, characterized by group consciousness and the realization of their belonging to a structure — generalized, reflexive, often mythological and macroterritorial — integrated on the basis of some kind of abstract criteria. A huge number of such macro-integrated communities, which had some kind of group or, most importantly, spontaneous self-consciousness, can be categorized or typologized in the following, most general manner:

The first type of society, widely known as the state-civic form of society, is based on group identity and self-identification of individuals by means of their relationship to the state through an individual's citizenship, designated throughout the world by the term "nation." For the sake of clarity, some researchers call this type of society the "nation-state." Examples of this type of society are the United States, France, Great Britain, Holland, Italy, and so forth.

France and America, of course, are the most striking examples of such societies. A Frenchman, just as an American, can be any citizen of France or the United States, regardless of descent, race, skin color, language, the time citizenship was acquired, and so forth. The famous singer Charles Aznavour is 100 percent French, despite his Armenian roots. No less French is the football star Michel Platini, whose parents emigrated from Italy; or the contemporary superstar Zinedin Zidane, whose parents are Algerian Berbers; and many other French citizens.

The second type of community, which in many ways resembles the first but significantly differs from it, is a "geographical" [stranovedcheskaia] or territorial society. It arises on the basis of the common residence of persons in a particular country, of which they need not be citizens.

In this connection, it is quite interesting to note one widespread principle that guides the U.S. State Department and other foreign ministries: career diplomats must change their countries of residence frequently so as not to become more enamored of any other place than their own homeland.

Inevitably, among those people who live in the same territory — regardless of citizenship, ethnic descent, skin color, religion, or even language — there form general interests along with certain general cultural stereotypes and distinguishing symbols. These are a consequence of living in a particular community, the contacts one makes, and territorial neighbors. On this basis, a whole hierarchy of a variety of different kinds of territorial and local communities can arise.

The third type is the religious-confessional community, based on the group identification of individuals according to religious belief. There are many examples, and they are well known: Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Jews, Armenians, Georgians, Russians, and so on. Among the historical examples, the best-known is the familiar division of Holland and Belgium in 1830 according to confessional identification (Protestants and Catholics) despite language, economic, and ethnic factors.

Lebanon constitutes a unique phenomenon; here the segregation of population and regulation of state-government activity are implemented on the basis of individuals' religious-confessional identities. The country's president is a Maronite-Catholic; the prime minister is a Sunni Muslim; the chairman of parliament is a Shi'ite Muslim; the defense minister is a Maronite; and so forth. We have already noted a similar situation with respect to the formation of Cyprus's government.

The tendency toward achievement of state independence on the basis of religious-confessional exclusion is widely known. The Balkan countries demonstrate this steady tendency over two centuries already, and the Middle East for a minimum of fifteen hundred years.

Another type of well-known community pertains to language. In this case, the individual's group identity is defined by his linguistic ability to incorporate himself into the socio-cultural system and to comprehend cultural values, by symbolic, verbal, and lexical-phraseological means; to make reference to these; and to exchange information and to maintain ties of communication, and to preserve cultural values. In many countries, one must pass an examination on language, history, and culture in order to obtain citizenship.

On the one hand, as language is the main system of communication, it naturally leads to mutual understanding and on this basis to an aggregation [agregatnoe sostoianie] [of people]. On the other hand, it greatly differentiates people. It suffices to recall Afro-Americans, whose speech can be clearly distinguished from that of other Americans lexically and even phonetically. Many linguistic and anthropological works have done a fine job of describing the transformation on the colonial periphery of English and French into pidgins.

Everyone in the former Soviet Union was well aware of the phonetic and lexical peculiarities of Russian in its various forms: Baltic, Central Asian, Caucasus, rural, proletarian, Muscovite, and so on. Now, everywhere in the remnants of the Soviet Union, with the exception of Russia, unique language communities are undergoing a process of formation: the Russian speakers of Kazakhstan, Central Asia, the Baltics, and so forth, including in their ranks

not only Russians but also Jews. Frequently, the main role may even be played by Russian-speaking representatives of the “indigenous” peoples.

An ethnic community, frequently interpreted quite arbitrarily and broadly as the analogue to any type of ethnos, is actually no more than a community based on a mythology of civic consciousness (self-consciousness) regarding its community and common origin. This is connected to the fact that the prototype of an ethnic community always puts forth a system of heredity, a mythological representation of some kind of blood tie.

As we have already seen, there exists in civic consciousness an objective tendency to ethnicize relations in a society [sotsium]. Thence we have this infinite opposition: local-not local, old-new, immigrants-indigenous, senior-junior, clean-unclean, legal-illegal, direct-indirect, significant-insignificant. Such concepts are linked to maxims of the following type: “the land of [my] ancestors,” “here my father and grandfather were buried,” “homeland,” and so forth. As a rule, a significant level of social relations is perceived through the prism of ethnic factors. One of the paradoxes of American life is the discrimination and disparagement toward American Indians (Native Americans) and, at the same time, the attribution to Indian roots, both by whites and blacks, as a higher order of proof of their autochtony, authenticity, and pride.

It is not, apparently, by chance that there existed a whole variety of understandings with respect to ethnicity in the former Soviet Union where membership in a particular ethnic group and ethnic identification were strictly obligatory. If ethnic identification, in strict terms, is based on the myth of communal origins and always makes appeals to the existence of common ancestors, then according to all logic, for an ethnic group, beyond ideas of common origins there cannot be a common culture, common spiritual values, common language, or a unified government.

What sort of common culture could there be among those Kazakhs, on the one hand, who have been born and have lived in the city (e.g., third-generation residents of Almaty); atheists who speak Russian and English and have never laid eyes on a *yurt* or horse; who spend their vacations on the Riviera or the Costa Bravo, who watch dozens of channels on cable television; who spend their free time in front of the computer or on the Internet; and rural Kazakhs, on the other hand, who live in extreme poverty, without proper sanitation, in *yurts*, without TV, without electricity, gas, heating or hot water, without medical care, and who speak Kazakh and who observe *uraza* [Islamic prayer]. They have not a thing in common; they do not share culture, community, or language. The only thing they have in common are ancestors or, more accurately, the myth of a common ancestry.

At the same time, the absurdity and mythic quality of the very idea of ethnicity is fine proof of the fact that, in principle, it is impossible to measure or to weigh the proportion or the significance of ethnic ancestors. When, for example, contemporary Turkic-speaking peoples refer to Tiurks-Tiutsziue [an ancient Turkic tribe in Chinese sources] as their ancestors, this causes nothing more than doubt and smiles, as in fact, Tiutsziue-Ashina [a sub-tribe that belongs to Tiutsziue] have no ethnic relationship whatsoever to present-day Turkic speaking

peoples. This was a ruling dynastic clan that ceased to exist as a result of bitter internecine war and external pressure and left no trace in Central Asia's ethnic history. The region's political history is another matter: here, the Tiutsziue-Ashina have left significant traces and have played an important historic role.

In any case all historic events are ethnicized; in this way, they are mythologized and subjected to total mystification and falsification. And history, playing, as a rule, the servant to ethnicity, actually is the best refutation and proof of the incommensurability of the myth of ethnicity before the twentieth century. Only the twentieth century globalized and politically activated ethnicity; before then, ethnicity had never been an independent subject of history.

The next type of community consists of those who live in isolation [izoliaty]: dwellers of mountains and valleys, deserts, islands, forests, arctic territories, and so forth. Isolation is an important integrating characteristic of social groups. In this connection, it is significant that while the ethnogenesis on the Eurasian steppes was completed by the time of the great geographic discoveries, to date, in the Savannah, Sahelian and Saharan zones, this has not occurred in Africa. S. Asfendiarov, a researcher from Kazakhstan who is rightly renowned, has explained that the completion of Kazakh ethnogenesis was achieved precisely because of the isolated conditions in which Kazakhstan's nomads lived.

The race factor is not unimportant; it integrates individuals in societies either through a feeling of their racial supremacy or through alienation and humble origins. It is sufficient to recall the general practice of racial classification of populations in Latin American countries, especially Haiti, where, during the past century and half, all persons of mixed blood were grouped into nine categories according to the number of white and black ancestors in seven generations: Sacatra, Griffé, Marabou, Mulatre, Quarteronne, Metif, Mamluk, Quarteron, and Sang-mele.⁵

For many peoples, including Kazakhs, prominence, beauty, and nobility are associated with fair skin color and fine facial features; humble or plebeian origins are associated with a dark complexion, dark hair, rough features, large hands and feet, etc. No wonder that a theory of Negritude has been created in response to this, along with the slogan "black is beautiful."

In Central and Northern Africa, a different type of society existed: it was based upon economic activity. In this case, a person's group membership was defined by his way of life and form of economic sustenance.

So, if we look at a population map of the peoples of Central Asia in modern times, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then we see that the entire population of this great region was situated as though between two basic and diametrically opposed poles.

At one extreme were to be found the nomads, represented by three isolated communities: Kazakhs, for whom a system of meridional nomadism predominated, with a low level of vertical movement on the great desert steppes of Kazakhstan; Kyrgyz, with a closed

5 [Author missing] *Afrikantsi v stranakh Ameriki. Negritianskii komponent v formirovanii natsii Zapadnogo polushariia* [Moscow, 1987], p. 111.

system of vertical nomadism in the Pamir-Tianshan mountains; and Turkmen, with a radial-elliptical system of nomadism around the rare oases in the isolated zone of the Southeastern Caspian, isolated from all sides by impassible deserts.

At the other extreme were found Central Asia's city- and oasis-dwellers. They were differentiated from one another by language: speakers of Iranian languages were called Tats and Tajiks. Turkic speakers were described as Sarts. And yet language was frequently a secondary and insignificant form of identity in a situation of widespread bilingualism. Between these two extremes — nomads and settled populations — were found scores of partially sedentary population groups that were far from being uniform: Uzbeks, Lokaits, Karluks, Kurama, Kipchaks, Tiurks, Karakalpaks, and so on. They were in the transitional process from nomadism to agricultural settlement (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Population of the Russian part of Central Asia, 1897 census

Oblast	Population	Kazakhs and Kirgiz	Sarts	Uzbeks	Turkmens	Tajiks	Russians	Tiurks
Akmolinsk	682,608	427,389	-	-	-	-	225,641	-
Transcaspian	382,487	74,225	-	-	248,651	-	33,273	-
Samarkand	860,021	63,091	18,073	507,587	-	230,384	14,006	19,993
Semipalatinsk	684,590	604,564	-	-	-	-	68,433	-
Semirechie	987,863	794,815	14,895	-	-	-	95,465	-
Syr Daria	1 478,398	952,061	144,275	64,235	-	5,557	44,834	158,675
Turgai	453,416	410,904	-	-	-	-	35,028	-
Ural	645,121	460,173	-	-	-	-	163,910	-
Fergana	1 572,214	201,579	788,989	153,780	-	114,081	9,842	261,234
Total	7 746,718	3 988,801	974,744	725,932	251,534	350,022	690,432	439,902

A line runs through the box for a group numbering fewer than one thousand.

In Soviet times, in the process of a general status [statusnoi] ethnicization, new ethnic communities were created, which were never independent subjects of a historical process. In Uzbekistan, there was an artificial process, directed from above, to “Uzbekize” Sarts, Tajiks, Kurams, Karluks, Tiurks, Lokaits, Kipchaks, and scores of other marginal economic and cultural groups that were never Uzbeks. In a similar manner, a process of “Tajikization” was carried out involving various Iranian-speaking groups of the population; in Turkmenistan, there was a process of “Turkmenization”; in Georgia, “Georgification”; in Azerbaijan, “Azerbaijanization”; and so on.

In summary, it is important to note that all of the above types of communities were usually rather open. Any individual could rather simply leave his group and could with the

same ease, given certain preconditions, join another group. The degree of mobilization and consolidation was not very high. Groups were not joined by firm, ancient ties.

In an agrarian society, communal relations largely prevailed; in cities, relations were of a neighborly variety. They were not in any way ethnically oriented. Thus, historians, with their far-fetched ethnic theories, are quite easily led astray when they try to extrapolate such theories into Antiquity or the Middle Ages. Ethnic communities were never independent and in any way significant historical actors.

At the same time, all of the types of communities enumerated above would not be seen in real life in a state of natural historical development. In reality, there was a huge variety of community types, a consolidation of a multitude of characteristics. The situation began to change in a fundamental way in the twentieth century, after the state began to interfere in this natural historical process and chose a particular identifying trait as a priority, which then came to predominate.

If in the West the choice of an individual's identification is in favor of state-civic identity, then in the former Soviet Union, the ethnic factor was predominant. On this basis, ethnic communities that previously did not exist came into being in the twentieth century: Russian, Ukrainian, Tatar, Kazakh, Georgian, Armenian, etc. Within the framework of a unified state, there occurred a unification of identifying criteria. At the foreground stood ethnicity, which the state chose as the main marker for positioning and differentiation. Other consolidating characteristics were given secondary consideration.

Interethnic relations in the former Soviet Union represented a system of "ethnic apartheid," cleverly veiled and concealed by the mystery of state ideology and internationalist rhetoric and based, as a matter of fact, on a principle of opposing individuals by group and ethnic origin; complete discrimination with respect to place of residence; and invented rights and privileges for the titular nation, together with a system of state ranks.