

**Distr.
RESTRICTED**

**E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.5/2003/WP.6
5 May 2003**

ENGLISH ONLY

**COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Promotion and
Protection of Human Rights
Working Group on Minorities
Ninth session
12-16 May 2003**

KYRGYZSTAN

**(Paper prepared by Ainur Elebaeva, Director of Ethnic Studies Institute,
International University of Kyrgyzstan)***

* The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the members of the Working Group or the United Nations

GE.03-14149

Introduction

The important date of Kyrgyzian history is 840 A. D. named “Kyrgyz Great Power”. In this period the Kyrgyz empire extended from the lake of Baikal to the Irtish River and from the present Krasnoyarsk city to the great Chinese Wall and encompassed many non-Kyrgyz nations. 1293 marked the downfall of the Enisey Kyrgyz state. Between 1500-1600 the formation of the Kyrgyz Nation on the Tien-Shan territory was completed. From the second half of the 19th century Kyrgyzstan incorporated into Russian empire.

After the 1917 October revolution a new stage began in the economic and cultural life of the Kyrgyz people. Recent history has recorded the reign of communism, for underdeveloped countries at a certain historical moment, it offered a constructive historical alternative to colonialism and an opportunity for economic and social development.

On the basis of the constitution of the USSR in 1936 the region became the Kyrgyz Soviet Socialist Republic with a status equal to that of the Russian Republic. The economy of Kyrgyzstan changed radically in the years of Soviet power Manufacturing, construction, transportation, communication and trade industries were established. Agriculture was diversified and sedentary farming and irrigation were introduced. Education and medicine, science and culture developed. Life in the Kyrgyz SSSR began to acquire the shape and essence of modern civilization.

Since the disintegration of the USSR, in 1991 Kyrgyzstan was proclaimed as a sovereign independent Kyrgyz Republic and the lawful successor to the territory of the Soviet Kyrgyzstan and acquired international recognition. In 1993 was adopted the Constitution of the new sovereign Kyrgyz state. The new government includes a President and a Prime Minister and Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament). The government has abandoned socialism and established a democratic state.

Now the Kyrgyz Republic is one of five newly independent Central Asian states. It consists of six administrative regions: Chui, Issyk-Kul, Osh, Jalal-Abad, Naryn and Talas. The capital, Bishkek, is located in the central north of the country. The population of Kyrgyz Republic numbered 5 million at the beginning of 2003.

Political changes in Kyrgyzstan.

Democratization of society and government institutions creates favorable political, legal, psychological and moral conditions for the proper development of society.

The first truly democratic step was society's rejection of communist ideology and the Soviet regime. The second was its choice of a path of peaceful but radical reconstruction, where the desire was to preserve civil harmony and involve all levels of society in the process of a renewal. The third step was the affirmation of ideological and political freedom, which

led to the emergence of multi-party system. The fourth step was the transition to variety of structure in the economy. The fifth was ensuring freedom of information. The sixth was movement towards an open society. Taken together, these steps are acknowledgment that general human values and respect for a person's right to choose have priority in society.

The democratic state institutions which have been formed, together with the fundamental rules of activity in democratic societies, have created a sound foundation for democratic development. The adoption of the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993, the formation of a bicameral parliament in 1995 (and the holding of competitive presidential elections on December 24, 1995) were all highly significant and solemn events on the path to democratization.

The legal foundation of our democratic society basically determined political pluralism. There are 41 political parties in the republic today, though it could not be said at this time that they all command great authority, or that they constitute influential political forces. Many of them are only in the process of formation. Despite their limited influence, the existing political parties maintain that they are struggling for the chance to participate in the formation of state and societal institutions. Representatives of some parties were elected to Parliament, their members also work in the government, other state institutions and local government organs.

In the country today there are 12 social movements which are making their own contributions to the democratization of society as well as 30 trade unions, 18 craft guilds, 37 cultural and educational societies, 34 community associations, 15 women's associations, 12 young and children's organizations and more than 100 various foundations, associations and unions. They have the potential role in democratizing society, improving the economy and human life.

To specify the political development model it is necessary to find out which form the state has assumed – after all, the state is the key link of any political system. The state and the model of its political development are interconnected.

The form of government in Kyrgyzstan can be described according to an analysis of its Constitution (1).

The Law on Introducing the Post of the President of the Kyrgyz S. S. R. and on Introducing Changes and Amendments into the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Kyrgyz S. S. R. adopted on 24 October, 1990 and the Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan adopted on 15 December, 1990 were two major steps that contributed to the Soviet Union's disintegration and consolidation of sovereign Kyrgyzstan's political system.

Askar Akaev was elected President on 27 October, 1990 at a sitting of the Supreme Soviet of the Kyrgyz S. S. R. On 31 August, shortly after the August 1991 coup was defeated, Kyrgyzstan announced itself a sovereign and independent republic. On 12 October, 1991, having won national elections, in which he was the only candidate, the president added legitimacy to his position. He gathered 96 percent of votes. The first years of his presidency (1991-1993) can be described as an opposition between executive and legislative powers, which competed for leadership. There were efforts to neutralise the Communist Party of Kyrgyzstan, which despite certain limitations imposed on it after the August coup remained the most influential opposition force. The president's powers were limited by the parliament. It looked as if the republic had opted for a parliamentary-presidential form of government.

By 1993 the prerequisites of constitutional reform were in place; the state institutions could be reorganised and a democratic system formed. On 5 May, 1993 the 12th Session of the Jogorku Kenesh (Parliament) of the republic of Kyrgyzstan of twelfth convocation adopted a new Constitution. It was based on the principles of separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judiciary; election of the president by popular vote; the separation of state power and local self-government. The principle of separation of powers meant that the

legislative, executive, and judicial powers “are acting independently; they cooperate among themselves” (Art 7 [2]). The fundamental law granted the president fairly wide powers: he is the head of state, guarantor of the Constitution and the unity of state power (Art 7 [1]).

The 1993 Constitution created conditions for a presidential republic; the country had no (and still lacks) the necessary conditions for a parliamentary republic because the country still has neither the full-fledged multiparty system nor the strong opposition.

According to the 1993 Constitution, presidential power in the republic was a blend of several models: the presidential republic proper and the premier-presidential republic. The parliament had an important role to play in determining the government’s structure, identifying the main trends of domestic and foreign policies. In this way the Constitution laid the legal foundations of a democratic regime.

In 1994 the first signs of strengthening presidential power and the parliaments weakening became obvious. This ended in opposition, the parliament was disbanded in October 1994 and the date of early parliamentary elections fixed. The election system based on a simple majority was introduced to deprive the Communist Party of an opportunity to come to power.

The first alternative elections were held on 24 October, 1995. Askar Akaev was re-elected president with 73 percent of votes. The referendum held on 10 February, 1996 extended his powers and limited those of the parliament. It also led to a Law on Introducing Changes and Amendments into the Constitution of the Kyrgyz Republic adopted on 17 February, 1996.

An analysis of the 1996 Constitution suggests that the republic acquired all legal prerequisites for a presidential form of government.

This shows that the 1996 Constitution opted for democratic development. It describes Kyrgyzstan as a democratic republic where state power rests on the principle of separation of powers. An analysis of the Constitution, however, reveals the fact that the balance among the branches of power was tipped in favour of the president while the political regime can be best described as an authoritarian one with democratic elements.

The republic is still at the beginning of the transition from non-democratic to democratic forms of government. We are living in the context of liberalisation or so-called “patron democracy”, which means a regime of formally democratic institutions. It can survive for a long time in the following circumstances: the institutions are too weak to serve as a “check and balance” to the president; the multi-party system is too young; the new system is still populated by the old elite preferring the presidency. There is no strong opposition. The regime is skilfully manoeuvring among various political forces (from the Communists to the Liberals), which prevents opposition from being fully developed.

One should bear in mind that society is growing more conservative in an attempt to avoid right and left extremes.

The next stage of democratic development when various political forces arrive at an agreement is possible in a definite context: the principle of separation of powers consistently observed, law becoming the ruling principle together with democratic procedures, free competition among potential elites, openness and freedom of speech (2).

The social stratification and poverty.

The development of market relations has led to a sufficiently marked social stratification.

The task of the State in this regard is to prevent a permanent polarisation and the consequent creation of a small, rich elite and a large majority of poor people. This can only be achieved by a state policy directed to the formation of a middle class comprising about 2/3 of

the population. In other words, the formation of a civil society, which is understood as a state of a specific type as well as a defined sphere of social structure.

Nowadays, the transformation of the social structure is on the one hand conditioned by the complication of social differentiation as new forms of property emerge, and on the other by its simplification as new economic classes are formed when new classes and strata arise alongside regulated ones. As, processes linked with the emergence and extension of new social classes should reform not only the economic and management system, but also the system of mass consciousness. In Kyrgyzstan, this process is characterised by extreme instability both within social groups and between them, and by the level of the individual's awareness of his or her own position in the social hierarchy. The establishment of new types of inter-group integration is conditioned according to forms of property, incomes, the extent to which people are included in the power structures and other factors.

There are in Kyrgyzstan, a substantial stratum of the population which represents a potential middle class. This embraces people with higher education and well-qualified, skilled workers. However, their potential is not being realised because the added value and a significant part of their production is transferred to the criminal sphere, either directly or indirectly via the state budget in the form of cheap credits or subsidies.

Now the attempts of a large part of the potential middle class to "commercialise" their own skills and abilities has run into many obstacles, such as the lack of incentives provided by the tax system and the absence of credits, as well as widespread racketeering by both criminals and state officials. As a result, only a small part of this class enjoys an average level of income which is provided not by qualified work, but by trade and serving as go-betweens and intermediaries. This group includes those specialising in small-scale shuttle trading and in the administration of enterprises, as well as a part of the bureaucracy.

Another part of the still unformed middle class remains on the periphery of society. If this process assumes a large-scale and long-term character, the result could be the mass impoverishment of society.

The difficult economic situation, the steep decline in living standards and increasing social stratification, when a significant part of the population is below the poverty line, decrease rather than increase the population's faith in the state and the political changes.

Increased confidence in the political and economic changes would be achieved if there were a more tangible improvement in the economy, if small and medium enterprises and farming began to emerge, if a middle class started to develop and then became the key stratum in the social structure of the society and if the co-ordinating, stimulating and forecasting role of the state in the economic sphere must not be reduced, but must be effective.

The economy of the Kyrgyz Republic within the Soviet Union was one of the most backward. Between ten years as a result of the economic crisis, Kyrgyzstan fell even further behind. The main economic indicators dropped back to their level in 1970. It will take years - and huge efforts - to restore the economy to its pre-crisis levels and then ensure further growth.

It is generally known, that poverty is one of the most serious threats to the preservation of political stability and civic accord. Therefore, reducing poverty must be of high priority for any state. The problem of reducing poverty must include all aspects of state policy, especially in the provision of social services, medical assistance and education.

The economic crisis has caused a progressive growth of poverty. It is obvious that poverty will remain as a problem for a long time.

Unfortunately, living standards have deteriorated for some groups of the population. Average aggregate per capita income for workers increased 8.7 times in nominal terms from 1992 to 1993, but when the increase in consumer prices over the same period is taken into account, average real income actually decreased by almost one third.

From the moment independence was proclaimed the government of the Kyrgyz Republic has studied her problem of poverty as have the Republican Trade Unions. Several government institutions share the responsibility for studying the problem of poverty: the National Committee on Statistics, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Institute of Economics controlled by the State Committee of Economics.

During the Soviet period, the term "low income people" denoted people who were not well to do. A specific level of income was defined below which people were considered to be poor. The term "poverty line" was introduced in 1988. The poverty line is the income level calculated with reference 4) the prices and quantities of commodities required for minimal subsistence.

The poverty line must reflect the minimum consumer budget (MCB) necessary to ensure sufficient calories and a sum for non-food expenditures. On the basis of this idea, the World Bank suggested for Kyrgyzstan a poverty line equal to 870 rubies per month per person in August 1992 prices. In addition to the decrease, the level of the average salary is a source of concern. In 2000 the Minimum Consumer Budget was 50 percent higher than the average wage. Only the average industrial wage was higher than the minimum consumer budget in 2000. The minimum wage, 100 soms in 2000, covers less than 20 percent of the minimum consumer budget.

The minimum consumer budget per capita was 1241,95 soms as on December 1, 2000, 1475,41 soms for individuals of working age and 1050,9 soms for individuals of retirement age (3).

In the structure of the household expenditure, food accounted for 61 percent, such a high level is a characteristic feature of poverty. Expenditures for housing, medical treatment and education have increased 70 percent. The caloric content and the quality of food deteriorated for most of the population (4).

Further economic decline is expected for the near future and experts expect the number of people living beneath the poverty line to continue to increase. The hardships of the most vulnerable groups of the population must be reduced to the minimum. A well-developed mechanism of state aid to the poor is needed to solve the growing problem of poverty in Kyrgyzstan.

The republic's working-age population is low in proportion to the total -50.3%. Children under working age make up 39.9%, and retirement-age people 9.8%. Under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that Kyrgyzstan is appreciably behind in technological terms, it is important that every member of the working-age population be employed to the benefit of society. It is especially important that material production jobs not be cut, and that vacancies be filled;

otherwise the burden of the unemployed on the "feeders and clothes" will increase.

The number of officially and unofficially unemployed people would appear to be rather small. However, if we compare these figures with the total working-age population and with the number of existing jobs - if we think how many extra people it is necessary to support in these financial hard times then the unemployment level becomes a truly menacing number.

As a rule, any citizen who has lost his job may apply to the employment services. Among those registered as looking for work, about 99% cannot find any job at all. Only 1% are seeking to supplement their incomes in their spare time. About 55% of applicants are Kyrgyz.

Job seekers have big problems finding appropriate work. About 40% of unemployed people have higher or specialized secondary education, yet according to the employment services, about 59% of job vacancies are for skilled labor. Here there is a discrepancy of supply and demand which makes it difficult for educated people to find employment.

The system of social protection and support

The independent Kyrgyz Republic inherited a system of social security which paid for elementary personal needs and provided basic services (pensions, benefits, medical aid) to citizens in need, either directly or through trade unions.

Furthermore, the deep economic crisis and lowering standard of living of the jobless mean that the existing system of social security (social guarantees) is becoming less effective. And as the system loses ground financially it becomes more and more difficult to fulfil the old mandate: to answer not to actual needs but to the undeclared rights of the population.

Work has begun in Kyrgyzstan to reform the system of social security and adapt it to the market economy. Foreign experience and world standards are being studied. The work under way should help to compensate for the costs of the transition period and stimulate economic development.

In accordance with world practice, work is now being done to divide the social security system into two organizationally independent systems with different sources of financing: social assistance and social insurance.

Social assistance is state support to the most vulnerable population segments (those living alone, the elderly, the needy, families with many children, etc.). This type of support is regionally differentiated and financed by state and local budgets. A partial legislative base for this system has been worked out and is continually being improved; administrative organs have also been formed.

Social insurance is a regional system of various state-guaranteed types of maintenance for citizens insured against loss of income due to old age, illness, disability or unemployment. It consists of three authorities: the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, which provides legislative support and payments of pensions and unemployment benefits; the Social Fund under the government, which amasses state insurance premiums and finances payment of insurance claims; and trade unions, which keep their workers and families healthy through their own structures in the workplace.

The Social Fund under the government was founded in 1994 on the basis of the pension fund, the social insurance fund and the employment fund. It is an extra-budgetary (i.e. non-state) credit institution which finances payment of pensions and allowances for illness, maternity, unemployment and burial, and covers the expenditures of trade unions for maintaining the health of their workers.

Insurance payments into the Social Fund are established by law at 37% of the payroll fund, of which 34.5% is paid by employers and 2.5% by employees. Broken down as a percentage of total payroll, 30% goes for pensions, 5% for illness and maternity benefits and for maintaining trade union members health, and 2% for unemployment benefits.

The financial base of social insurance is also not in good order. The state budget is extremely limited in its ability to provide subsidies for social insurance. In 1995, for instance, the 140 million *som* which came from the state in the form of subventions and subsidies did not cover.

The Social Fund's budget deficit was then around 25 million *som*.

In 1996 the Social Fund had 1.79 billion *soms*. The deficit grew to 300 million' *soms*. Steps to make up the shortfall with subsidies from the state budget are being considered.

The deficit is caused by narrowing of the social insurance revenue base, by insolvency at enterprises, and by growth in unemployment. In 1994 only two-thirds of the necessary premiums were collected into the social insurance budget; in 1995, only 89% in 1996 - 70%. (See source N6- Social and Economic conditions of Kyrgyz Republic, p.23-25).

These problems have an especially severe effect on old-age pensioners.

Pensions still have not reached the minimum level necessary for survival, its covered only

70% of a pension-age person's minimum consumer budget. Three-fourths of all pensioners receive pensions less than or equal to three times the minimum (100 soms) with the result that more than 31,000 retired people (about 7%) are forced to work. Those who cannot work must deal in small commerce, street trading, etc.

Fourteen percent of the population, receives some pension from the government. In spite of the fact that the Kyrgyz Republic is demographically younger than most of the other republics of Former Soviet Union, the percentage of senior citizens is growing, and with it, the importance of the provision of pensions.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, the right for a pension depends on age and length of work: 58 and 25 years for women and 63 and 30 years for men, respectively. The amount of the pension is fixed at 55 percent of the average level of the basic wage calculated for 5 years out of the last 20 years of work.

Today a socially oriented market economy is only in the initial stage of formation in the Kyrgyz Republic. The market economy will become socially oriented only when a highly developed economy and rich society are able to ensure social orientation. The situation is tremendously serious. The experience of economic development in countries that are currently prospering indicates that it will take the Kyrgyz Republic 15 to 20 years, at least, to achieve tangible, genuine success. The Kyrgyz Republic must begin work on the restructuring and technological innovation that will allow the economy to grow.

On the other hand the immediate task is to protect the population from famine and cold, from diseases and unemployment. The features of these calamities become more and more evident. First of all, the bread, fuel and energy problems will have to be solved.

The recession is expected to continue in the near future. It is necessary to minimise its negative impact on the most vulnerable groups of the population. To solve the problem of impoverishment in Kyrgyzstan, a detailed state concept of assistance to the poor is needed.

In spite of the difficult situation, the country is rich in intellectual, personnel, production and resources potential. That potential must be utilised rationally, profitably, and economically. The government and the people must sacrifice the things that can be done without in order to implement the tasks necessary to survive.

Education

Reforms in the social sphere have thus become an urgent necessity and one of the primary tasks of the state. The first step in this direction was the creation of an educational concept and the passing of a law on education. 25 decrees have been issued and developed further in numerous governmental decisions.

In May 1996, the government of the republic accepted the national educational programme "Bilim" (Knowledge), which defined the strategy in the educational sphere for the next five years. The main aims of this programme are to maintain access to education for the population, increase its quality and ensure effective financing. Accordingly, 1996 was declared the "Year of Education".

The educational concept assures the independence of educational bodies from ideological institutions, creates the conditions for competition in the educational sphere and the free development of educational institutions under different types of ownership and control. It also establishes a legal framework for the creation of private institutions alongside state bodies and sets out a stage-by-stage decentralisation of state control and correspondingly large degree of autonomy for educational bodies. There in Kyrgyzstan - 1,007,100 pupils were attending the 1,890 general schools.

The educational system is becoming increasingly differentiated. In Kyrgyzstan there are 270 special schools at which various subjects are taught more intensively, as compared to 197

in the previous year, including 65 grammar schools and 33 lyceums. 92,100 pupils are attending these schools, an increase of 85.3% on the previous school year.

In accordance with the educational reforms, the process of decentralisation is also gathering pace. This is allowing the educational institutions to work out and implement their own programmes and curricula. Already in 1996 there are 28 lyceums and 42 grammar schools teaching their own programmes.

The number of private schools has also increased. 23 of these have received licenses and 9 written recommendations. 13 Kyrgyz-Turkish lyceums have been opened and are now operating successfully.

The new schools tend to be characterised by a new philosophy of education based for the most part on the social-humanitarian idea, on the elaboration and implementation of non-traditional educational approaches and an integrated programme of courses which are untypical of mass schools. This ensures the pupils a free choice of their curriculum and the use of new technological approaches to studying. It also enables the school to search for new management methods. Thanks to such innovative schools, about 20% of all pupils have an opportunity to study in accordance *with* their abilities and interests, which bears full fitness to the attention these schools put on the pupil as an individual. Innovative schools promote a high degree of motivation on the part of the pupils to their demanding studies.

The educational process of the majority of private schools is also directed at searching for teaching methods oriented towards the individual pupil and to satisfying the educational requirements and aspirations of the pupils and their parents.

Kyrgyz-Turkish lyceums have been operating successfully in Kyrgyzstan since 1992. At the moment there are 12 private-state Kyrgyz-Turkish lyceums run by the firm Sebat and one state lyceum of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. The teachers in these schools are Kyrgyz and Turks and a series of subjects such as physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics are taught in English. The widespread availability of computer technology allows the intensive use of teaching aids in the educational process and the possibility to study according to individual programmes.

As the annual results of the level of knowledge, ability and techniques of the pupils in lyceums, grammar schools, private schools and Kyrgyz-Turkish lyceums demonstrate, about 10-80% of pupils achieve a high rating in basic subjects, while in special subjects in figure is over 90%. Pupils in these schools participate actively in the Olympiads of different levels in various general subjects. Over 90% of the pupils taking part win. A high percentage of pupils goes on to higher education.

The falling quality of school education is also connected with the shortage of teachers. As a study of 930 schools (50% of the overall number) carried out by the state statistics committee showed, that at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year, staffing levels stood at 94.7%.

There are many other problems. The low quality and insufficient the number of textbooks, low staffing levels and chronic wage arrears - have led to a sharp reduction in the level of teaching.

Many of them mentioned are directly linked to the level of material resources available to general schools. A whole series of schools is badly equipped for teaching in the winter, but the construction of new schools is constantly falling.

One of the main reform thrusts of higher education in Kyrgyzstan has been to increase number of regional higher educational institutions. In the last three years alone, 12 state and 11 private institutions of higher learning have been opened, as well as 24 annexes and teaching-cum advice points in various regions of the republic. The opening of these institutions was motivated by the good intention of offering young people in every region a

full, varied and quality education. Unfortunately, these aims have not been fulfilled. The level of education in the regional institutions is low since they were created by the mechanical amalgamation of several technical colleges. Furthermore, they lack sufficient material resources, equipment, premises qualified teachers and lectures.

All of this has obviously hardly been conducive to an increase in the quality of education in the institutions of higher learning. In the first years of reform, when a normative framework for the implementation of the law on education was for the most part still lacking, the ministry of education granted licences to 12 private institutions of higher learning and 138 new courses and specialities. The licences were sometimes awarded without taking into consideration the actual provision of the teaching, methodological and material framework, the teaching staff and the definition of the optimal number of students.

The main criteria in the classification of institutions of higher learning (university, academy, institute, college) are the quality and volume of scientific research and development, of the scientific staff and of the availability of appropriate laboratory and scientific equipment.

However, teachers in higher education now conduct only limited amounts of scientific work due to the heavy increase in the teaching and administrative load and the more intensive study process. These factors, combined with low salaries, mean that many teachers are forced to hold down several positions and are left with little time for research. The high turnover of teaching staff has also led to a sharp decline in the scientific potential of institutions of higher learning, which hardly helps the transition of a scientific research centre to a university.

In these conditions, the reform of higher education in the republic is being carried out in accordance with the available financial and material resources by a trial-and-error method.

The first success in attracting funds from international programmes was achieved by the Kyrgyz National University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan and Kyrgyz Technical University.

The number of students and research students attending institutions in the "far abroad" is also rising annually, and today the figure is over 1,500.

A priority task today is gaining access to the international market of science and education. The institutions of higher learning in the republic enjoy respect in a series of countries such as Turkey, India and the Arab states. Malaysia has also shown interest in our engineering, technical and medical specialists, and also in our ballet and circus soloists. A series of institutions of higher learning in the United States would like to have historians from our republic teaching the history of Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. The first steps along these lines have already been made. A prospectus on the institutions of higher learning in Kyrgyzstan has already been prepared and distributed by the embassies accredited in the republic, and in the majority of colleges foundation faculties and language courses have been set up for foreign students.

A major element in modern teaching is information technology, the creative mastery of which solves to a large extent the problem of continues education. Computerisation at institutions of higher learning will allow, students to master modern information technology. Several republican' institutions of higher learning, including the Kyrgyz State National University, the International University of Kyrgyzstan, the Slavonic University, Osh State University and others are no less well-equipped with computer technology than leading institutions in the CIS - and equally versed in its use. They also have access to international educational programmes through the Internet.

In spite of a series of positive elements the reform of education in the Kyrgyz Republic has still not achieved its main goal.

It is generally well-known that the reform of education should in the first instance be aimed at firstly giving workers the skills required in the market and, secondly, developing informed and educated citizens capable of participating in the society. The achievement of these main

goals would help to solve tasks. These include access to studying and education for all social groups, as well as the elaboration of a system and types of education to prepare people for life in society in the economic, political and social sense; the most effective administrative system of education (pre-school institutions, schools and institutions of higher learning) and sufficient financing of education to allow it to function successfully.

To improve access to higher and secondary education, it is essential to introduce a system of free credits and loans or vouchers from the government. These would be used to acquire a profession or specialisation or for retraining. This system would improve the mobility of the population in taking up jobs not only in republican and oblast centres, but also in the more remote regions. However, educational reform in the Kyrgyz Republic is impossible at the moment, given the current level of financing.

The deficit of the state budget has forced the government to reduce funding for the educational system. As a result, over two-thirds of the pre-school institutions have been closed, which could have a potentially negative impact on the preparedness of children to begin formal schooling and study properly. Due to the increase of paid services in secondary and tertiary education, access to compulsory and higher education has declined sharply.

The central question in the reform of education is the creation of new curricula and programmes directed at the deideologisation and the renewal of the subjects studied, and adapting the school and college programmes to the changed economic realities and values. The reform of education should promote the development of a competitive publishing sector and thus the creation of a new, qualitatively better generation of textbooks.

It is necessary to prepare qualitatively new teachers in accordance with market conditions. In connection with the low salaries of teachers and the correspondingly low prestige of the profession, the percentage of gifted students of teacher training colleges is low. It is also necessary to organise a system of retraining and improving the qualifications of teachers and lectures in institutions of higher learning. New teaching staff should not only renew the content of education, but also introduce new, innovative methods of studying in both schools and institutions of higher learning. Without this, it will be impossible to reform education in Kyrgyzstan and approach international standards.

The system of studying and education has not changed its previous aim to accumulate knowledge. At the same time, it is necessary to study how to apply acquired knowledge in practice. Today the educational system uses education to transmit cultural, political, national and other values. But the accent in the future should also be directed to the formation of personal responsibility, intellectual freedom, creativity in ones work and the ability to pose and solve questions and problems. However, the educational institutions of Kyrgyzstan have yet to solve these tasks, and their graduates joined the ranks of the unemployed in considerable numbers. Ten percent of the unemployed have high-school or university diplomas.

In addition, it is necessary to forecast the number of teachers for secondary schools and universities in the republic and define the type and number of specialists which will be needed. The law of supply and demand should be applied more rigorously to the work force. The reform of education has to be implemented in the shortest possible time insofar as the erosion of human resources will lead to huge losses in the future.

Lack of funds has led to financing being drawn from many sources. The 1997 budget foresees a provisional allocation of 1,494,000 soms, or 12.7% of the 1996 level. In addition, a credit of 30 million dollars for education has been awarded by the Asian Development Bank, of which 5 million dollars are due to be disbursed in 1997 (5).

The legislative framework for fee-paying education in state-owned institutions of higher learning is being improved. This will be achieved by creating structural departments or

subdivisions which will implement the training of specialists on a contractual basis. A priority task in 1997 will be entry into the international market of science and education. The goal will not only be integration into the world educational space, but also a source of additional financing.

The government is currently deciding the question of cheap credits and loans for students. A normative legal framework to guarantee the social welfare of students and teachers in the market economy is currently being worked out. To maintain access to education and state orders for training specialists, an educational support fund is being created together with the state administration, oblasts and rayons. This will bring together funds from the budget, from non-budget sources and also funds from citizens and legal entities.

Due to growing unemployment in the wake of the structural changes in the economy and changing demands on specific professions in the labour market, competition for jobs has increased among those seeking work.

Under such conditions, the professional orientation, vocational training and retraining are important components of social welfare and socio-economic adaptation.

A network of teaching institutions has been retained, including 74 vocational-technical colleges, 39 vocational lyceums, an industrial-pedagogical technical college and a self-financing republican centre for training entrepreneurs. Since 1995, the indicators of vocational and technical education have been included in the state indicative plan-forecast for the period up to 2005.

A qualitative restructuring should take place, linked to the changes in the social and economic functions of vocational training. The previous assumption that a specific profession assured a person work for life, is both impossible and unnecessary under market conditions. Vocational and technical education is now confronted with other tasks. In market conditions, vocational and technical schools should ensure the social welfare and protection of the young. This entails means a vocational training which allows young people to switch quickly from one type of vocational work to another as the economic situation changes.

To speed up reforms of vocational and technical education, it is essential to develop and implement financing from various other sources to take advantage of the market economy to improve the vocational schools.

So the difficult economic situation, the steep decline in living standards and increasing social stratification, when a significant part of the population is below the poverty line, decrease rather than increase the populations faith in the state and the political changes.

Increased confidence in the political and economic changes and greater social cohesion would be achieved if there were a more tangible improvement in the economy and small. And medium enterprises and farming would begin to emerge, if a middle class started to develop and then became the key stratum in the social structure of the society.

The co-ordinating, stimulating and forecasting role of the state in the economic sphere must not be reduced, but must be effective. The allocation of the economic freedom to management does not mean the full renunciation of the governments "intervention" in the economy. "Intervention" defined as state economic policy and control to secure its implementation in a complex economy using organisational, administrative and market mechanisms and based on a legal foundation, is both unavoidable and necessary.

Among the various social problems now facing the republic, growing unemployment represents a potential danger. The number of officially registered unemployed on 1 January 1997 was 77,200. The official level of unemployment has risen from 0.1% in 1997 to 4.4% of the working population. Taking into account those that are not fully employed in production, on administrative leave, and also those unemployed but actively seeking work by their own efforts and not through the employment offices, the potential number of unemployed people in

the Kyrgyz Republic amounts to over 500,000 or about 25% of the economically active population.

One of the factors threatening hidden unemployment is that it encourages and feeds the black economy, which is of course based on illegal activity.

World experience shows that in periods of radical change, unemployment reaches a crucial threshold of 10-15 %. The actual level of unemployment (including hidden unemployment) has thus now reached this threshold and urgent measures are required to reduce bring the percentage down.

Decree No. 571 issued by the government on 3 December 1996, confirmed the programme " The Employment Market and Employment Assistance to the Population in 1996-1997 and in the Period to 2005". The programmes main aim is to create favourable conditions to ensure the employment of the population and satisfy the demand of enterprises for labour by virtue of economic stabilisation, to improve the quality and competitiveness of labour, to develop a system for training workers and to improve the state employment service.

In solving the social problems connected with the growth of unemployment in the republic, new methods of regulating the labour market have been developed and implemented. These include stimulating small businesses (self-employment), creating societies for assisting employment, helping employers and creating jobs for the unemployed.

Sovereign independence, the introduction of market relations and the formation of new social structures have made the establishment of continuing vocational training one of the most important tasks in the educational sphere.

Continuing vocational training is not an adjunct to the current forms of education and cannot compensate for any inadequacies in basic education. One of its most important tasks is to create the basis of human independence, irrespective of age but taking into account individual abilities, in other words the initial acquisition of a professional training and specialisation.

The restructuring process now underway in the economy means that many people are moving and will continue to move from the production to the service sector. This will be accompanied by the retraining of the unemployed to enable them to work in services (public catering, the hotel and tourist industry, secretaries and administrative personnel with foreign languages and computer skills, television and radio repairmen etc.).

The ongoing structural changes are displacing the "old" jobs and opening up prospects for "new" professions such as managers, computer programmers and operators, businessmen, bookkeepers and specialists in computer hardware and modern domestic appliances.

A social pedagogical service should be set up to learn from foreign experience. Each social pedagogue should be allocated a particular territory where she/he will carry out work on the social and psychological rehabilitation of people without work, including senior citizens and other social groups in " need of such support.

III Inter-Ethnic Relations and Political Integration

1 Interethnic relations: dynamics and development.

Interethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan today are extremely multifaceted and characterized by dynamism and contradiction. One particular feature of their development is that they are determined not only by the coexistence of various ethnic groups and by the interaction of formal and informal social and political structures, but also by an aggregate of geopolitical, economic, socio-demographic, foreign policy and religious considerations, as well as a whole range of other objective and subjective factors.

Kyrgyzstan differs from its southern neighbours - the other Central Asian republics - by its

smaller proportion of representatives of the titular nationality. The proportion of Kyrgyz in the population decreased as a result of the genocide of Kyrgyz people in 1916. The total decline in the Kyrgyz population in 1917 against 1916 in the northern part of Kyrgyzstan alone was almost 120,000 people or 41.4%.

A considerable portion of the population consists of Slavic nationalities - Russians, Ukrainians, and Belorussians. It must be noted that mass settlement of other nationalities in Kyrgyzstan began at the start of the 20th century, especially during Stolypin's reforms, when migrants from Russia and Ukraine were settled on the best lands in Chui valley, the Issyk-Kul basin, and the foothills of the Fergana valley. On the whole they used to be employees of all-Union enterprises which belonged to the military-industrial complex. The overwhelming majority of these Slavs ended up in the republic as the result of purposeful migrations regulated by the central government.

Intensified industrialisation of the outlying ethnic borderlands in the 1950s was oriented not toward training the republics' own workers but toward exporting labour from the Slavic republics - Ukraine and Russia.

The tragic events of the 1930s in Kazakhstan also contributed to migrations of non-natives into Kyrgyzstan, when inhabitants of the neighbouring republic moved to Kyrgyzstan as a result of mass hunger. Stalin's mass deportations of Germans from the Volga region, Koreans from the Far East, Caucasians (Chechens, Ingush, Balkars, Meshked Turks and others), and Crimean Tatars also contributed to an increase in the non-native population.

Emigration is one of the reasons that Kyrgyz constituted only about 30% of the urban population in the beginning of 90 years . Throughout the republic they live mainly in foothill and mountain areas, which has an effect upon the mood of the local population. The vast majority of Kyrgyz (approximately 70%) live in rural areas and do not have even minimal facilities or services. Mainly they work in the most labour-intensive, unskilled low-paying agricultural sectors; livestock breeding, tobacco growing and soon.

Kyrgyzstan has a unique and geopolitically important location at the center of Central Asia. The republic borders directly on Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and China. Neighbouring countries (Uzbekistan in particular) watch developments in the interethnic situation in the republic very carefully, because the destiny of their compatriots living in Kyrgyzstan is far from immaterial to them. Interethnic oppositions and conflicts between Central Asian states can not only seriously destabilise the situation in the region, but can also substantially aggravate the international security system.

Dynamic democratic processes arose during the rapid reorganisation of public relations and political structures in Kyrgyzstan. The first results of the development of democracy were the introduction of the institution of presidential government and adoption of the declaration on state sovereignty (December 15, 1990). In spite of the progressive and positive nature of these changes, they were accompanied by a number of serious alterations in the interethnic relations and socio-political situation in the republic.

The new ethnopolitical situation has been characterised by politicisation of the ethnic factor, intensification of political struggle, and polarisation of the population according to nationality. This is due to the fact that sovereignty in the republic was taken by a certain part of the native population to mean sovereignty of the titular nationality first of all, along with the opening of priorities for this nationality in all spheres of human activity. This mono-ethnic overtone while sovereignty was being achieved for a republic with a multiethnic population, contributed to the appearance of interethnic tension. Given the existing low political culture, political confrontation often devolved into violent methods of resolving ethnic tensions.

Democratization and the gaining of sovereignty in Kyrgyzstan, as well as in other states of the former Soviet Union, occurred in a national model. These processes were most graphically developed in the growth of national movements, the agendas and ideological platforms of

which were far from unequivocal and even contradictory, since the positive and progressive ideas of national revival of the Kyrgyz people and the new relevance of their national-culture and language had a strong psychological effect upon other nationalities living on the territory of republic. This situation gave rise to a feeling of discomfort and even national affront on the part of people of other nationalities. Ultimately, all these facts contributed to the beginning and escalation of interethnic tensions.

The 1989 law on the state language, which proclaimed the language of the titular (Kyrgyz) nationality to be the state language, contributed to a considerable extent to the aggravation of the interethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan. Implementation of the law on the state language envisaged a gradual transition to Kyrgyz in all institutions and organizations, schools and higher educational institutions 5 January 1998. However, in practice this process was considerably accelerating (6).

Politicisation of the language problem, the introduction of Kyrgyz language into government and administrative spheres, science, culture and education - all these facts willy-nilly created an advantage for Kyrgyz people as speakers of the state language. Inversely, it hemmed in the interests of other nationalities. This undoubtedly furthered the polarization of the attitudes of Kyrgyz people and those of other nationalities and the deterioration of interethnic relations.

Intensified emigration took place as a result, with 145,000 Russian-speaking people, mainly Slavs, leaving the republic in 1989-1991. The tragic events of the Osh interethnic conflict of 1990 (7) were also a factor which furthered the emigration of the Russian-speaking population.

The worsening of interethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan has occurred against the background of crisis in all spheres of activity in the republic. The sum total of socio-economic, political and even psychological relations had an influence on the aggravation of the interethnic situation in the republic.

Undoubtedly the crisis in the economy, which started at the beginning of the 1990s and led to inflation, unemployment, the breakdown of the consumer market and a sharp decline in living standards, projected itself into the sphere of interethnic relations. However, the immediate factors which destabilised the interethnic situation in Kyrgyzstan at that time were first of all political factors, namely the August coup and its consequences. The intensification of centrifugal tendencies in the republics, the collapse of the Soviet Union and the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States were the logical continuation and result of the August events.

Beginning in 1992, a decline in interethnic tension was seen in Kyrgyzstan. First, the victims of the Osh interethnic tragedy cooled many hot heads among national patriots. Second, as a result of increased emigration of the Russian-speaking population, the republic lost several thousand skilled workers from various fields of the national economy, mainly in industrial enterprises, the construction sector, the energy complex and other very important spheres. Irreparable damage was done to the national economy of the republic as a result of these migrations. These and other factors have contributed to changes in the interethnic climate in the republic. The Kyrgyz government is taking steps to retain the Russian-speaking population. Corrections in the implementation state language policy were made in 1992, when permission was granted to make documentation in Russian if an enterprise, organisation or population point, has more than 70 % of Russian-speaking population. The Kyrgyz-Russian (Slavic) University was established in the autumn of 1992. The Criminal Code was supplemented with a new article, recently submitted to the new Parliament, on criminal punishment of ethnic discrimination of citizens. The question of the status of Russian as the language of interethnic communication is being discussed at a high level. As a result of elections in 1995, B. I. Silayev, a Russian by nationality, became the mayor of Bishkek, the

capital of Kyrgyzstan. A. S. Moiseev was appointed as a vice-prime minister (8).

The sharp decline in migration of the Russian-speaking population is a clear result of the decline in ethnic tensions. In 1994, migration was half of the 1993 level, and during the first half of 1995, migration reduced the population of the Kyrgyz Republic by only 9,200 people

The present transitional period in the Kyrgyz Republic- from totalitarianism to democracy, from a planned to a market economy - is accompanied by oppositions and conflictive forms of development. However, the accents of social tension in Kyrgyz society have changed substantially toward a lessening of interethnic conflict.

The problems of the social sphere are the most urgent in the republic today, as the establishment of a socially oriented market economy is still only in the initial stage.

The economic crisis brought about a decline in the living standard for tens and even hundreds of thousands of people living in Kyrgyzstan. The crisis situation of the first years of independence was a strong blow to industry and brought about significant de-industrialisation in the country. Most enterprises in the republic have switched to single-shift work schedules or completely halted production. Many workers are on forced unpaid leave.

Such large-scale reduction in employment leads to an escalation in social tension. The important social problem of providing the population with employment must be solved. Although births have dropped in recent years, it is expected that the number of people joining the labour force will increase during the next few years.

The economic crisis has brought about rapid growth of poverty in Kyrgyz society. It is obvious that poverty is one of the most serious threats to maintaining social and political stability and civic peace and harmony.

During the last few years the living standards of some segments of society in the republic have dropped drastically.

The quickly progressing social stratification of society into rich and poor, with rapid enrichment of the one group and impoverishment of the other group, is contributing to the growth of social tension in the republic.

Now 24% of the population had an income less than the minimum salary. In the breakdown of expenses, 61% went for food. Such a high level is a characteristic feature of serious poverty in the population and more. Expenses for housing, medical treatment and education increased to 10 times. The quality and caloric content of food consumed has deteriorated for the majority of the population.

Further economic recession is expected in the near future, and specialists predict a steady increase in the number of people living below the poverty line. Most of all these are pensioners who are dependent on support from the state budget. According to available information, 70% of pensioners, who get the minimum pension of 100 soms, live below the poverty line.

Unemployment hits the most vulnerable social groups of the population -women and young people - worst of all. Women's unemployment is growing very rapidly at present. Of the total number of officially registered unemployed, 70% are women. Women represent from 75.9% to 79.7% of the unemployed in every region of the republic. Unemployment is particularly high among women of Kyrgyz nationality, and most of these are in rural places. Since women have a higher representation in the lower-paying branches of the economy. Therefore, most retired women continue to work.

Along with women, youth constitute one of the most discriminated-against social groups. In 1994 there was a considerable reduction in planned (free) education at state specialised secondary and higher educational institutions. In connection with the production slump in the republic, the system of professional and technical education, which prepares thousands of young people for specific professions, found itself in a crisis. The budget of education was cut by 35 million som in 1995, with the result that young people are unwillingly swelling the

ranks of the unemployed. Today young people together with women constitute more than 70% of the unemployed population. Marginalization of youth, especially in rural areas, has led to a sharp rise in crime among young people and adolescents - more than 60% of all crimes.

The growth in social tension has been accompanied by a serious deterioration of the crime situation in the country. In recent years the number of murders has risen drastically. There were as many suicides as murders in 1994. This is a very serious symptom, showing that the economic decline has transformed into wider psychological depression. If measures are not introduced against violence and lawlessness immediately, the losses for society could be very substantial. There is a tendency toward psychological instability in the population.

The housing shortage was always a problem in the enormous Soviet empire, and Kyrgyzstan has inherited this problem. In former times, state programs of housing construction lagged behind the rate of population growth. Present attempts by the government to solve the issue of housing construction are not successful. The potential of private enterprise is as yet small, and privatised building companies are concentrating their efforts in the field of commercial construction. The compensatory role of emigration, which could have made empty apartments available to people without them, has been insignificant and has begun to decline. The slowed growth in the population will not have an effect upon housing demand for many years. As a result, the shortage of housing may become an additional source of social tension.

These crisis phenomena in socioeconomic life, which contribute to the escalation of social tension in modern Kyrgyz society, could very soon form the background for interethnic destabilisation.

The Center of Social Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Kyrgyz Republic (9) has carried out systematic research to detect and study the destabilising factors in the social and interethnic situation and the level of interethnic tension in Kyrgyzstan, beginning of 1991 after tragic events of inter-ethnic conflict in June 1990 in Osh. On the basis of analysis of interethnic situation in the south region, it was necessary to make up a prognostic of events in future and work out scientific practical recommendations for a stabilisation of interethnic relations of a state management (10).

It is well known that economic, political and religious oppositions are the primary objective reasons for interethnic conflicts. However, we must remember that socio-economic, political, religious and other factors leading to the outbreak of interethnic conflicts can remain latent for long periods. These factors come directly to the surface with the help of subjective circumstances and situations.

Interethnic oppositions and problems can very often play such a role in a multiethnic society, because people are inclined by their own ethnocentrism and ethnic prejudices to seek the sources of their troubles in representatives of other ethnic groups.

Experience has shown that psychological stereotypes and ethnic prejudices have played and play a considerable role in the emergence and escalation of interethnic conflicts. For all their differences, the Sumgait, Fergana, and Dushanbe events, as well as events in New Uzen (Kazakhstan), Osh Oblast, and other regions of the CIS, developed in the same way. If we take a step back from analysing specific socio-economic and historic-cultural causes, we can see that the immediate stimuli for these conflicts were psychological phenomena and various kinds of unfounded and exaggerated rumours of national discrimination. Interethnic tensions in the Osh interethnic conflict of 1990 developed along the same lines.

The most urgent task for the study of interethnic relations is to identify and eliminate interethnic tensions in the republic as a whole as well as in its regions.

Comprehensive research of the interethnic climate and its positive and negative tendencies has become possible on the basis of the systematic sociological research conducted by the Center of Social Research.

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to an upsurge in specific reasons for conflict. This was due to the general social and economic crisis which affected all the post-Soviet states and the destruction both of the huge country in which people were used to living and of their way of life. Home used to be the Soviet Union itself, not the flat or the street where one lived, but this had now changed. In addition, law and order on the territory of the former Soviet Union declined. As a result, the solution of inter-ethnic conflicts became one of the main problems facing the new states. The Kyrgyz Republic, which is inhabited by over 80 nationalities and ethnic groups, is no exception.

The population of the Kyrgyzstan according to the preliminary data is submitted to last statistic information of the population by 1999 number 4822943 men more than 80 nationalities. Among the largest national groups living in the country, it is necessary to allocate the following: Kyrgyzs – 64,9 % (3128148); the Uzbeks - 13,8 %; (664956); Russian - 12,5 % (603189).

Population, living in the Kyrgyz Republic, (man)

	1989	In percentage to the general population	1999	In percentage to the general population	Change of an absolute population, men	Change of an absolute population, %
All population	4257755	-	4822938	-	565183	13
Kyrgyzs	2229663	52,34	3128147	64,9	898484	40
Russian	916558	21,5	603201	12,5	313357	65,8
German	101309	2,4	21471	0,4	79838	21,2
Uzbeks	550096	12,9	664950	13,8	114854	20
Tadjiks	33518	0,8	42636	0,9	9118	27
Kazakhs	37318	0,9	42657	1	5339	14
Other	389293	9,1	319876	6,6	69417	82

Characteristic feature of territorial moving ethnic community is that all of them practically live by compact groups. For example, as of January 1, 1999 in the south of republic lived:

In the Osh region : Kyrgyzs - 63.8 %, Uzbeks - 31.1 %, Russian – 1.3 %, Tadjiks – 0.9 %, Uigurs – 0.9, Tatars – 0.5 % etc.;

In Jalal-Abad region : Kyrgyzs - 69.8 %, Uzbeks - 24.4 %, Russian – 2.1 %, Tatars – 0.8 % etc.;

In Batken region: Kyrgyzs – 74.3%, Uzbeks- 14.4%, Tadjiks- 6.4.%, Russian – 2.2.%, Tatars-1%.

In northern area:

In Naryn region: Kyrgyzs - 98.7 %, Russian - 0.3 %, Uzbeks - 0.3 %;

In Talas region: Kyrgyzs - 88.5 %, Russian - 4 %, Kazakhs - 1.7 %, Uzbeks – 0.9 %;

In Issyk-Kul region: Kyrgyzs - 79.4 %, Russian - 13.2 %, Kazakhs - 1.7 %, Ukrainians - 1.0 %, Uzbeks – 0.8 %, Uigurs - 1.0 %, Tatars - 0.6 % etc.;

In Chui region: Kyrgyzs - 43.8 %, Russian - 31.9 %, Dungans – 5,7 %, Ukrainians – 3.3 %, Kazakhs - 2.3 %, Germans - 1.8 %, Uzbeks - 1.8 %, Uigurs - 1.9 %, Turks - 1.7 %, Azerbaijanians - 1.0 %, Tatars - 1.1 % etc (11).

Now on the data of National Statistical Committee of the Kyrgyz Republic on January 1, 2002 in republic lives: Kyrgyzs - 60.8 %, Russian - 15.3%. The Uzbeks - 14.3 %, Ukrainians - 1.5 %, Tatars - 1.2 %, Dungans - 1.0 % and a number of the representatives of other nationalities, whose number less than 1%.

The social, economic, political, cultural and moral interests of different ethnic groups, which as often as not do not overlap and are often contradictory, can lead to conflict in particular situations. Specific areas of potential conflict include clear violations of social justice, low and late wages, salaries, pensions and grants, the growth of inflation, unsatisfactory public health, education and environmental protection, a distorted personnel policy, failure to develop the national culture, limited scope for the use of national languages and the loss of work and accommodation etc.

In this regard, it should be taken into account that national minorities will usually react more sensitively to one and the same social or other injustice committed against all the inhabitants of Kyrgyzstan than the titular nation.

A sensitive reaction to an existing injustice may be expressed in demands to re-examine the existing administrative and territorial division of the republic and the structure of the nation or state, in movements to defend the language and culture and the territorial or cultural autonomy already achieved or in the removal of any unequal rights which have supposedly arisen in the social and economic sphere between the ethnic minorities and the titular nation.

The most important element is a scientifically-based state nationalities policy capable of forestalling and preventing conflict situations.

No less important is a legal and organisational framework establishing equal rights for all citizens to take part in the state, economic and cultural renaissance of the republic, irrespective of their ethnic origin. A stable and then growing economy also has to be established. Only economic growth, accompanied by a significant improvement in people's standard of living, will restore optimism in society and stop people blaming other ethnic groups for problems.

To prevent conflicts from arising, it is vital to ensure a functioning legal framework to allow the free development of culture, language, traditions and other moral and culture values of national minorities. Such laws and principles must be applied equally to all nationalities, along with norms for regulating social relations.

A characteristic trait of public life in modern Kyrgyzstan is the increased national awareness of all ethnic groups. The social and economic position of these groups and the problem of maintaining their integrity and their future is of central concern to all. These factors are taken into account when searching for solutions to the problems. The current situation has led to a further, very important task, namely directing the political and national movements into positive and creative channels and preventing them from becoming nationalistic and chauvinistic.

In the Soviet period, the low level of culture in inter-ethnic relations was one of the main reasons for the tension between groups. In recent years, this has deteriorated yet further because many people, especially the young, have lost their moral and cultural ideals and because many try to ape a kind of pseudo-democracy, which in turn leads to complete license, anarchy and violence. This has provided fertile soil for nationalists and extremists, who are convinced of their own rectitude and infallibility and who represent the greatest danger to inter-ethnic stability.

The formation of public awareness is a crucial task today. This awareness should be based on an acknowledgement of the natural right of every ethnic group to have its own specific goals, tasks, ideals, needs and requirements flowing from their national interests and from a

tolerant relationship to them. In this regard, appeals to eternal friendship and brotherhood, as was the case in the not too recent past, are less important than inculcating mutual understanding and the ability to make compromises at the individual level.

To maintain the stability and integrity of the state, social policy has to be changed to take into account the new realities, particularly with regard to language. The current law on the official language of the Kyrgyz Republic was passed when the republic was still part of a major power and there was virtually only one official language, namely Russian. In 1959, Russians made up 30.2% of the population of Kyrgyzstan. After this date, the number of Russians and Russian-speakers continued to rise. This led to a real danger that the Kyrgyz language would lose its function and significance.

Since then, the situation has changed dramatically. Kyrgyzstan is now a sovereign state and the Kyrgyz nation is the titular nation. It thus bears the main responsibility for the stability and integrity of the country. The proportion of Kyrgyz nationals in the republic has increased from 40.5% in 1959 to 60.3% at the beginning of 1996, while Russians have declined from 30.2% to 15.7%. In other words, there are no longer any internal or external factors which could hinder the increasing use of Kyrgyz, other than people's own unwillingness.

The realisation of the law on the official language in its optimum form is thus only a matter of time. The unceasing hullabaloo concerning the language problem, which in 1989 created only nervousness among all the ethnic and national groups using Russian as a lingua franca, has not made any positive contribution to the fulfilment of the law.

It is necessary to perfect the state and legal framework to prevent inter-ethnic conflicts and to punish those guilty of fomenting such conflicts. Taking into account the multinational composition of Kyrgyzstan, its geopolitical situation and environment, there should be strict punishment for crimes relating to inter-ethnic relations, as is the case in Malaysia, for example, or in other multinational countries of the Pacific region.

Such measures would promote not only the stabilisation of the inter-ethnic situation, but also a reduction in the emigration of hard-working and highly qualified people from the republic (see table).

Table . Emigration from the Kyrgyz Republic according to ethnic Composition

Nationality	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Total	-41,913	-33,757	-77,453	-120,604	-51,093	-18,934	-11,674
Kyrgyz	+3,371	+4,260	+2,208	+2841	+1,091	+1,292	+913
Russians	-16,342	-17,397	-48,513	-80,896	-31,594	-9,476	-6,066
Ukrainians	-2,349	-2,275	-6,750	-10,607	-4,018	-1,333	-806
Belarussians	-30	-179	-606	-811	-277	-114	-60
Uzbeks	-3,943	-3,416	-5,589	-5,977	-3,109	-1,942	-1,012
Kazahs	+341	+267	-408	-836	-213	-133	-146
Tatars	-1,529	-1,028	-3,406	-9,759	-3,408	-1,188	-817
Germans	-15,142	-12,830	-12,025	-10,585	-7,675	-5,507	-3,639
Other Nationalities	-6,290	+1,159	-2,364	-4974	1,890	-553	-41

Source: National Human Development Report 1997, P. 54

As can be seen from the table, emigration from the republic in 1996 was 10 times lower than in 1993 and 1.6 times lower than in 1995, but at almost 12,000 was still perceptible. About 70% of the emigration consisted of hard-working and highly qualified people, and this represented a severe loss to the economy of the republic.

3 Problems of consolidation of the Kyrgyz nation

Now the main problem is problem of consolidation of Kyrgyz nation.

The interests of constructing sovereign statehood, of guaranteeing its security and the cultural and moral renaissance of the nation demand an objective and selective relationship

with regard to the historical past of the people. In this regard, an awareness of the essential principles governing the traditional social self-organisation of the Kyrgyz, namely tribalism, occupies a particularly special place. For the concept of tribalism incorporates the idea that the Kyrgyz have retained their integrity and independence during the course of millennia. This in turn can become the pivot around which the modern social structure and the spiritual renaissance of the reborn nation can be built. But it also contains the sources of phenomena which can at times disturb the peace in contemporary society.

A generally accepted reason for the emergence and support of a tribal structure and the principles of tribalism's self regulation, is the common struggle for collective survival in conditions of limited economic resources (gathering, hunting), the absence of settled communities and common statehood.

The central task of tribalism was to preserve the integrity, independence the material welfare of the generation, clan and tribe. This was done in a variety of ways, for example by creating effective defensive methods against outside threats, by preserving the traditions and rules of collective labour, by the collective use of land and livestock and by internal democracy. In addition, the clan or tribe and their various lines were responsible for the actions and fate of kinsmen, and there was duty to bring up able descendants and render mutual help and assistance when much labour and material expenditure was necessary.

Tribalism has retained its place among the Kyrgyz due to the specific nature of nomadic herding which our ancestors continued to practice until the 1930s. Certain elements of the nomadic existence posed obstacles to the development of agriculture and a sedentary life and preserved pre-class forms of social organisation. Furthermore, the absence of statehood meant that over the course of the centuries, defending the independence and cohesion of the tribe was the concern of the tribal associations.

The history of all peoples show that only those nomadic herders who rigorously adhered to the principles of tribalism when they lacked a state were able to preserve their ethnic independence and cohesion. The Kyrgyz thus survived, whereas other groups such as the Huns, the Sakhs, the Usun and the Polovtsy, which formed into tribes at around the same time as the Kyrgyz, merged into other ethnic formations and disappeared. In this sense, past, present, and indeed future, generations of Kyrgyz should be grateful to tribalism for preserving their integrity and cohesion.

History also proves that the main conditions for discarding tribalism as a way of organising society are: a change to more effective economic forms and a sedentary mode of existence; a reduction in the degree of dependence of individual families on the help of the tribe or clan; the creation of a state which assumes the functions of defending the population against external attacks and a legal regulation of internal, economic, political, social, family and other relations.

The first major blow against Kyrgyz tribalism was inflicted by the Russian imperial colonial system, which introduced divisions based on volost or small rural districts, rather than on clan or tribal principles. Furthermore, in order to end the rivalry between the manapstvo or traditional Kyrgyz administration, and the colonial administration, the volosts were formed from mixed clans. When the Kyrgyz became part of Russia the number of barimta or thefts of cattle and livestock from other clans and tribes fell sharply. Other types of theft, as well as blood vendettas, also declined since the case could now be settled in court if satisfaction was not achieved. Attempts to capture foreign land ceased completely, since earlier, the defence of land had to be undertaken by uniting blood relatives, and this basis was now lacking.

If the components of czarist policy outlined above prepared the way for a weakening of tribalism, other factors led to an intensification of the group struggles on a clan or tribal basis. This applies in particular to the regular elections of the volost administrators. Excessive increases in requisitions were imposed to pay for the holding of these elections and the

maintenance of the colonial administration. However, these levies were in the main imposed on the kinsmen of the candidate who had lost the election.

The Soviet regime waged a large-scale battle against tribalism, ranging from the persecution of patriarchies and the physical liquidation of clan leaders by deporting baymanaps (people of supposedly noble origin) and kulaks to the liquidation of economic, political and organisation bases of tribalism by forcing the nomads into a settled way of life. Modern forms of production were introduced and the role of the state in regulating all areas of life was increased. Attempts were also made to strengthen the class-by community of people relations. Due to the indiscriminate negation of virtually everything of tribalism which was characteristic of that period, it was not only the bad aspects of clan relations which were destroyed. Many positive and progressive elements such as morality were also destroyed in the course of the struggle.

At that time, many Soviet procedures such as collective property, the central planning and distribution of material welfare and financial resources, and especially the system of selecting and placing personnel or cadres, allowed traditional elements to survive, with an illegal, but fairly widespread, application of the rules and principles of tribalism continuing in practice.

The current upsurge in tribalism has been provoked not only by the fact that tribalism has retained many of its positive and creative aspects in modern conditions, but also because the struggle for survival has acquired a particular significance for many people. But the most important reason is that tribalism has received the chance to participate openly in the construction of the state.

However, it should be remembered that many principles and rules of tribalism which are justified and necessary when a central state is lacking and production is based on a primitive nomadic lifestyle, are hardly appropriate for a modern society. Even worse, they actually represent a serious danger to social stability and the integrity of the state.

Thus, the centuries-old experience of life under constant threat of foreign attack and worries about the protection of one's nearest and dearest by any means, has led to the people acting in accordance with the principle: "My kinsman is right above others" or "First we defend our own people, then we will sort out who is right" (12).

At first sight, action according to these precepts should have no place in a modern society. However, in the course of the recent presidential elections, members of all political parties from the South of the republic, who apparently had diametrically opposed political platforms, threw to one side all their political differences and voted almost as one for the leader of the communists, just as they did previously. This would suggest that such principles still hold.

The millennium-old tradition of competition between the Kyrgyz clans and tribes for leadership, which was consolidated by the rules for electing the administrators of the volosts in the imperial period and then further strengthened by the selection of cadres in the Soviet period, led to action being governed by the principle that the Leader should be chosen from one's own people.

Examples of this type of behaviour can be readily found today. Most people's deputies at all levels were elected solely due to the support of kinsmen and fellow clan members. They express in the first instance their interests, rather than national or state interests.

The economic basis of Kyrgyz tribalism was, like everywhere else, the joint ownership of pasture land. Livestock was also jointly owned and formed the basis of the economic activity of the nomads, especially when major events occurred: funerals, repasts, payments to relatives when a member of another clan was killed and fines etc. Kolkhoz and collective property, as introduced by the Soviet system, did not lead to cardinal changes in traditional property relations because the kolkhozy and sovkhkozy were in essence clan-based. In other words, until the recent past, private property in Kyrgyz society was to a large extent a formal institution. As a result, the sudden upsurge of tribalism, without due regard of the goals, tasks and thrust

of modern economic reforms, can create a situation which stands in contrast to the current course of economic changes, including privatisation, the development of farms and the supremacy of private property. Tribalism may also express itself in the dissatisfaction and resistance of those groups of people who have come together according to clan principles because of convenience and fertile land and pasture, to make hay, to use water for irrigation, to engage in the group theft of cattle and to form territorially a family-based clans.

This could culminate in an upsurge of regionalism and, as a result, of separatism, which is one of the main dangers to the integrity of the state. Indeed, symptoms have already appeared. There have been suggestions in the mass media that the people in the southern city of Osh could live from the cotton, non-ferrous metals and other minerals produced locally, the people around Issyk-Kul from the gold at Kumtor and sanatoria in the region and the inhabitants of Chu oblast from the relatively high level of economic development and potential of the oblast.

According to the principles of tribalism, the individual could only find protection within his own clan. These principles not only allowed, but demanded that all members took revenge for any crime committed against a member of the clan. On the other hand, the clan in the first instance was held accountable for the actions of the individual.

In the past, the authority, political weight and influence of the head of the clan in inter-clan relations depended to a certain extent on the size, cohesiveness and economic state of the clan. In its turn, the protection of the clan and all its members depended to a large extent on the authority of its leader. Therefore, all members of the clan were interested in strengthening its power and increasing its authority by all the means available, from winning over disaffected people from other clans, defending its own members, stealing cattle, to a broad, even rash display of the wealth of the clan and emphasising the rank and dignity of the leader in celebrations, funerals and repasts (13).

The tribal tradition of today has thus experienced a renaissance after 70 years of suppression. All the Kyrgyz now compete to hold, anniversaries of the dead, of the living, of deserving people and of just plain ordinary people, but who have aggressive, pushy or influential kinsmen.

Such are the consequences today, and probably in the future as well, which stem from the rapid revival of some of the traditions of tribalism. With time, it will be possible to support the positive and useful aspects of tribalism in a modern society and prevent its more harmful manifestations through a balanced approach to the renaissance of national traditions and customs. Certain corrections in the economy and social policy must be effected at the political level. These should take into account the historical traditions of the people and the interests and needs of modern society. In the first instance, this entails the preservation of stability and security in the state.

Problems of managing ethnic relations in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Kyrgyzstan National Assembly has become a representative agency expressing the interests and hopes and protecting the rights of the multitude of ethnic groups residing in the republic.

At present, 28 ethnic cultural centers and public associations belong to the Assembly, which represent all the nationalities living in the republic.

It also has two regional branches—the Osh and the Dzhahalal-Abad. Each of these regions has 10-15 ethnic cultural centers. The regional branches function on the basis of the Assembly's prospective plans, taking into account regional characteristics. For example, a Palace of Friendship in which all the region's ethnic cultural centers are located was opened in the Osh Region for developing and coordinating the activity of ethnic cultural centers and resolving ethnic problems. This greatly raised the prestige of the Assembly's regional branch

and cultural centers, since they all function under one roof, which allows them to be in constant communication with each other, and promotes mutual understanding and rapid resolution of any problems that arise in their activity. The regional branch and ethnic cultural centers conduct joint inter-national undertakings, thus strengthening ethnic relations in the south of the republic.

It can be claimed that the Kyrgyzstan National Assembly is still the only significant lever for managing ethnic relations in the country, since the republic has only just set about creating a legal basis for their development. That is, the state does not have any special government agencies, such as a state committee or ministry, for solving problems in ethnic interrelations. The president's personal participation in their regulation is of course a rather progressive fact. But the efforts of one person, even if he is the head of state, are clearly insufficient to successfully resolve all the questions that arise. The author of this article are in favor of creating legislative foundations of interaction in ethnic relations and developing specific legal, social, and other mechanisms for protecting the rights of ethnic minorities, which should be mandatory for all government agencies and at all levels.

The National Academy of Sciences Social Research Center continuously conducts sociological studies on the problems of ethnic interaction in the republic. For example, it participated in a project organized by the Management Academy under the country's president and supported by the OSCE Supreme Commissar Office on National Minorities' Affairs. In the summer of 2000, the first stage of this work was conducted—studies on "The Management of Ethnic Relations in the Kyrgyz Republic." Their main goal was to reveal the main problems in ethnic relations and create corresponding management methods and mechanisms (primarily for resolving conflict situations).

The sociological study was conducted using two different methods: first by interviewing experts, that is, state officials of various power structures, mainly in the regions, in other words, carrying out a survey of the employees of local government agencies; and second by asking the representatives of ethnic minorities, including activists in the nongovernmental sector who live in the Batken, Osh, Dzhahalal-Abad, and Chu regions, and in Bishkek to fill out questionnaires.

Based on the principle of representative territorial selection, no fewer than 30 (a total of 150) interviews with state officials and no fewer than 70 (a total of 350) questionnaires among the population, representatives of ethnic minorities, had to be conducted in each region. A total of 173 experts, that is, state officials of various ranks and various fields of management in the Batken, Osh, Dzhahalal-Abad, and Chu regions and Bishkek participated in the interviews. Among them were 41% Kyrgyz, 23.7% Russians, 14.5% Uzbeks, 5.8% Ukrainians, 2.3% Tapks, 23% Tatars, 1.2% Kazakhs, 0.6% Koreans, 0.6% Turks, and 2.9% representatives of other nationalities.

A total of 361 residents of the Batken, Osh, Dzhahalal Abad, and Chu regions and Bishkek participated in the questionnaires. Among them were 29.1% Uzbeks, 22.4% Russians, 13.3% Kyrgyz, 4.7% Tatars, 4.7% Uighurs, 3.6% Kazakhs, 3.0%, Tajiks, 2.8% Dungans, 1.9% Ukrainians, 1.7% Germans, 1.7% Koreans, and 9.7% representatives of other nationalities. On the whole, the overall selection was extremely representative, reflected the opinion of the multinational population, and presented two viewpoints on the development of ethnic relations in the republic, that of the government agencies and that of the ordinary people (14).

Almost every third employee of the state apparatus, that is, representatives of the expert group (34.7%), denied any discrimination according to nationality. All the same, this group of respondents singled out three main problems: 22.5%—personnel, 13.3%—linguistic, and 8.1%—border.

An analysis of the opinion of the experts, if based on their national affiliation, shows certain differences in priorities with respect to territorial residence. For Kyrgyz, the most

important are, 16.9%—personnel and 11.3%—border problems, for Russians 34.1%—personnel, 22%—linguistic, and 12.2%— problems arising in religious life, for Uzbeks 24%—personnel, 16%—border, and 16%—political, relating to the past election campaign, for Tajiks 25%—border and the same amount—linguistic problems. In the group of representatives of other nationalities, the range of problems was approximately the same: personnel, linguistic, sociopsychological, and everyday difficulties.

The opinion of state officials coincides to a certain extent with the results of the survey of the ordinary people—the representatives of ethnic minorities. Among them, 63.7% believe that there is no official discrimination of the representatives of other nationalities in the political sphere, whereas 33.8% indicated that it exists, 0.8% noted discrimination in the unofficial sphere, at an everyday level, another 0.8% in linguistics, and 0.3% noted personnel problems and claimed that it is impossible for Russians to find a job.

In so doing, the absolute majority (73.4%) were unable to give specific cases of discrimination at the legislative level. Although representatives of this group of respondents noted that in the personnel (8.7%) and linguistic spheres (3.5%), certain problems have still not been resolved. For example, an analysis of the national aspect revealed complaints by Russians relating to linguistic—9.8% and personnel—4.9% questions, and Uzbeks expressed their dissatisfaction with the unequal representation in the government agencies—24%.

To the question "In which structures of state power is the representation of different nationalities violated (people are not employed because of their nationality)"⁹—representatives of ethnic minorities replied as follows: 19.7%—police structures, 19.1%—akimiat structures, 18%—tax services, 16.1%—judicial sphere, 15.8%—customs. An analysis of the respondents' answers with respect to nationality showed that Russians are dissatisfied with their representation in the police force—54.3%, in tax services—42%, in customs—40.7%, in the akimiats—37%, in the judicial structures—32.1%, and in parliament—30.9%. Uzbeks expressed their desire to have greater representation in the akimiats—16.2%, in the judicial structures—13.3%, and in the tax services—9.5%.

Complaints from respondents in the second group (the ordinary people) about the insufficient representation of ethnic minorities in the government agencies, particularly in the local structures, are entirely justified. For example, during the study, employees of the Social Research Center were unable to obtain any official data in the state structures about the representation of ethnic minorities in the government agencies. By observing and interviewing the experts, it was established that there is a clear majority of citizens of the titular nationality in the regional administration structures: there was not one representative of an ethnic minority in the leadership of the Batken Region, there were 3-4 such representatives in the leadership of the Osh Region, and 3-4 in the leadership of the Dzhahal-Abad Region.

The absolute majority of respondents from among the state officials (69.4%) is convinced that these questions should be resolved by the state. At the same time, 12.1% believe that the state needs society's help, as well as international financing of special programs aimed at the timely resolution of ethnic problems. Approximately the same amount (11.6%) believe that this problem is entirely resolvable, all it needs is willingness on the part of the authorities.

An important aspect of the study was revealing the government agencies to which representatives of ethnic minorities turn with complaints about national discrimination: 28.3% of those discriminated against did not turn anywhere, and 2.5% responded that there was no point in making a complaint, and it could even make matters worse. Almost 30% do not believe that their honor and dignity will be protected. Only 5.3% turned to the police, and 1.7% to the judicial structures. Among them were Russians (4.9% and 3.7%), Uzbeks (6.7% and 1%), Uighurs (11.8% and 5.9%), Kyrgyz (2.1% and 2.1%), Ukrainians (14% and 0%), Kazakhs (7.7% and 0%), and representatives of other nationalities (5.7% and 0%), respectively. But judicial statistics show that during the first half of 2000, only two legal

proceedings were instigated in connection with a breach of Art 299 of the Kyrgyzstan Criminal Code ("Arousing Religious, Racial, and National Hostility..."), both in the Osh Region. But they reviewed cases against the activists of the illegal religious party Hizb ut-Tahrir, and did not have anything to do with ethnic problems.

Some respondents also turned to other agencies: 1.1% each to the government, local akimiat, and Council of Aksakals; 0.8% to the regional administration structures; and 0.3% each to the presidential administration and the Kyrgyzstan National Assembly (association of fellow-countrymen, ethnic cultural center).

Such a small number of those appealing for help shows that the ordinary people have either lost faith in the protection of their national dignity, or do not know how to go about submitting a complaint.

Nevertheless, from the viewpoint of the respondents in the first group, the following structures function most efficiently in ethnic relations: 28.3%—the local state administrations, representatives of the executive power; 19.1%—the "power" departments (National Security Ministry, Interior Ministry, Public Prosecutor's Office); 16.2%—the Jogorku Kenesh, deputies; 10.4%—the government; 9.8%—presidential power.

The hierarchy of priorities shows that the closer the government agencies come to resolving ordinary everyday questions, the greater their possibilities for successfully resolving the problems of discrimination of the ethnic minorities. Indeed, from the heights of presidential power or the government, it is difficult to follow individual violations of the rights of ethnic minorities in specific regions.

From the point of view of the ordinary people (the representatives of ethnic minorities), the following structures enjoy the greatest authority with respect to improving ethnic relations: 53.2%—republic-level state administration structures, 31.6%—authoritative people, including the aksakals, 20.8%—district administration structures, 18.8%—nongovernmental organizations, parties, movements, 18.6%—regional administration structures, etc.

An analysis of the responses shows that in the southern regions, the authority of the republic-level state power and aksakals is traditionally strong, and the regional and district administrative structures also carry a lot of clout. In the Chu Region and in Bishkek, along with the republic-level authorities and aksakals, the activity of nongovernmental organizations and movements is highly evaluated. Their authority in this field is higher than that of the local government agencies. Similar responses were also given by Russians and Uzbeks. Kyrgyz and the representatives of other nationalities traditionally prefer the local government agencies and put the nongovernmental sector in second place.

The respondents of the first group believe that local government agencies and law enforcement agencies are the most effective, and the second group mostly trusts the supreme republic-level state agencies, authoritative people, nongovernmental organizations, and only then the local administrations. Apparently, the ordinary people do not feel that the local government agencies are ready to "steer" their problems, but perhaps the employees of these structures are not yet able to smoothly resolve ethnic conflicts, or do not have the opportunity.

Recently, in the south of the country, particularly in the Batken Region, the activity of the public foundation "For International Tolerance has been acquiring increasing popularity. Its mission is to prevent and resolve ethnic conflicts, and in this sphere, the foundation has successfully implemented several projects. Among them are "Teaching Tolerance and Conflict Transformation" among school children, "A Network of Goodwill Messengers" as representatives of national diplomacy, and so on. This organization has attracted grants totaling more than \$1.5 million to the southern region, which have been allotted by many international organizations (15). Such activity in the nongovernmental sector is worthy of every means of support.

A significant number of the experts (20.8%) believe that the legislative base should be

strengthened in order to achieve the more successful resolution of ethnic problems: punishment measures for manifestations of nationalism should be toughened up; the incorporation of representatives of ethnic minorities into all state power structures, including their supreme echelon, should be reviewed legislatively; and laws should be adopted on personnel policy. In addition, 13.3% of those surveyed from this group propose expanding the powers of the local administration and self-government structures; 9.8% suggest resolving economic problems, giving special attention to land issues and privatization, as well as rendering the necessary financial help, including crediting; 8.7% emphasize promulgating the ideology of internationalism and explaining the importance of having a tolerant attitude toward the representatives of other nationalities; 6.4% are in favor of creating special state agencies, for example, a National Affairs Committee, which would have the power to resolve problems in ethnic relations not only at the republican, but also at the international level.

Representatives of the Kyrgyz nationality believe the main problems to be: amending the legislation—23.9% and expanding the powers of local government agencies—14.1%; Russians: legislation—17.1%, financial support—12.2%; whereas Uzbeks put the emphasis on expanding the powers of the local administration structures—44% and amending the legislation—20%.

In order to reduce conflicts in the regions, 30.1 % of the respondents propose the following economic measures: raising the prosperity of the people, organizing additional jobs, creating equal working conditions for the representatives of all nationalities, including equal access to material resources (land, credits), and reducing rural migration. Among the other proposals were promulgation and prevention (conducting continuous work with the population, conducting more joint measures aimed at mutual understanding and cooperation in the field of culture, everyday life, and so on)—24.9%; legislative changes (envisaging the equal development of all nationalities, developing laws on the rights of ethnic minorities)—12.7%; improving personnel policy (taking into account the specifics of multinational staff in work collectives, creating corresponding conditions for developing ethnic minorities and ensuring their broad access to state service, abolishing the principle of employment based on nationality and place of birth)—11%; comprehensive resolution of social problems—10.4%.

Kyrgyz are more confident in the effectiveness of economic (33.8%), propagandistic (26.8%), and social (12.2%) measures. Russians support changes in the economy (34.1%), legislation (12.2%), and linguistic practice (12.2%). Uzbeks hope to activate promulgation of internationalism—40%, changes in the economy—20%, legislative initiative—16%, personnel progress—12%, and stepping up of the work of local administration structures—12%.(16)

IDENTITIES IN KYRGYZSTAN

The main objective of the ethnic policy of the government of Kyrgyzstan in the post-Soviet era was a consolidation of all people and ethnic groups on the territory of the Republic into the Kyrgyzstani nation. Such a goal is important for any nation that has just gained independence, but for the Kyrgyz Republic it was an especially important task for several reasons. First, the multiethnic composition of the country. Second, inter-ethnic relations in the Republic were especially tense at the beginning of the 1990s because of the inter-ethnic conflict in the Osh region of the Republic in 1990. Third, the Kyrgyzs themselves lacked (national cohesiveness and they often defined themselves as members of different tribes or tribal groups with distinct dialects, dress, and political affiliations.

The official ethnic policy was based on the development of a Kyrgyzstani identity and loyalties of all citizens to the newly independent state; unification of all people within the

territory of the nation state in the one Kyrgyzstani nation, and maintenance of the multicultural nature of the society (17). The civic loyalty of all citizens to the state was an important part of this concept. Unlike the Baltic Republics of the former Soviet Union, the Kyrgyzstani government granted citizenship to all residents, irrespective of their ethnic origin, but it strongly objected to an idea of dual citizenship. The liberal government of President Askar Akayev has stated that the official course was not towards an ethnocratic state, but rather towards a civil state that guarantees equal opportunities to all citizens of the Republic without discrimination based on the ethnic background of the people (18).

The realities of the post-Soviet development were different from the official declarations of the Kyrgyzstani government and all predictions by local and foreign experts. The stagnating economy, some political, social and cultural reasons, and a very tense inter-ethnic situation (or one perceived to be tense) in the Republic influenced the decision of people to emigrate. In addition, the 1989 Language contributed further to feelings of insecurity among the Russian-speaking population about their future, as it stated that the Kyrgyz language was to replace the Russian language by 1999 in the entire country as the state language and it made knowledge of the language compulsory.

The people of Kyrgyzstan responded differently to the social, economic and political changes in the Republic. One of the phenomena of the post-Soviet development was the mass exodus of people from the Republic. According to official statistics, more than 590,000 people (or almost 15% of the Republic's population) left Kyrgyzstan between 1989 and 1995. In response to the large-scale emigration and brain drain, the government introduced several measures, including the liberalisation of its Law on Language. The government furthermore postponed compulsory learning of the Kyrgyz language (19). It also established the Slavic University and allowed secondary education not only in Kyrgyz but also in Russian, Uzbek, and other languages. Additionally, President Akayev set up a kind of an extra-parliamentary body, the Assembly of the People of Kyrgyzstan, which was intended to represent the interests of all ethnic groups of the country.

Almost ten years have passed since Kyrgyzstan achieved independence and the government introduced its ethnic policy. Kyrgyz national symbols have largely replaced supranational Soviet symbols and myths. Thus, reference to the epic Kyrgyz hero Manas and to the concept of Kyrgyz national values, *Kyrgyzchilik*, has replaced the Soviet heroes of the Revolution and the Soviet concept of internationalism and *bratstvo narodov* (people's brotherhood). There were a number of expected and unforeseen changes in the social and political development of the country. It is appropriate at this point in time to summarise some results of this ethnic policy, including the changes in the ethnic composition of the Republic, changing national and state symbols, *etc.* In particular, how did the people of the Republic perceive the ongoing changes? What has changed in the people's perception of their identity, ethnicity, and loyalties?

In 1997 the Centre for Social Research of the Kyrgyz Academy of Science conducted a study that targeted several issues: (1) inter-ethnic relations in Kyrgyzstan; (2) perceptions of inter-ethnic conflicts; and (3) the formation of national identities in the Republic in the post-Soviet era (20). A questionnaire-based survey was used for data collection. This study was conducted among citizens of Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan. A random sample of 1,200 individuals was developed with the help of a computer program. Stratified-random proportional sampling was used to generate random samples. In this article, the authors decided to present some findings of the survey study, concerned mainly with the perception of identities and inter-ethnic relations.

The Soviet government emphasised Soviet identities, which stressed identification as a Soviet citizen and loyalties to the USSR, although this policy was inconsistent over time. By and large, behind the officially endorsed Soviet (all-union) identity, there always was

identification with of each particular Republic. However, the person who, for example, migrated to Kyrgyzstan often did not feel a necessity to integrate himself or herself into the local society, study the local language, or identify himself or herself with the Republic if he or she were comfortable with the Soviet identity.

The disintegration of the USSR brought considerable changes: people were forced to identify themselves clearly with the one or other Republic and to choose their citizenship. There was no social space for any other supranational identities, especially for the Soviet identity.

Several questions in the survey focused on the perception of identities. One of the questions was "How do you identify yourself at present?" It is interesting to note that an absolute majority of respondents clearly identified themselves with the Kyrgyz state, including those of non-Kyrgyz origin: 64.8% of the respondents considered themselves "citizens of Kyrgyzstan." It is noteworthy that 29.9% of Russian respondents considered themselves "citizens of Kyrgyzstan," although they were born in places other than Kyrgyzstan. 8.2% of the respondents considered themselves "citizens of the world." Only 12.8% of the respondents considered themselves "citizens of the Soviet Union."

Another question dealt with the issue of migration: "If you would have an opportunity to leave for overseas, what would be your preference?" 35.1% of the respondents replied that they would go overseas temporarily for "seasonal work." 26.1 % replied that they would like to go overseas for "study or training." However, almost 20.4% of the respondents expressed their desire to leave the Republic "forever." This is quite a considerable figure and includes not only Russians and other nationalities, but also the Kyrgyz themselves. Around 10.1% of respondents of Kyrgyz nationality expressed such a desire.

There was a question that dealt with the political aspect of post-Soviet development. The study asked, "May a non-Kyrgyz be the president of Kyrgyzstan?" The opinions of the respondents split on this issue. 39.1% of the respondents replied "Yes," including 20% of respondents of Kyrgyz origin and 51.4% of those of Slavonic origin. 36.1% of the respondents replied "No" (among them 62.9% of the people of Kyrgyz origin). 15.6% of the respondents replied that "It does not matter."

So from a historical perspective, ten years is a very short period and it is still too early to arrive at any firm conclusions. Social, demographic and migration indicators are constantly changing and they reveal that the process of forming the "Kyrgyzstani nation" is far from being complete. For example, the preliminary results of the 1999 census in Kyrgyzstan indicated that the ethnic composition of the Republic is still changing. Kyrgyzstan is slowly becoming ethnically more monolithic with the proportion of Kyrgyz approaching 65% in 1999 (52% in 1989). This trend is becoming increasingly visible not only in the rural areas but also in major cities, although, unlike in some other transitional and developing countries (Thailand, Vietnam, China), Kyrgyzstan has experienced slower migration of the rural population to the urban areas. However, the reality is that the country will maintain its multiethnic composition for decades to come, especially with the growing proportion of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan.

Nevertheless, the results of the survey study allow for some preliminary conclusions. First, nostalgia over the Soviet past has gone almost entirely and the people accept the post-Soviet realities, acknowledging that the disintegration of the Soviet Union is an irreversible fact. Nevertheless, people, especially of non-Kyrgyz origin, do not accept the ethnocentric concept of the nation and would like to have equality in all areas, including politics, for all ethnic groups in the Republic. Second, the majority of the population understand that Kyrgyzstan is their only home country, regardless of their ethnic background, and the people perceive themselves as citizens of this state. However, a considerable number of people in the Republic are still uncertain about their future, indicating their desire to migrate. Third, post-Soviet

development has revealed that the legacy of the Soviet past still strongly affects people's perception of the ethnic policy and the nation state, but everyone has his or her own interpretation of the past. The people still strongly believe that the state must guarantee their rights, but for some people these rights mean total equality. For others they mean control over all aspects of life, including politics, language policy, education, *etc.* For a third group of the people, they mean indirect protection of their special rights and positions in society. However, it is important that there is a strong shift in people's identities and loyalties towards the Republic and a growing acceptance that they are citizens of Kyrgyzstan.

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17. The speech by President Akaev A. Delovoi Mir, 21 December 1993.
18. The speeches by President Akaev. Slovo Kyrgyzstana, 4 December 1992 and 30 March 1999.
19. Article 5 of the first Kyrgyz Constitution, adopted in May 1993 and later amended in 1996, provides the Russian language the status of the “Language of interethnic communication” and the Constitution guarantees that there should be no discrimination of the rights of citizens on language bases. See Article 5, in Konstitutsia Kyrgyzskoi Respubliki (Bishkek: Uchkun 1996), pp.57-58.
20. A. Elebaeva, N. Omuraliev, R. Abazov, The shifting identities and loyalties in Kyrgyzstan: the evidence from the Field, Nationalities Papers, Vol. 28, No. 2, 2000, pp. 343-348