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FROM “BULGHARISM” THROUGH “MARRISM” TO NATIONALIST MYTHS: DISCOURSES ON THE TATAR, THE CHUVASH AND THE BASHKIR ETHNOGENESIS

UYAMA TOMOHIKO

Nations are imagined communities.¹ They consist of members who do not know most of their co-members, but imagine – simultaneously – that they all belong to the same community, possessing a common culture and fate. By their nature, nations exist in a synchronic space, not a diachronic one. Ancestors cannot determine how their distant descendants will imagine their community, and boundaries and characteristics of a nation can always change.

In most cases, however, nations are imagined as extremely large families, connected by “fraternity,” living in “motherlands” (or “fatherlands”), and having common “ancestors.” People often take pride in their national history, contending that some ancient people are “their” ancestors and some elements of ancient culture are “their” cultural “heritage.” Competitions for ancestors and heritages are often connected with political disputes between neighboring nations. Because nations and ethnic groups can be solid communities only synchronically and are diachronically changeable, it is scientifically not very meaningful to determine which ancient or medieval communities are their ancestors. This should better be understood as the creation of myths than academic research. But the very fact that such futile attempts have attracted much attention and the ways in which ethnic history and ethnic origins (ethnogenesis) have been studied are interesting objects of research for both intellectual history and politics.

Pointing out the mythical character of ethnic history, I do not intend to say that such a character is peculiar to modern nations. As Benedict Anderson notes, all sizable communities, including pre-modern ones, are imagined.² Many religious and regional communities, schools and companies produce legends about their “tradition,” which support their unity. Therefore, we will start with

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1 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso, 1991).

2 Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, p. 6.

analyzing pre-modern discourses – in this case, those connected with so-called “Bulgharism” – on history and examining whether they were connected with religious, regional or ethnic communities, and later compare them with modern discourses on ethnic history.

In discourses on history, scientific researches are often intertwined with state ideology. In this respect, the ethnic history of peoples of the former Soviet Union present a vivid example. The Soviet state, with the help of scholars, systematized and controlled the writing of ethnic history, not only of the dominant Russians, but also of other nationalities. Soviet-style ethnic history and, above all, Soviet ethnogenetics were formulated under Stalin’s rule, borrowing from the work of the linguist, Nikolai Marr. Despite the strict state control, problems of ethnic history became contentious issues between peoples of the Soviet Union, and today they remain so among newly independent states and republics within the Russian Federation.

I have previously examined discourses on Kazakh ethnic history.³ In this article I will analyze discourses on the ethnic history of three other Turkic-speaking peoples of the former Soviet Union: the Volga Tatars, the Chuvash and the Bashkirs, and, when necessary, compare them with those in Central Asia. I will also discuss the formation of Soviet ethnogenetics as a whole. As we will see later, there are quite a few useful scholarly works related to the individual topics that concern us here. Our task is in part to correct these works’ interpretations, as well as to analyze discourses on ethnogenesis over the long period from the early nineteenth century to the present day.

1. DISCOURSES ON HISTORY OF THE VOLGA-URAL TURKS BEFORE THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

It is extremely difficult to know how people in the Volga-Ural region identified themselves before the eighteenth century, because very few sources written in their own languages have survived to the present day. But at least in the case of the Muslims, one can roughly discern several identities and historical perceptions, which sometimes overlap each other. They are: 1) an Islamic identity; 2) “Chingizism,” or reverence for Chingiz Khan and his offsprings, common to many Central Eurasian peoples⁴; 3) a historical perception that emphasizes the importance of Jochi Ulus, or the Golden Horde (this is basically in line with Chingizism, but can be connected with non-Chingizid heroes, such as Idegei); 4) a historical perception that emphasizes the importance of the pre-Mongolian Volga Bulghars (from around the tenth to the thirteenth centuries); 5)

3 UYAMA Tomohiko, “Kazafu Minzokushi Saiko: Rekishi Kijutsu-no Mondai-ni Yosete [Rethinking the Ethnic History of the Kazakhs: Some Reflections on Historical Writing],” *Chiki Kenkyu Ronshu [JCAS Review]* 2:1 (1999), pp. 85-116.

4 About Chingizism see: Veniamin P. Iudin, “Ordy: Belaia, Siniaia, Seraia, Zolotaia...,” in Utemish-khadzhi, *Chingiz-name* (Alma-Ata: Gylym, 1992), pp. 14-21.

identities in line with the ethnic names used by Russians (Tatars, Bashkirs, Mishars, etc.⁵); 6) identities of local communities or tribes, reflected in village histories and genealogies.

A conspicuous phenomenon was the growth of "Bulgharism," which Allen Frank has recently investigated.⁶ A history compiled between 1682 and 1700, *Daftar-i Chingîz Nâma* [Notebook of a Book about Chingiz] (the title is oddly tautological), described the Kazan khans as descendants not of Chingiz Khan (although Chingiz Khan himself was regarded as a Muslim), but of the last khan of Bulghar. The leader of a rebellion in 1755, Batyrsha (Abdulla Aleev), referred on numerous occasions to the Bulghars as the ancestors of Volga-Ural Muslims. In 1760's, Mulla Murad led a movement that called for the re-establishment of Bulghar.⁷

In the nineteenth century, important "Bulgharist" historical works appeared. The most popular one was the *Tawârîkh-i Bulghâriyya* [History of Bulgharia] of Hisamutdin al-Bulghari (Muslimi).⁸ According to it, the Prophet Muhammad sent his Companions (*sahabas*) to the city of Bulghar (which was allegedly founded by Alexander the Great!), and the Bulghars, having seen how the Companions cured the Khan's daughter, became Muslims.⁹ The names of

5 While "Tatar" was a name used by Russians and rarely used by "Tatars" themselves, the name "Bashkir (Bashqort)" was used by both Russians and Bashkirs, although it is yet to be examined how strong (or weak) "Bashkir" identity was. The Mishars, a Turkic-speaking people of probably Ugric origin, participated in a Tsarist irregular army called *Bashkiromeshcheriaskoe voisko* (1798–1865), and were assimilated by the Tatars (partly by the Bashkirs and the Russians) by the 20th century.

6 Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and "Bulghar" Identity among the Tatars and Bashkirs of Russia* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

7 Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 15-17, 44-46. Damir Iskhakov argues that the historical consciousness of *sluzhilye* Tatars (aristocrats who served the Tsar) was concentrated not on Bulghar but on the Golden Horde, and Batyrsha probably meant the Kazan khanate by the word "Bulghar" (Damir Iskhakov, "Ob identichnosti volgo-ural'skikh tatar v XVIII v.," in *Islam v tatarskom mire: istoriia i sovremennost'* (Kazan': Panorama-Forum, 1997), pp. 30-31.). Contrary to Iskhakov's intention, his argument does not deny but complements the significance of "Bulgharism." Exactly because there was strong historical consciousness connected with the Golden Horde, Bulgharism tried to surmount it. And it is not important what in "real" history Batyrsha meant, because people's perception of time until the mid-nineteenth century was different from the modern perception of time. Such anachronisms as making Chingiz Khan and Timur contemporaries was quite common. What is more important is that so many things were labelled with the name of "Bulghar."

8 The author claims that he wrote the book in the sixteenth century, but actually it was most likely written in the 1810s or the 1820s. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 56-58; Mirkasym A. Usmanov, *Tatarskie istoricheskie istochniki XVII-XVIII vv.* (Kazan': Izd-vo Kazanskogo un-ta, 1972), pp. 150-151. A Cyrillic transcription and a modern Tatar translation are available in: Möslimi, *Tävarikhy Bolgariya (Bolgar Tarikhy)* (Kazan: Iman, 1999), but they somewhat differ from the summaries by Frank and Usmanov.

9 This would mean that the Bulghars became Muslims in the seventh century. In reality, the Bulghars are supposed to have converted in the tenth century.

many followers of the Companions correspond to the names of local saints, ancestral figures and villages of the Volga-Ural region. Thus, the author promoted the sacredness of the Bulgars, who had been converted on the initiative of the Prophet himself, and the close connection between them and the Volga-Ural Muslims of the nineteenth century. It is also noteworthy that he depicted Chingiz Khan as an unrepentant infidel, whom Timur righteously killed (!).¹⁰

Not only the Tatars but also the Bashkirs fostered the Bulgharist idea. In 1805, that is, probably before the *Tawârîkh-i Bulghâriyya* was compiled, Tajetdin Yalchîghul oghlî wrote the *Târîkh Nâma-yi Bulghâr* [History Book about Bulghar],¹¹ in the form of the author's genealogy, beginning with Adam. According to it, one of the grandsons of Äflakh (the ancestors of the Kazakhs) was Törkmän (Turkmen), and his grandsons were Tatar, Mishar, Ishtäk¹² and Nughay (Nogay). Ishtäk's grandson was Äyle (the name of the author's tribe), whose grandson was Qasur (Caesar). Qasur's son was Soqrat (Socrates), who, together with Alexander the Great, founded the Bulghar city. Soqrat's eighth-generation descendant was Mäskaw (Moscow), and Mäskaw's eleventh-generation descendant came from China and conquered Bulghar. During his son's reign the Bulgars converted to Islam. The author names himself "a Bulghar Ishtäk." Thus, he combined Bulghar history with the genealogy of his own tribe, the Bashkirs, various Turkic peoples, and even the Greeks, Romans and Russians.

Frank defines "Bulghar identity" as a regional identity of Volga-Ural Muslims, and explains its emergence by the growing influence of the *'ulama*, who sought to reinforce the idea that the Volga-Ural Muslims under the jurisdiction of the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly (founded in 1788) were a unified Islamic entity.¹³ There is no evidence, however, that the geographical scope of the "Bulghar" identity exactly coincided with the "Volga-Ural" region. The *Tawârîkh-i Bulghâriyya* often referred to Timur and Sufis of Central Asia.¹⁴ The *Târîkh Nâma-yi Bulghâr* showed that ancestors of the author had lived in a number of regions of India, the Middle and Near East, Central Asia, Greece and Russia (this applied not only to the most ancient ancestors, since some descendants of the Bulghar khans lived in Khorezm). Bulgharists' historical perception was not confined to the Volga-Ural region, but was open to broad areas of Eurasia, especially Central Asia.

10 Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 62-72; Möslimi, *Tävarikhy Bolgariya*, pp. 25-27, 29.

11 We can read its facsimile, a printed Arabic-script text, Cyrillic-script translation and Russian translation in: Ishmukhamet G. Galiautdinov, "*Tarikh nama-i bulgar*" *Tadzhettina Ial-sygulova*, 2nd revised & enlarged edition (Ufa: Kitap, 1998).

12 Ishtäk is a name of tribes and legendary figures among Bashkirs, Kyrgyz, Karakalpaks and Khanty (Ostyaks), but in this case it is apparently used as another name for the Bashkirs and their ancestors. Cf.: Rail' G. Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda: etnicheskii sostav, istoriia rasseleniia* (Moscow: Nauka, 1974), pp. 204-205, 443-444.

13 Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 21-39, 197-199.

14 Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 79-84; Möslimi, *Tävarikhy Bolgariya*, pp. 32-47.

Bulgharists made "Bulghar" a sacred symbol, and linked it to various historical figures, places and, above all, themselves. They thereby attempted to outshine (although not necessarily deny and sometimes incorporate) identities related to Chingizism and Jochi Ulus, as well as divisions of quasi-ethnic groups, granted different privileges and obligations by the Russian authorities. To be sure, "Bulghar identity" was not an ethnic or national identity in the modern sense. Religious, tribal, ethnic, national and regional identities were not clearly differentiated. Various people claimed their ties to Bulghar, but they did not form a clearly defined "community." Bulgharist histories were not written in strict chronological order and were not histories of "communities" in the proper sense. Rather, they were genealogies of individuals that ultimately led back to Adam and narratives of prominent (both real and imaginary) figures. The histories of tribes and villages were often written as histories or genealogies of their founders and notables. In this sense, Bulgharist historiography was a part of the pre-modern tribal and local historiography of Central Eurasia,¹⁵ and was still far from ethnic history in the modern sense.

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a major upsurge of Islamic reformism, later named Jadidism. One of its most prominent theoretician, Shihabuddin Marjani, denounced Bulgharists' ideas in his *Mustafâd al-akhbâr fî ahwâl Qazân wa Bulghâr* [Select Information on the Situation of Kazan and Bulghar] (1885). According to him, they (among others, Hisamutdin al-Bulghari) were writing false history, idealizing the Volga-Ural Muslim community of the Bulghar period (for him, the ideal was the community of the Prophet Muhammad). He also criticized those people who thought that "a name other than 'Muslim' is an enemy of the religion, and if you do not know his nationality (*millät*), it is, of course, 'Muslim'." In order to clearly distinguish the ethnonational name from the confessional one, he dared to use the hitherto-unpopular name "Tatar," which belonged to the same category as "Arab," "Tajik," "Chinese" and "Russian." At the same time, he did not deny continuity between the Bulghars and the Tatars.¹⁶

Despite Marjani's criticism, Bulgharist historical works continued to appear, and in the early twentieth century, a political Bulgharist movement emerged: the Vaisi movement of Ginan Vaisov.¹⁷ Unlike most of the earlier

15 The most famous history of Central Eurasian tribes, *Shajara-yi Tûrk* [Genealogy of the Turks] of Abû'l-Ghâzî Bahâdûr Khân (a Khiva khan of the 17th century), combined genealogy with the history of dynastic rulers. Aboul-Ghâzi Béhâdour Khan, *Histoire des Mogols et des Tatares*, publié, traduite et annotée par le Baron Desmaisons (St. Petersburg: Imprimerie de l'Académie Impériale des sciences, 1871-1874).

16 Şehabeddin Mercani, *Müstefad'ül-ahbar fî ahval-i Kazan ve Bulgar*, I (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Basimevi, 1997) /facsimile reprint of the second edition in Kazan, 1897/, pp. 4, 206-224; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 149-150; Uli Schamiloglu, "The Formation of a Tatar Historical consciousness: Şihabâddin Mârcani and the Image of the Golden Horde," *Central Asian Survey* 9:2 (1990), pp. 44-45.

17 His father, Bahautdin Vaisov, is often regarded as a Bulgharist, too, but recently research-

Bulgharist historians who were close or compliant to the Orenburg Spiritual Assembly, Vaisov fiercely opposed to it. He asserted that official Islamic leaders were “Tatars” and not real Muslims, while real Muslims, including himself and his followers, were “Bulghars.” He and his followers viewed Volga Bulgharia as the place and time when Islam in its pure form had been practiced, and they sought to resurrect the Bulghar state.¹⁸

Mainstream modernist intellectuals of the early twentieth century, however, were not so interested in “Bulghar” topics. A theme of more heated discussion was whether they were “Tatars” or “Turks,” or, in other words, whether the “Tatars” were a nation (*millät*) and the “Turks” were a superethnos, or the “Turks” were a nation and the Volga Turks were its subgroup. The discussion culminated in 1910–1912 in the *Shura* magazine, published in Orenburg.¹⁹ Both “Tatarists” and “Turkists” tried to define the Tatars (or Volga Turks) as a large and advanced community (one of the Tatarists, Jemaletdin Validov, claimed that the Tatars included the Bashkirs and the Mishars), which was to play a leading role in the Turkic (or Russian Muslim) world.

Meanwhile, Russian scholars in the nineteenth century were interested in the ruins of Bulghar city, which some called “Russian Pompei,” and wanted to determine to which ethnic group the Bulghars had belonged. Some prominent scholars, such as Il’ia Berezin, guessed that the Bulghars were the Tatars’ ancestors, because both were Muslims who excelled in commerce, but this hypothesis ran counter to the traditional Russian perception of the Tatars as descendants of the Mongol invaders. Some others, who thought that the Bulghars’ advanced culture could not belong to the Turks, claimed that the Bulghars were Slavs. But the Bulghar-Slavic theories were not very well grounded and lost credibility by the end of the nineteenth century.²⁰

As the deciphering of Bulghar epigraphs progressed, scholars noticed that the language of the Bulghars was similar to that of the Chuvash,²¹ which pos-

ers have pointed out that there is no concrete evidence that Bulghar identity was a central factor in the elder Vaisov’s movement. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, p. 173.

18 E.V. Molostvova, “Vaisov Bozhii polk,” *Mir Islama*, Tom 1, No. 2 (1912), pp. 143-152; Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, pp. 172-177.

19 NAGANAWA Nobuhiro, *Voruga-Uraru Chiiki-no Atarashii Tatâru Chishikijin: Minzoku (Millät)-ni kansuru Gensetsu-to Haikai-to shitenô Osuman Teikoku (1908-1914) [New Tatar Intellectuals of the Volga-Ural Region: Discourses on Nations and Their Relation with the Ottoman Empire]*, Unpublished M.Sc. Dissertation (The University of Tokyo, 2001), pp. 24-68; “Pantiurkizm v Rossii,” *Mir Islama*, Tom 2, Vyp. 1 (1913), pp. 13-30.

20 Robert Paul Geraci, *Window on the East: Ethnography, Orthodoxy, and Russian Nationality in Kazan, 1870-1914*, Ph.D. Dissertation (University of California at Berkeley, 1995), pp. 210-225. Some arguments for the Bulghar-Slavic theory are shown in: Viktor Ragozin, “Bolgary,” /originally published in 1881/ in *Mify drevnei Volgi* (Saratov: Nadezhda, 1996), pp. 145-148. I am grateful to TSUKAZAKI Kyoko for referring me to this book.

21 The first scholar who pointed out the existence of Chuvash words in Bulghar epigraphs was Feizkhanov, a Tatar disciple of Marjani. Khusein Feizkhanov, “Tri nadgrobnikh bulgarskikh nadpisi,” /originally published in 1863/ *Tatarskaia arkheologiia*, No. 1/2 (1999), pp. 56-57.

sesses features remarkably different from all the other known Turkic languages. On this basis, they began to claim that the Chuvash were descendants of the Bulgars. The well-known educator and missionary, Nikolai Il'minskii, enthusiastically supported this hypothesis, possibly because the history of the Muslim Bulgars becoming the Christian Chuvash was useful for his own activities.²² In 1902, Nikolai Ashmarin, a linguist of mixed Russian and Chuvash birth, wrote a fundamental work on linguistic relations between the Bulgars (who, in his opinion, were closely related to the Huns) and the Chuvash.²³

The standard Russian theory regarded Kazan Tatars as descendants of the Kipchaks of the Golden Horde, mixed with Fins, Bulgars, etc.²⁴ In 1909, Tatar scholar Gainutdin Akhmarov wrote a work that underlined continuity between the Bulgars and the Tatars.²⁵ (His viewpoint should not be confused with that of earlier Bulgarist historians who emphasized the sacred Bulgar legacy of Volga-Ural Muslims, but not the secular “Tatar” nation). Thus, a prototype of the future Chuvash-Tatar rivalry for the Bulgar legacy appeared. Meanwhile, Russian and European (especially Hungarian) scholars presented hypotheses about whether the Bashkirs were of Ugric or Turkic origin.²⁶

In Central Asia, Kazakh intellectuals compiled tribal and ethnic genealogies,²⁷ and Turkistani intellectuals disputed the appropriateness of the word “Sart” as an ethnic name,²⁸ but most of their works were fragmental and had little relation to the ethnic histories that would be written during the Soviet period. Compared with Central Asia, discourses on ethnic history in the Volga-Ural region were more intensive and systematic, thanks to the tradition of Bulgarist historiography and Russian scholars' active researches.

22 Geraci, *Window on the East*, pp. 225-232.

23 Nikolai I. Ashmarin, *Bolgary i Chuvashi* (Kazan': Imperatorskii Un-t, 1902). Ashmarin (1870-1933), a key figure in Il'minskii's school system (he taught at the Central School for Baptized Tatars), remained an influential scholar in the Soviet period.

24 For example: “Tjurko-tatary,” in *Entsiklopedicheskii Slovar'*, Tom 34 (St. Petersburg: Brokgauz-Efron, 1902), p. 349; “Tatare,” in *Bol'shaia Entsiklopediia*, Tom 18 (St. Petersburg: Prosveshchenie, n.d.), p. 306.

25 Andreas Kappeler, “L'ethnogénèse des peuples de la Moyenne-Volga (Tatars, Tchouvaches, Mordves, Maris, Oudmourtes) dans les recherches soviétiques,” *Cahiers du Monde russe et soviétique* XVII, 2-3 (1976), p. 319. The work in question is probably the *Bolgar tarikhy* [History of the Bulgars], published in Kazan (cf.: *Biobibliograficheskii slovar' otechestvennykh tiurkologov: Dooktiabr'skii period*, 2nd revised edition (Moscow: Nauka, 1989), p. 28), but I have not found it yet.

26 Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda*, pp. 16-23.

27 For example: Chokan Ch. Valikhanov, “Kirgizskoe rodoslovie,” /written in around 1856/ in his *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, Tom 2 (Alma-Ata: Glav. red. Kaz. sov. entsiklopedii, 1985), pp. 148-166; Shākārīm Qūdayberdiūly, *Türük, qyrghyz-qazaq häm khandar shezhiresi* [Genealogy of the Turks, the Kyrgyz-Kazakhs and Khans] (Almaty: Qazaqstan, 1991) / originally published in Orenburg in 1911/.

28 Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 203-207.

Il'minskii and his followers left behind a particularly important legacy. He was a missionary but not a Russifier, and believed that only propagation in the mother tongue could instill the true faith. He promoted education in native languages, devised grammars, compiled dictionaries, and practically contributed to the delimitation of ethnic groups. His concept may be called "national in form, Orthodox in content." His activities expanded beyond a purely missionary purpose, and his followers studied various linguistic and ethnographic problems, including relations between the Bulgars and the Chuvash. Moreover, Il'minskii was a close friend and colleague of Lenin's father, an inspector of schools, and probably influenced Lenin's views on national minorities. Isabelle Kreindler points out many parallels between Il'minskii's ideas and Lenin's nationality policy.²⁹ Lenin's policy was, with modifications, inherited by Stalin, who formulated the concept of culture "national in form, socialist in content."

Thus, many of the topics of future debates already appeared before the October Revolution, though they were to be discussed in different contexts during the Soviet period.

2. "MARRISM" WITHOUT MARR: THE RISE OF SOVIET ETHNOGENETICS

During and right after the February and October Revolutions, the Volga-Ural region experienced an upsurge of national movements. Tatar nationalists tried to establish a "Tatar-Bashkir" republic where they would play a leading role, and Bashkir nationalists opposed them. Chuvash nationalists wanted to create "Greater Chuvashia." In the first half of the 1920s, as in many other regions of the Soviet state, a nationalist (or pan-Turkic, pan-Islamist, etc.) mood continued to exist. According to rather biased sources written during the anti-nationalist campaign around 1930, Chuvash nationalists idealized the "golden age of the Chuvash-Bulgar national state" and proposed to change the name of the Chuvash Republic to the "Bulgar Republic." They also argued that the Chuvash were the oldest settlers in the Kama-Volga region, and that they had practiced much more developed agriculture than the Russians had.³⁰

The Soviet leadership, in the spirit of Il'minskii, fixed the standards of minority languages and the boundaries of nations and ethnic groups. It also created Union republics and autonomous republics, employing the principle of national self-determination. If nations and national republics were officially approved, then why not study *their* history? In the 1920s, the Soviet leadership promoted *kraevedenie*, i.e., the study of a region's language, history, folklore,

29 Isabelle Kreindler, "A Neglected Source of Lenin's Nationality Policy," *Slavic Review* 36:1 (1977), pp. 86-100.

30 Victor A. Shnirelman, "The Faces of Nationalist Archaeology in Russia," in Marguerita Díaz-Andreu & Timothy Champion, eds., *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe* (London: UCL Press, 1996), p. 227; Kappeler, "L'ethnogénèse des peuples," p. 13.

economy, natural environment, etc. If the region was a national republic, *kraevedenie* also meant studying the titular nation (*tatarovedenie*, *uzbekovedenie*, etc.). Archaeologist Petr Efimenko called for the study of *etnogeniia* (ethnogenesis; later renamed *etnogeniia*, and then *etnogenez*), based on comparative linguistics and prehistoric archaeology (which was to explore material culture, “often more durable than language”).³¹ However, no systematic research on this subject was carried out at that time. Some non-Marxist historians educated before the October Revolution wrote works on the history and origins of their ethnic communities,³² but they do not seem to have had a persistent influence.

The “Cultural Revolution” of the late 1920s and the early 1930s affected many branches of arts and sciences. Organizations, specializing in *kraevedenie*, were abolished. Many non-Russian scholars were purged as “bourgeois-nationalists.” Ethnography (or ethnology) was harshly criticized as a “bourgeois” science, and a new Marxist ethnography (clearly distinguished from Western ethnology) was encouraged to engage in “practical” matters, analyzing both present conditions and the history of ethnic communities. One of the issues of high priority was the process of ethnogenesis.³³ Many of those who criticized the old ethnography and advocated creating a new one were followers of Nikolai Marr, the linguist who founded the “Japhetic theory” (or more broadly, the “new theory of language”) and attained enormous authority in the humanities and social sciences of the Soviet Union.

Marr himself did not construct a theory of ethnogenesis. Although in earlier times he wrote about the history of “Japhetic languages” as that of “Japhetic tribes,”³⁴ he later claimed that all the languages of the world were related to each other, and these relations were not racial (ethnic) but social. He recommended not using the term “tribe (*plemia* or *etnos*; in today’s usage, ethnic group),” at least in its conventional meaning, asserting that it was not a racial but socioeconomic concept. According to Marr, there exists no ethnic

31 P. Efimenko, “Doistoricheskaiia arkheologiia, ee zadachi i perspektivy v oblastnom izuchenii,” *Kraevedenie*, No. 2 (1923), pp. 96-97.

32 For example: Gaziz Gobäydullin, *Tatar tarikhy* [History of the Tatars] (Kazan, 1923); D.P. Petrov, *O proiskhozhdenii chuvash* (Cheboksary, 1925); Gh. Fäkhretdinov & S. Meräs, *Bashqort tarikhy* [History of the Bashkirs] (Ufa, 1927); Mikhail P. Petrov, *Chävash istoriyê s'inchen. Kêskên kalasa kätartni. Maltankhi payê. Têp istoriyên yêrêsem* [Short Outlines of Chuvash History, Part 1, Traces of Ancient History] (Cheboksary, 1928). None of these were made available to me.

33 Yuri Slezkine, “The Fall of Soviet Ethnography, 1928-38,” *Current Anthropology* 32:4 (1991), pp. 478-481; “Soveshchanie etnografov Leningrada i Moskvyy (5/IV–11/IV 1929 g.),” *Etnografiia*, No. 2 (1929), pp. 110-144.

34 The ethnic aspect of his theory in its earlier stages vividly appeared in an article first published in 1920: Nikolai Ia. Marr, “Iafeticheskii Kavkaz i tretii etnicheskii element v sozidanii sredizemnomorskoi kul'tury,” in his *Izbrannyye raboty*, Tom 1 (Leningrad: Izd-vo GAIMK, 1933), pp. 79-124. “Japhetic languages” originally meant such languages as Georgian, Abkhazian, Basque, etc., but subsequently became a very wide notion that meant not only many existing languages but also a stage, through which all the languages of mankind had once progressed.

culture with a separate origin, but rather a culture of mankind with common origin; cultural diversity derives from the variety of developmental stages, whose characteristics have been partly retained by various peoples.³⁵ Although his logic was strange in many aspects, his rejection of primordialist views on ethnicity was noteworthy even from the viewpoint of our time. A Kazakh Marxist historian, Sanzhar Asfendiarov, summarized Marr's idea and noted – interestingly, referring to the anti-Bolshevik Kautsky – that “nation” was a historical category, transitory and not primordial (*iznachal'nyi*).³⁶

However, ethnographers and archaeologists paid attention to another side of Marr's theory. Marr waged a war against Indo-Europeanist comparative historical linguistics, which supposed that a protolanguage had branched into different languages during the course of the migration of ethnic groups from their original homeland. His version of linguistic history was that different socioeconomic developmental stages produced different languages, which remained in today's world as relicts. The most important origin of linguistic changes was not external mass migrations but revolutionary shifts of socioeconomic systems, as well as the intercrossing (*skreshchenie*) of words and languages.³⁷ His followers applied this idea to cultural and ethnic history, adding an ethnoterritorial aspect to it. His closest disciple, Ivan Meshchaninov, argued that material culture changed according to the developmental stages, and while migration could stimulate these changes, “foreign (*chuzhie*)” elements derived from migration were secondary to local elements.³⁸

At that time, German scholars often wrote about the history of Germanic peoples (among others, the Goths), who had once occupied a vast territory in Eastern Europe and Russia, and claimed that the Germans were superior to the Slavs. Thus, it became a politically important task for Soviet scholars to characterize Germans' views as expressions of “racism, militarism and expansion-

35 Marr, “Znachenie i rol' izucheniia natsmen'shinstva v kraevedenii,” /originally published in 1927/ in his *Izbrannye raboty*, Tom 1, pp. 236, 241; Idem, “Postanovka ucheniia ob iazyke v mirovom masshtabe i abkhazskii iazyk,” /a paper presented in 1928/ in his *Izbrannye raboty*, Tom 4 (n.p.: Gos. sots.-ekon. izd-vo, 1937), p. 58. On the change of Marr's views of language and ethnos, see: I.I. Meshchaninov, “Itogi izucheniia obshchego iazykoznaniiia v SSSR za dvadtsat' let,” *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR: Otdelenie obshchestvennykh nauk*, No. 5 (1937), pp. 1222-1226; Vasilii I. Abaev, “N.Ia. Marr (1864–1934): K 25-letiiu so dnia smerti,” *Voprosy iazykoznaniiia*, No. 1 (1960), pp. 94-95.

36 S. Asfendiarov, “Problema natsii i novoe uchenie o iazyke,” *Novyi Vostok*, No. 22 (1928), pp. 169-183.

37 Marr, “Postanovka ucheniia,” p. 61; Idem, “Obshchii kurs ucheniia ob iazyke,” /originally published in 1927/ in his *Izbrannye raboty*, Tom 2 (n.p.: Gos. sots.-ekon. izd-vo, 1936), p. 101; Abaev, “N.Ia. Marr,” pp. 92-95. Marr used the word *skreshchenie* also in relation to “tribes,” but without theoretical explanation. Marr, “Chuvashi-iafetidy na Volge,” /a paper presented in 1925/ in his *Izbrannye raboty*, Tom 5 (Moscow & Leningrad: Gos. sots.-ekon. izd-vo, 1935), p. 328.

38 I.I. Meshchaninov, “O doistoricheskome pereselenii narodov,” *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii*, Kn. 29(5) (1928), pp. 205-238.

ism.” Archaeologist Vladislav Ravdonikas argued in 1932 that the Goths had appeared on the north coast of the Black Sea not as a result of the migration of a Germanic people. Rather, they were formed “autochthonously,” as a result of the transformation from the “Sarmatian stage” to the “Gothic stage” on the same territory.³⁹ “Autochtony (*avtokhtonost*)” was a new notion, which was to gain importance later, although Ravdonikas remained faithful to Marr’s denial of separate origins for various ethnic communities.

From the middle of the 1930s, as the official ideology turned away from internationalism, and inward, to Soviet (and Russian) society, the emphasis shifted from the socioeconomic nature of peoples to their distinct origins. From 1938, the USSR’s Academy of Sciences organized intensive discussions on ethnogenesis, and many works on the origins of the Slavs were published. Scholars argued that the culture of Russians’ ancestors had been the most developed one in Europe already in the Paleolithic era, regarding the Goths either as a tribal union whose core consisted of Slavs or simply as “barbarians,” and denying the Vikings’ role in foundation of Kievan Rus.⁴⁰ These scholars always referred to Marr, and their theories have been called “Marrist,” but they either cited only his name or quoted his words, neglecting their contexts.⁴¹ The famous historian, Boris Grekov, wrote: “Marr made us turn our eyes far back to the Scythians, the Cimmerians and even further, and showed that we have to search for the roots of the Slavs and other European peoples precisely there.”⁴² Certainly, Marr had a keen interest in prehistory and antiquity, but his purpose was to explore the history of mankind and not to seek the Slavs’ ethnic roots! The essence of the new theory was that ethnic groups had been formed not by migrations but “autochthonously” on the territories they currently occupy. The key word, “autochtony,” was not Marr’s term. The “Marrist” ethnogenetic theory was created without Marr, although it is true that Marr’s ambiguous theory left room for arbitrary interpretations.⁴³

39 V. Ravdonikas, “Peshchernye goroda Kryma i gotskaia problema v sviazi s stadial’nym izucheniem Severnogo Prichernomor’ia,” *Izvestiia GAIMK*, Tom 12, Vyp. 1-8 (*Gotskii sbornik*) (Leningrad, 1932), cited in: M.A. Miller, *Arkheologiia v SSSR* (Munich: Institute for the Study of the History and Culture of the USSR, 1954), p. 66. Also see: Victor A. Shnirel’man, “Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki: etnogeneticheskie issledovaniia i stalinskaia natsional’naia politika,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie*, No. 3 (1993), pp. 56-58.

40 Elena P. Aksenova & Mikhail A. Vasil’ev, “Problemy etnogenii slavianstva i ego vetvei v akademicheskikh diskussiiakh rubezha 1930–1940-kh godov,” *Slavianovedenie*, No. 2 (1993), pp. 86-104; Shnirel’man, “Zlokliucheniia odnoi nauki,” pp. 58-64; Shnirelman, “The Faces of Nationalist Archaeology,” pp. 233-236.

41 In other fields of learning, too, Marr’s concrete ideas were gradually put aside after his death in 1934. Vladimir M. Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa: Marr i marrizm* (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), pp. 115-142.

42 B.D. Grekov, “Itogi izucheniia istorii SSSR za dvadtsat’ let,” *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR: Otdelenie obshchestvennykh nauk*, No. 5 (1937), p. 1103.

43 Marr and “Marrism” in Soviet ethnogenetics have been extensively and elaborately studied by Slezkine and Shnirelman, to whose works I am greatly indebted, but they do not

It is also evident that some separate ideas of Marr himself influenced ethnogenetic discourses. He was very interested in the Chuvash language, and believed that Chuvash was the only language which was preserved from that tightly connected group of Japhetic languages, from which Turkic languages were subsequently formed, and that Chuvash had contributed to formation of the Russian language. He thought that although the Chuvash became an underdeveloped people because of Russian and Tatar “imperialism,” they originally possessed a high culture and were related not only to the Bulgars but also to the Sumerians.⁴⁴ But such fantasies of Marr occupied only marginal places in “Marrist” ethnogenetics.

Soviet scholars were assigned to study the origins not only of the Slavs but also of other peoples of the Soviet Union, especially in connection with the fight against “Pan-Finnism and Pan-Turkism.”⁴⁵ A conference about ethnogenesis of Central Asian peoples held in Tashkent in 1942 vividly manifested peculiar features of the “Marrist” ethnogenetic theory. There, Aleksandr Udaltsov, a historian and author of works on the origins of the Slavs, declared that a new scientific discipline, “ethnogenetics,” was being formed, using Marr’s linguistic theory and combining archaeology, anthropology, linguistics and history. Another important speaker was Sergei Tolstov, an aggressive “Marrist” ethnographer, who became director of the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the same year. Tolstov argued that the Central Asian peoples began to take shape on roughly the same territories they currently occupy (with the exception of the Kyrgyz) in the second half of the first millennium B.C., and their autochthonous ethnogenetic processes were almost completed between the sixth to twelfth centuries A.D. He intentionally ignored the fact that communities with the same names as today’s Central Asian nations appeared not so long ago (for example, “Kazakhs” appeared in the fifteenth century).⁴⁶

Newly created Soviet ethnogenetics was a multidisciplinary science, and saw ethnogenesis as a long process, in which various ethnic elements participated. It was more sophisticated than an approach that simply sees ethnic history as the history of migration of a pureblooded community from an original homeland. But the combination of archaeology⁴⁷ and physical anthropology

always clearly distinguish “Marrism” from Marr’s own ideas. Slezkine’s work on this subject is: Yuri Slezkine, “N.Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics,” *Slavic Review* 55:4 (1996), pp. 826-862.

44 Marr, “Chuvashi-iafetidy,” pp. 327-372. Marr was not always consistent and, in particular, his sympathy to minorities sometimes made him primordialist.

45 “Soveshchanie po voprosam etnogeneza,” *Istoriĭ-marksist*, Kn. 6(70) (1938), p. 201.

46 “Sessia po etnogenezu Srednei Azii,” *Sovetskaia etnografiia: Sbornik statei VI-VII* (Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1947), pp. 301-325.

47 Archaeology was also closely connected with Marr, who worked as director of the State Academy (until 1924, the Russian Academy) of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK, the predecessor of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences) from 1919 to

meant that some kind of continuity in culture, physical character, or even decorations on pottery was sufficient to guarantee continuity in ethnic history; changes in identity, ethnic names and political formations could easily be put aside.⁴⁸ If one selects criteria convenient for him/her, he/she could trace the origin of an ethnic group to the first people who inhabited the same territory in the most ancient times. This is one of the reasons why Soviet ethnogenetics became so primordialistic.

In parallel with the study of ethnogenesis, much effort was made to compile histories of national republics under collective authorship. The first book to be published was the *History of Kazakh SSR*,⁴⁹ written by both local historians and writers, and famous historians evacuated from Moscow during World War II. Responding to the need to uplift the fighting spirit, it vividly depicted the heroic past of the Kazakhs and especially featured the history of rebellions. It consistently used the geographic name "Kazakhstan" in describing a history from the first moment that people had inhabited this region, even before the ethnic name "Kazakh" appeared. This style was subsequently applied to most of the histories of national republics of the Soviet Union.

As the war came closer to conclusion, Soviet leaders thought that the Russians had contributed the most to the victory, and the state ideology became increasingly Russo-centric. The authors of the *History of Kazakh SSR* were harshly criticized for praising anti-Russian heroes of the past.⁵⁰ Tatar historians and specialists of literature were especially hard hit by a campaign begun in 1944 against the embellishment of the Golden Horde and popularization of the epic about Idegei, a hero of the Golden Horde who had besieged Moscow. The compilation of the *Outlines of the History of Tatar ASSR* was delayed, apparently because the editors did not know how or by whom the chapters should be written under the new conditions. The prepared text of the *Outlines of the History of Bashkiria* was also criticized for idealizing the "feudal past" and denying

1934. But Marr did not actively engage in archaeology and did not control the Academy in his last years because of a severe illness, and here, too, "Marrism" without Marr had stronger influence than Marr himself. Cf.: Miller, *Arkheologiya v SSSR*, pp. 40-121; A.L. Mongait, "Voznikovenie i pervye shagi sovetskoi arkheologii," *Istoriia SSSR*, No. 4 (1963), p. 82; Aleksandr A. Formozov, "Arkheologiya i ideologiya (20-30-e gody)," *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 2 (1993), p. 76.

48 To be more precise, ethnogenetics dealt with *narodnost's* (nationalities, or ethnic communities of the pre-capitalistic period), and the political history of *natsii*s (nations) was a separate theme that was popular in the 1950s. But the formation of "bourgeois nations" and "socialist nations" was regarded as a result of transition to capitalism and socialist revolution, respectively, and continuity between a *narodnost'* and a *natsiia* of the same name was taken for granted.

49 Mukhamedzhan Abdykalykov & Anna M. Pankratova, eds., *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata: KazOGIZ, 1943).

50 Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 70-83, 93-100, 110-129.

the “fact of the voluntary annexation” of Bashkiria to the Moscow state and its “progressive” results. Its authors were ordered to rewrite it completely.⁵¹

Both “Marrist” ethnogenetics and the anti-Golden-Horde campaign influenced the conference about the history of Tatarstan, held in Moscow in 1946.⁵² It was entirely dedicated to problems of ethnogenesis of the Kazan Tatars. Its participants agreed that the Kazan Tatars were not “strangers (*prishel'tsy*) – the Mongol-Tatars,” but were formed from the Bulgars, the Kipchaks and other tribes who entered Volga Bulgaria, had a higher culture than the Mongols and fought against the latter. Medievalist and archaeologist, Aleksandr Iakubovskii, claimed that one should not make a “fetish” of ethnic names (in this case, “Tatar”) and it was necessary to separate the history of a people from the history of its name.⁵³ This claim was analogous to the one he made in 1941 in relation to the history of the Uzbeks, who he (and thereafter most Soviet historians) thought had much older autochthonous origins than the Uzbek tribes who came to Transoxiana in the fifteenth century.⁵⁴ Some participants also asserted that the Russians had great influence on the Tatars’s formation. Archaeologist Aleksei Smirnov argued in favor of continuity between the Bulgars (who originally were, in his opinion, “Sarmatian-Alanian” tribes), the Kazan khanate and the Kazan Tatars. Anthropologist Tat’iana Trofimova stressed that the Volga Tatars (the Kazan Tatars, the Kriashens and the Mishars) were basically of a European race and were not descendants of the Mongols.⁵⁵ Thus the Soviet (pro-Russian and anti-Mongolian) version of Bulgarism was established.

Questions about the Bulgars’ language were discussed at this conference on the basis of the results of researches done by the Commission of Bulgar-Tatar Epigraphy, attached to the Tatar Institute of Language, Literature and History in 1941–1942. Archaeologist Nikolai Kalinin asserted that there were two types of Bulgar epigraphs and the first type was written in the Kipchak

51 Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, pp. 79-80; “Postanovlenie o sostoianii raboty po sostavleniiu ‘Ocherkov po istorii Tatarskoi ASSR’” (1946) in *Islam v tatarskom mire* <see note 7>, pp. 347-349; “V Institute istorii Akademii nauk SSSR,” *Voprosy istorii*, No. 8/9 (1946), pp. 151-154.

52 In contrast with pre-Revolutionary scholars, who paid much attention to ethnic history of the Volga region, Soviet scholars during and right after World War II devoted more energy to studying the history of Central Asia, and the study of the Volga-Ural peoples and republics slightly lagged behind. This is perhaps because the Central Asian republics enjoyed a priority as Union republics, whereas the Volga-Ural republics were merely autonomous republics within Russia.

53 Khairi Gimadi, “O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii Tatarii,” *Voprosy istorii*, No. 12 (1951), p. 120.

54 Edward Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present: A Cultural History* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1990), p. 239.

55 “Nauchnaia sessiia po voprosam istorii Tatarskoi ASSR,” *Voprosy istorii*, No. 10 (1946), pp. 146-147; A.P. Smirnov, “K voprosu o proiskhozhdenii tatar Povolzh’ia,” *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, No. 3 (1946), pp. 37-50; T.A. Trofimova, “Etnogenez tatar Srednego Povolzh’ia v svete dannykh antropologii,” *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, No. 3 (1946), pp. 51-74. I am grateful to INOUE Koichi for allowing me to use his microfilms of *Sovetskaia etnografiia* of the years 1946–1949.

(close to Tatar) language, and only the second type was written in a language close to Chuvash.⁵⁶

The conference on Bashkir history held in Ufa in 1947 was dedicated to various problems and only partly dealt with ethnogenesis. One of the main speakers, historian Abubakir Usmanov, argued that not only Turkic and Finno-Ugric tribes but also "the most ancient tribal confederations that inhabited Bashkiria, and were in the Japhetic stage of development," participated in the formation of the Bashkirs.⁵⁷

In 1950, a conference on Chuvash history and ethnogenesis was held in Moscow. The first speaker, historian and archaeologist Petr Tret'iakov, criticized the idea that the Chuvash were direct descendants of the Bulgars as a "proposition of bourgeois science." He pointed out that not only ancestors of the Chuvash but also those of the Kazan Tatars, the Maris and the Udmurts inhabited Volga Bulgaria. He also claimed that the difference between the northwestern (Upper) Chuvash and the southeastern (Lower) Chuvash had its origin in the second millennium B.C., and that only the latter had a close relationship to "strangers"-Bulgars. Other speakers also stressed the autochthony of the Chuvash or intercrossing of the aborigines (presumably Finno-Ugric people) and the Bulgars. Interestingly, while in the case of Tatar ethnogenesis the Bulgars were contrasted to the "strangers" – the Mongols, this time it was the Bulgars who became the "strangers." They were referred to as "steppe nomads," although in reality they became mostly sedentary people in the period of formation of the Volga Bulgar state. Some speakers emphasized the influence of the Russians on the Chuvash.⁵⁸

Soon after this conference, Stalin severely criticized Marr's theory and called him a "mere simplifier and vulgarizer of Marxism."⁵⁹ Officially, the epoch of "Marrist" ethnogenetics then ended. Scholars criticized themselves and colleagues for their "Marrist" past. They denied the "Marrist" thesis that Japhetic languages and ethnoses had been transformed into Indo-European or Turkic ones through "jumps (*skachoks*)" and "explosions (*vzryvs*)." They also denounced exaggeration of "intercrossing's" effect as well as their underestimation of the reverse phenomenon, i.e., branching of one ethnic community into several.⁶⁰ Elements of Soviet ethnogenetics that derived directly from Marr

56 Garun V. Iusupov, *Vvedenie v bulgaro-tatarskuiu epigrafiku* (Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1960), pp. 15-16, 34-35. Iusupov further developed Kalinin's hypothesis.

57 "Nauchnaia sessiia, posviashchennaia voprosam istorii Bashkirii i istorii kul'tury bashkirskogo naroda," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 11 (1947), pp. 141-143.

58 "Sessiia po istorii chuvashskogo naroda," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 4 (1950), pp. 154-156; Kappeler, "L'ethnogenèse des peuples" <see note 25>, pp. 321-322.

59 Iosif V. Stalin, "Marksizm i voprosy iazykoznaniiia," /originally published in 1950/ in his *Sochineniia*, No. 3(16) (Stanford: The Hoover Institution on War, Revolution, and Peace, 1967), pp. 144-148.

60 Petr N. Tret'iakov, "Nekotorye voprosy proiskhozhdeniia narodov v svete proizvedeniia I.V. Stalina o iazyke i iazykoznanii," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 10 (1950), pp. 3-18.

were eliminated, and the discipline became more similar to traditional ethnogenetic approaches that attach importance to the branching of language families.

The high priority attached to ethnogenetics, however, was maintained, if not elevated.⁶¹ Stalin criticized Marr's linguistic theory (especially, his view that language belonged to the "superstructure" and classes) and not the whole structure of "Marrist" ethnogenetics, whose essence was alien to Marr's own view of ethnicity from the beginning. The combination of archaeology, anthropology, linguistics and history remained firm. Even leaders of the ethnogenetic studies did not change drastically. Among others, former "Marrist" Tolstov remained influential, continuing to edit the voluminous series of the *Peoples of the World* (*Narody mira*, published from 1954 to 1966) and to work as director of the Institute of Ethnography until 1966.

Although "autochtony" stopped being an axiom and migrations were given more importance than before, many scholars either explicitly or implicitly used the autochtonous approach, probably because it corresponded very well to the need to legitimize historically the borders of the national republics. And whether they employed the autochtonous or other approaches, scholars traced ethnic genealogies as far back as possible. Standard accounts of ethnic history described how the oldest inhabitants of the territory, mixing with various newly arriving ethnic communities, developed into today's nations, without special regard to changes of ethnic names.⁶² The basic characteristics of Soviet ethnogenetics were not changed.

3. "NATIVIZATION" OF ETHNOGENETICS AND THE BULGHAR DISPUTE

Ethnic histories and histories of the national republics were first compiled mainly on the initiative of ethnically Russian and Jewish scholars from Moscow and Leningrad. Their opinions *per se* had nothing to do with the nationalism of the Volga-Ural or Central Asian peoples. However, because Soviet policy promoted the growth of research organizations of ethnically non-Russian researchers in the national republics, the study of ethnic history had to be also "nativized" sooner or later. This could add elements of nationalism or, at least, national self-consciousness, to discourses on ethnic history.

In the Volga-Ural region, where ethnic historiography had already a long tradition, such tendencies surfaced immediately. In 1950, a Tatar historian from

61 Slezkine, "N.Ia. Marr and the National Origins," pp. 859-861.

62 Concerning the cases of the Chuvash, the Volga Tatars and the Bashkirs, see: *Narody Evropeiskoi chasti SSSR (serii <Narody mira>)*, Tom 2 (Moscow: Nauka, 1964), pp. 599, 636-639, 685-688. Most typically, the volume on Central Asia repeated Iakubovskii's disregard of ethnic names twenty years before: "... one has to distinguish the history of the ethnic name 'Uzbek' from the history of formation of the Uzbek people." *Narody Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana (serii <Narody mira>)*, Tom 1 (Moscow: Nauka, 1962), p. 167.

Saransk (Mordovia), Magamet Safargaliev, refuted the Bulghar-Tatar theory brought forward at the 1946 conference. He denounced as groundless the arguments of Smirnov and Khairi Gimadi (a historian from Kazan) for the existence of a Bulghar principality within the Golden Horde, which was to bridge the pre-Mongolian Bulgars and the Kazan Tatars. He asserted that the Tatars had their origin in Tatar (in his opinion, Turkic-speaking) tribes of Mongolia, who mixed with Bulghar and other tribes during the reigns of the Golden Horde and the Kazan khanate.⁶³ It was not so dangerous to denounce Bulghar autochtonism after Stalin's criticism of Marr, but the anti-Golden-Horde campaign since 1944 was still in force. The importance that Safargaliev attributed to the Golden Horde (although he differentiated Tatar tribes from Mongol rulers of the Horde) and his emphasis on the similarity between the Tatar communities (the Volga, Kasimov, Astrakhan, Siberian, Tatars) on the territory of the former Golden Horde were politically problematic, and Gimadi refuted him.⁶⁴ Safargaliev's relatively free position may be explained in such a manner that scholars outside Tatarstan were not subject to the control of the Kazan bureaucrats, who were very sensitive about the implementation of policies of the Union leadership.⁶⁵

The *History of Tatar ASSR*, at last published in 1955, took a position close to the 1946 conference, although it did not claim the Russians' influence on the Tatar ethnogenesis (while stressing close contacts between the Russians and the Bulgars-Tatars), as outright Russo-centricism faded away after Stalin's death in 1953. The book's authors wrote that the process of creating a unified Bulghar people had been stopped by the Mongol invasion, which, however, had not greatly changed the ethnic composition of the region. According to them, the process of formation of the Kazan Tatars was finished in the Kazan khanate mainly on the basis of the Bulgars and, partly, the Kipchaks and other Turkic tribes. Deviating from the multidisciplinary tradition of Soviet ethnogenetics, this book attached extraordinary importance to language, and claimed that the Bulghar language and the modern Kazan Tatar language were one and the same.⁶⁶

In contrast, in the *Outlines of the History of Bashkir ASSR* (1956), the author of the section about ethnogenesis, Rail' Kuzeev (then a 27-year-old ethnographer), developed the multidisciplinary approach of Soviet ("Marrist") ethno-

63 Magamet Safargaliev, "Odin iz spornykh voprosov istorii Tatarii," *Voprosy istorii*, No. 7 (1951), pp. 74-80.

64 Gimadi, "O nekotorykh voprosakh istorii Tatarii," pp. 118-126.

65 Victor A. Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?: Competition for Ancestors among Non-Russian Intellectuals in Russia* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1996), p. 36. Similarly, during the controversy (1947-1950) over Ermukhan Bekmakhanov's works on the Kenesary rebellion, main accusers were Kazakh scholars from Alma-Ata, whereas some Russian scholars from Moscow defended him. Cf.: Il'ias M. Kozybaev, *Istoriografiia Kazakhstana: uroki istorii* (Alma-Ata: Rauan, 1990), pp. 82-108.

66 *Istoriia Tatarskoi ASSR*, Tom 1 (Kazan': Tatknigoizdat: 1955), pp. 67-69, 78-79, 89-91, 102-104.

genetic theory, combining ethnography, archaeology, linguistics and also studies on tribal genealogies. He described the formation of the Bashkirs as a long process, in which various Turkic tribes (the Huns, the Pechenegs-Oguz, the Polovtsy-Kipchaks, the Bulgars, the Noghays, etc.) played major roles, but non-Turkic tribes (the Magyars and other Finno-Ugrians, the ancient Sarmatians and the Mongols) participated as well.⁶⁷ His approach was balanced and well equipped with concrete proofs.

A little earlier, the famous Russian ethnographer and archaeologist, Sergei Rudenko, asserted that Turkic-speaking Mongoloids had come to Bashkortostan as early as in the first half of the first millennium B.C., and that the Bashkirs had been formed as a unified group of tribes in the first centuries A.D. Although he described in detail the Bashkirs' local variety of physical characters, modes of life and dialects, and explained it mostly as results of their contacts with neighboring ethnic groups, he claimed that such contacts had not fundamentally changed the Bashkirs' ethnic characteristics.⁶⁸ His argument was much weaker than Kuzeev's, but his hypothesis about early Turkification was to find many successors later on.

Meanwhile, Chuvash scholars were not satisfied with the results of the conference in 1950, and held another conference in Cheboksary in 1956. They argued that the Bulgars (in particular, their subgroup of Suvars; the name "Suvar" or "Suvaz" was thought to be related to "Chuvash") played a major role in the formation of the Chuvash. Smirnov claimed that the Bulgars inhabited not only the southeastern part but also other areas of Chuvashia.⁶⁹ Although Smirnov was an ethnic Russian and had advocated the Bulghar-Tatar theory at the 1946 conference, thereafter he often defended the position of Chuvash scholars.

As archaeological and linguistic researches progressed, more detailed works on the relations between the Bulgars, the Chuvash and the Tatars appeared. Chuvash archaeologist Vasilii Kakhovskii wrote in his book in 1965 that the ancestors of the Chuvash who originally lived in the Baikal region were separated from other Turkic and Mongolian communities already in the first millennium B.C. and migrated to the West. At the same time, he admitted that the Maris also took part in the formation of the Upper Chuvash.⁷⁰

67 *Ocherki po istorii Bashkirskoi ASSR*, Tom 1, Chast' 1 (Ufa: Bash. kn. izd-vo, 1956), pp. 27-37.

68 S.I. Rudenko, *Bashkirya: istoriko-etnograficheskie ocherki* (Moscow & Leningrad: Izd-vo AN SSSR, 1955), pp. 328-352. Although this book was basically a reprint of the book published in 1925, the chapter on ethnogenesis was newly written.

69 Kappeler, "L'ethnogénèse des peuples," p. 322; V.F. Kakhovskii, "Arkheologiya Volzhskoi Bolgarii i voprosy etnogeneza chuvashskoi narodnosti," in *Bolgariya i chuvashi* (NII iazyka, lit-ry, istorii i ekonomiki pri SM ChASSR, 1984), p. 63.

70 V.F. Kakhovskii, *Proiskhozhdenie chuvashskogo naroda: osnovnye etapy etnicheskoi istorii* (Cheboksary, 1965), cited in: Kappeler, "L'ethnogénèse des peuples," p. 323. Earlier, Kakhovskii was faithful to the line of the 1950 conference and distinguished the sedentary Chuvash-Suvars from the nomadic Bulghar rulers. He thought the Bulghar cultural influence was almost confined to southern Chuvashia, although, at the same time, he criticized Tatar

Tatar archaeologist Al'fred Khalikov thought that the invasion of the Turkic Huns in the fourth and fifth centuries was essential to the formation of the Chuvash, and denied any relationship between them and the Bulgars. Another Tatar archaeologist, Ravil' Fakhrutdinov, argued that there were no grounds for relating the Suvars to the Chuvash. Khalikov also claimed that the basis of the Tatars was formed by the culture of the tribes originating from the Western Turkic kaganate who invaded in the Volga region in the sixth and seventh centuries. Originally, this hypothesis meant that the ancestors of the Tatars came to the Volga region before the Bulgars and the latter's role in the Tatar ethnic history was minimal. But later Khalikov claimed that the Bulgars, too, were the Tatars' direct ancestors.⁷¹ Smirnov denounced as unscientific the arguments of Khalikov and other scholars from Kazan for the existence of Turkic tribes in the Volga-Ural before the Bulgars, and he entered into a major controversy with them in 1971–1974.⁷²

Khalikov's method of identifying a change in archaeological artifacts with a linguistic Turkification of inhabitants of the area⁷³ was problematic. Regardless, his theory of early Turkification of Volga-Ural was, on the one hand, a method, alternative to (or variant of) "Marrist" autochtonism, of tracing the origins of the Tatars in Tatarstan as far back as possible. On the other hand, it suggested the resurrection of a "Turkic" identity, made possible in the context of the post-"Marrist" approaches that attached importance to language families in the traditional sense. Bashkir archaeologist Niiiaz Mazhitov claimed that the Turkic-speakers had begun moving from Central Asia to the Southern Urals in the fourth century B.C.⁷⁴ A similar tendency appeared in Central Asia, especially in Uzbekistan.⁷⁵

Chuvash scholars' opinions were summed up in *The Bulgars and the Chuvash*, a collection of papers published in 1984. The authors stressed the continuity between the Bulgars and the Chuvash in a variety of aspects, claiming that the Kazan khanate did not have a direct relationship to Volga Bulgaria, denying a mass Turkification in the pre-Bulgar period, advocating the Inner-Asian

scholars who tried to monopolize the Bulgar legacy. V.F. Kakhovskii, *Pamiatniki material'noi kul'tury Chuvashskoi ASSR* (Cheboksary: Gos. izd-vo ChASSR, 1957).

71 Kappeler, "L'ethnogénèse des peuples," pp. 323-324; Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, pp. 26-33; Vasilii D. Dmitriev, "O poslednikh etapakh etnogeneza chuvashei," in *Bolgary i chuvashi*, pp. 24-27.

72 A.Kh. Khalikov, P.N. Starostin et al., "Voprosy etnogeneza tiurkoiazychnykh narodov Srednego Povolzh'ia (po povodu retsenzii A.P. Smirnova)," *Sovetskaia arkheologiya*, No. 1 (1974), pp. 265-274; A.P. Smirnov, "Otvét A.Kh. Khalikovu, P.N. Starostinu, E.A. Khalikovoï, A.G. Petrenko i dr.," *Sovetskaia arkheologiya*, No. 2 (1974), pp. 320-325.

73 A.Kh. Khalikov, "K voprosu o nachale tiurkizatsii naseleniia Povolzh'ia i Priural'ia," *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, No. 1 (1972), pp. 100-109.

74 Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, p. 27.

75 Yuri Bregel, *Notes on the Study of Central Asia* (Bloomington: Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies, 1996), pp. 14-17.

origin of the Chuvash, and denouncing autochthonous approaches. It seems that the autochthonous line of the 1950 conference that minimized the role of the Bulgars in the Chuvash ethnic history inspired a deep hatred of autochtonism among Chuvash scholars. Meanwhile, this book's authors included not only Chuvash scholars but also Kuzeev, who emphasized the need to study the ethnic history of "historical-ethnographic regions" rather than one specific ethnos, and suggested that there were ancient relationships between the Chuvash and the Bashkirs.⁷⁶

Prior to *The Bulgars and the Chuvash*, Kuzeev published a fundamental work of 571 pages on Bashkir ethnogenesis. He closely examined the history of tribes in various localities, using oral and written sources as well as the marks (*tamgas*) of tribes. Further developing the propositions he wrote in the *Outlines of the History of Bashkir ASSR*, he described how the Bashkirs were formed in stages, from various ethnic communities.⁷⁷ Generally, Bashkir ethnic history was not so politicized as Tatar and Chuvash ones. It was clear to everyone that Bulgar elements existed but were not decisive in Bashkir ethnic history. Although Tatars have often challenged the existence of the Bashkir nation on the level of daily conversation (northern Bashkirs are similar to the Tatars in many ways because of the latter's cultural influence as well as intermarriage), Bashkir scholars have had no serious contentious issues with scholars of neighboring peoples in the field of ethnogenetics.

4. DISCOURSES ON ETHNIC HISTORY IN THE POST-SOVIET PERIOD

(a) *The Tatars*

During and after *perestroika*, debates on ethnic history were activated everywhere in the (former) Soviet Union, but they became especially heated in Tatarstan. In 1990, historians started criticizing the anti-Golden-Horde campaign of 1944 and declared that the theory of the Tatars' Bulgar origins had been imposed by force. They began instead stressing the roles of the Kipchaks and the Golden Horde in the formation of the Kazan Tatars.⁷⁸ This does not mean that they regarded the Tatars as descendants of the Mongols; they emphasized that the Turks had quickly assimilated Mongolian conquerors. Fakhrutdinov repeated the claim Safargaliev had made in 1950 that the Tatar tribes who migrated from Mongolia had been Turks.⁷⁹

76 R.G. Kuzeev & V.A. Ivanov, "Etnicheskie protsessy v Volgo-Ural'skom regione v V–XVI vekakh i problema proiskhozhdeniia chuvashskogo etnosa," in *Bolgary i chuvashi*, pp. 3-22.

77 Kuzeev, *Proiskhozhdenie bashkirskogo naroda* <see note 12>.

78 Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, pp. 36-37. For an account of the background and consequences of the campaign of 1944, see: Bulat F. Sultanbekov, *Istoriia Tatarstana: stranitsy sekretnykh arkhivov* (Kazan': Tat. kn. izd-vo, 1994), pp. 203-235.

79 Ravil' Fakhrutdinov, *Zolotaia Orda i tatars; Chto v dushe naroda* (Naberezhnye Chelny: Izd-vo KAMAZ, 1993), pp. 8-11.

The Golden Horde has now acquired an important place in the state ideology of Tatarstan. Rafael' Khakimov, the chief ideologue of Tatarstan (an adviser to President Shaimiev) and the director of the Institute of History of the Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, emphasizes the influence of the Golden Horde on Russia. According to him, the Tatars of the Golden Horde created a great empire, and Russian principalities, which had engaged in internal fights, were incorporated into world history thanks to the Golden Horde.⁸⁰

Shnirelman argues that while the Bulghar version of ethnogenesis may have an advantage in the struggle of Tatarstan for sovereignty and territorial unity, the Golden Horde version supports the belief in pan-Turkic unity and can legitimize territorial claims to other regions where Tatars live.⁸¹ This explanation may be plausible, but Khakimov's arguments point to other important features of the discourse on the Golden Horde. His position has two sides, the assertion of the Tatars' historical superiority to the Russians and recognition of common history of the Tatars and the Russians in the Golden Horde (he sometimes refers to such Russian Eurasianist scholars as Lev Gumilev and Nikolai Trubetskoi). His position well corresponds to Tatarstan's efforts to secure a special status in the Russian Federation.

Khakimov also stresses the common basis of the Turkic peoples who once lived in the Turkic kaganate and/or the Jochi Ulus.⁸² This might be psychologically related to expansionism, but in reality not only Tatarstan's expansion but even the coordination of historical researches of Turkic peoples is difficult. In an interview, he complained to me that independent states in Central Asia look down on Tatarstan, and it will be possible to coordinate Turkic historians only in the future.⁸³ The fact that he is also the chief editor of the journal *Finno-Ugrica* indicates his intention to cooperate with Finno-Ugric peoples, many of whose ancestors also inhabited the lands of the Golden Horde.

A related but unique position that stresses the Central Asian origin of the Tatars is represented by Marsel' Akhmetzianov, who has long been researching genealogies (*shäjäräs*). Denouncing autochtonism, he argues that the Tatars were formed from Kipchak tribes of the European race in Central Asia and had a close relationship with the Karakhanids. According to him, the Bulgars allied themselves with the Tatars fearing Russification, and entered into the Tatar ethnos only to a limited extent.⁸⁴

Some other Tatar scholars continue to adhere to the Bulghar version. Mirfatykh Zakiev, the director of the Institute of Language, Literature and Art and a longtime advocate of the Bulghar version, asserts that Bulghar and Chuvash belong to totally different groups within the Turkic languages. He sees the

80 Rafael' Khakim, *Istoriia tatar i Tatarstana* (Kazan': Panorama-Forum, 1999).

81 Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, pp. 52-55.

82 Khakim, *Istoriia tatar i Tatarstana*, pp. 36-37.

83 Interview with Khakimov (February 28, 2000, Kazan).

84 Interview with Akhmetzianov (February 29, 2000, Kazan).

Tatars as the only historical heir of the Bulgars, who he thinks were “a Kipchak tribe.”⁸⁵ He also writes that the Scythians, the Sacae, the Sarmatians and the Alans were not Iranian-speaking as usually thought but Turkic-speaking, and traces the origin of the Bulgars and the Tatars to them.⁸⁶

Most scholars whom I interviewed in February 2000, however, consider disputes between “Bulgarists” and “Tatarists” (those who attribute importance to the Golden Horde) futile. In fact, most “Tatarists” do not deny the relationship between the Bulgars and the Tatars. Khakimov writes that the Turkic kaganate and the Bulgar state were the first forms of the Tatars’ statehood, adding that the Bulgar state was multiethnic and Tatar culture expressed itself most clearly during the epoch of the Golden Horde. In general, he is critical about reducing history to ethnogenesis, and interested more in the meanings of various past states for the Tatars and Russia.⁸⁷ Fakhruddinov once minimized the role of the Bulgars in the formation of the Tatars,⁸⁸ but now incorporates both Volga Bulgaria and the Golden Horde into Tatar history. He thinks that Muslim elite Bulgars became the Tatars and non-Muslim rural Bulgars became the Chuvash, admitting that 90 percent of Bulgar epigraphs are written in a language similar to Chuvash, while 10 percent are written in a language similar to Tatar.⁸⁹

Another important problem is, after all, who are the “Tatars.” Do the Kazan, Kasimov, Astrakhan, Siberian and Polish-Lithuanian Tatars as well as the Mishars and the Kriashens (including Nagaibaks) constitute a single ethnos, or are they separate ethnoses? Most scholars in Kazan support the former interpretation,⁹⁰ but some regard the Siberian Tatars as a separate ethnos.⁹¹ This problem is related to both the identities of various “Tatars” and the “Bulgarist-Tatarist” controversy, because it is difficult for the Bulgar theory to explain the ethnogenesis of those Tatars who have traditionally inhabited regions outside the territory of former Volga Bulgaria.

Outside academic circles, a Bulgarist movement has reemerged since 1988 (Shnirelman calls its proponents “neo-Bulgarists”). Its main ideologue is Fargat Nurutdinov, a history teacher and the head of the “Bulgar al-Jadid [New Bulgar]” club. Inspired by Midkhad Vaisov, a son of Ginan Vaisov, Nurutdinov claims that the Bulgars have lived in the Volga-Ural region from time

85 M.Z. Zakiev & Ia.F. Kuz'min-Iumanadi, *Volzhskie bulgary i ikh potomki* (Moscow: Insan, 1993); M.Z. Zakiev, *Tatary: problemy istorii i iazyka* (Kazan': IILi ANT, 1995).

86 Mirfatykh Z. Zäkiev, *Törki-tatar etnogenezy* (Kazan: Fiker, 1998).

87 Khakim, *Istoriia tatar i Tatarstana*, pp. 2, 8, 22-23, 33.

88 Fakhruddinov, *Zolotaia Orda i tatary*, pp. 13-14.

89 Ravil G. Fäkhretdinov, *Tatar khalky häm Tatarstan tarikhy: boryngy zaman häm urta gasyrlar* (Kazan: Mägarif, 1997); Interview with Fakhruddinov (February 28, 2000, Kazan).

90 *Tatarskii entsiklopedicheski slovar'* (Kazan': In-t Tat. entsiklopedii AN RT, 1999), p. 566; Damir M. Iskhakov, *Etnograficheskie gruppy tatar Volgo-Ural'skogo regiona* (Kazan': IILi ANT, 1993).

91 Foat T. Valeev, *Sibirskie tatary: kul'tura i byt* (Kazan': Tat. kn. izd-vo, 1993). Valeev himself is a Siberian Tatar.

immemorial. According to him, Bulgharia covered the area from the Danube to the Ob and from the Arctic Ocean to the Black and Caspian Seas; its army went on expeditions to Europe and the Middle and Near East. He asserts that the Tatars were in fact a "small people" formed during the years 1905–1917 with the descendants of *sluzhilye* Tatars as their core. Soviet leaders forced the name "Tatar" upon other people, but the "true name" of the Tatars (except descendants of *sluzhilye*) and the Bashkirs is "Bulghars." He cites Midkhad Vaisov as saying that such nations as the Ukrainians, the Crimean Tatars and the Meskhetian Turks are also descendants of the Bulghars.⁹² Neo-Bulgharists demand that the authorities write their nationality in the passports as "Bulghars," not "Tatars."

Neo-Bulgharists' narratives are sheer fantastic myths that express their desire to connect themselves to the world history. One can do the same thing by using the word "Turks." A linguist, academician Abrar Karimullin, claims that the Native Americans are of Turkic origin.⁹³ There are also popular accounts of the history of great Turkic empires and dynasties, which reveal the strength of the Turkic identity among the Tatars today.⁹⁴

While neo-Bulgharists are more nationalistic and less religious than the Vaisi movement a century ago, even Islamic revival is often connected with nationalism rather than denouncing it. Iskhak Hajji Lotfullin, the *imam* of a mosque in Kazan, claims that only peoples who have attained a sufficient level of freedom and ethnocultural development can accept Islam, while barbaric, aggressive and unfree communities (such as Kievan Rus) could not accept it in the pure form. The Bulghars, who possessed "patriotism" and a "developed national self-consciousness," made Islam their state and national religion. "The eldest among equals" (an epithet referring to the Russians in the Soviet period) peoples of the Golden Horde, the Bulghars-Tatars defended Eurasia's various peoples from becoming slaves of foreigners and raised the cultural level of Eurasia. He maintains that after Russia's conquest of Kazan, Islam became the symbol of national resistance and ethnic originality among the Tatars, who have fought a great *jihad* against Christianization and Russianization for four and a half centuries.⁹⁵ We can see how deeply ethnic particularism has influenced people in the former Soviet Union, including Islamic leaders, and how discourses on the Russians' "superiority" are used by non-Russians in the reversed form.

92 Fargat G.-Kh. Nurutdinov, *Bulgarskii vopros* (Orenburg: Vestnik "Bulgariia," 1993), pp. 9-12, 44-47; Idem, *Rodionovedenie: Metodicheskoe posobie po istorii Tatarstana* (Kazan': Tat. gaz.-zhurnal'noe izd-vo, 1995), pp. 20-21. The latter book is a curious mix of Bulgharism, Soviet-style historical terms and period division, while flattering Shaimiev.

93 Abrar G. Karimullin, *Prototiurki i indeitsy Ameriki: po sledam odnoi gipotezy* (Moscow: Insan, 1995).

94 Rafael' N. Bezertinov, *Tatary, tiurki – potriasateli vselennoi: Istoriia Velikikh Imperii* in 3 Vols. (Naberezhnye Chelny: Kalkan, 1997).

95 Iskhak M. Lotfullin & Faizulkhak G. Islaev, *Dzhikhad tatarskogo naroda: geroicheskaia bor'ba tatar-musul'man s pravoslavnoi inkvizitsiei na primere istorii novokreshchenskoii kontory* (Kazan, 1998), pp. 7-43.

(b) *The Chuvash*

Chuvash scholars firmly adhere to the theory of Bulghar-Chuvash continuity and consider this problem already resolved, although many of them agree that the Tatars also share the Bulghar legacy to some extent.⁹⁶ They unanimously reject autochtonism and describe how ancestors of the Chuvash – the Huns and the Bulghars – migrated from Inner Asia through North Caucasus to Middle Volga. At the same time, they admit that the Bulghars-Chuvash settled the northern and central parts of Chuvashia only around the fourteenth century and that the Chuvash have culturally much in common with Finno-Ugric peoples.⁹⁷ There seem to be neither serious dispute about ethnic history nor drastically new approach to it.

However, some Chuvash try to claim still more legacies of ancient peoples. Writer Mikhail Iukhma supposes that not only the Bulghars and the Huns but also parts of the Sumerians, the Parthians, the Sogdians, the Sacae, the Massagetae, etc., participated in the formation of the Chuvash, and describes Sogdian heroes and heroines (as well as Zoroaster) as “ancestors of the Chuvash.”⁹⁸ Amateur researcher Gennadii Egorov investigates the relationships between the Sumerians and the Chuvash (following the tradition of Marr), and claims that the Chuvash-Sumerians, who had nothing to do with the Turks, discovered America and brought culture to the Native Americans. Shnirelman describes the Chuvash version of ethnohistory only on the basis of Egorov’s book, but naturally, serious scholars do not support Egorov’s arguments.⁹⁹ Another author attempts to explore the longer term of the continental drift, climate changes and the origins of the Turks, the Huns and the Chuvash.¹⁰⁰

(c) *The Bashkirs*

Kuzeev remains the chief authority on the ethnogenesis of not only the Bashkirs but also other peoples of the Volga-Ural region. His approach is multifaceted and free from nationalism, and he is very much respected throughout the region.¹⁰¹ Mazhitov adheres to the theory that the nomads of the Southern

96 Interviews with Leonid A. Taimasov and Atner Khuzangai (March 1, 2000, Cheboksary); Vitalii P. Ivanov, *Chuvashskii etnos: Problemy istorii i etnogeografii* (Cheboksary: Chuv. gos. in-t gumanitarnykh nauk, 1998), pp. 117-137.

97 V.P. Ivanov, V.V. Nikolaev, V.D. Dmitriev, *Chuvashi: etnicheskaiia istoriia i traditsionnaia kul'tura* (Moscow: DIK, 2000), pp. 6-39; Ivanov, *Chuvashskii etnos*, pp. 17-81.

98 Mikhail Iukhma, *Drevnie chuvashi: istoricheskie ocherki* (Cheboksary: Vuchakh, 1998). Vitalii Ivanov comments on this book that “of course, from a scientific point of view, one cannot agree with all the interpretations by the author.” Ivanov, *Chuvashskii etnos*, p. 10.

99 Shnirelman, *Who Gets the Past?*, pp. 46-49, 57.

100 Antei Ilitver, *Ot gipotezy dreifa materikov k gipoteze proiskhozhdeniia gunnov – predkov chuvashai i drugikh tiurkskikh narodov*, Chast' 1 (Cheboksary: Chuv. kn. izd-vo, 1993).

101 Rail' G. Kuzeev, *Narody Srednego Povolzh'ia i Iuzhnogo Urala: etnogeneticheskii vzgliad na istoriiu* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992). I do not mean that Kuzeev is free from any ideology, because he is an ideologue of Eurasianism.

Urals in the early Iron Age (the Massagetae, the Sacae, etc.) were, at least partly, Turkic-speaking, and the Bashkirs inherit not only their language but also various features of their culture. In this aspect, he further develops the hypothesis of Rudenko, to whom he frequently refers. He argues that the Bulghar state and the Golden Horde were not Tatar states and played important roles in the Bashkir ethnic history as well.¹⁰²

Although historical researchers in Bashkortostan are generally very active, there seem to be no essentially new trends or disputes in ethnogenetic studies. There are, in my opinion, three reasons. First, Kuzeev's works on ethnic history are so sophisticated that, although not everyone agrees with him, it is difficult for younger scholars to produce qualitatively new works. Second, there are many other interesting themes for historians to study, including the national movement of the early twentieth century (its most prominent leader, Akhmed Zaki Validov (Togan), is now a national hero).

Third, the Bashkirs rose in revolt many times against Russia after their annexation and, as Kuzeev told me, it took two hundred years for them to adapt themselves to Russia. After that, however, they received privileges connected with their military service. Consequently, the central theme for the Bashkirs was and is the special relationship with Moscow, and not the relations with neighboring non-Russians.¹⁰³ Of course, there are many potentially contentious issues with the Tatars, because the ethnic boundaries between them are vague¹⁰⁴ and many Tatars live in Bashkortostan, but Bashkirs appear to think that the resolution of these problems with their neighbors, too, depend on their relations with Moscow.

Bashkortostan, too, is not bereft of fantastic stories. Amateur historian Salavat Galliamov claims that the Bashkirs (Bashkords) are an Iranian people related to the Kurds and the Scandinavians, and that English was originally a dialect of the Bashkir language. Despite the eccentric contents of the book, photographs of famous scholars (Meshchaninov, Rudenko, Mazhitov, etc.) are

102 Niiaz A. Mazhitov & Al'fiia N. Sultanova, *Istoriia Bashkortostana s drevneishikh vremen do XVI veka* (Ufa: Kitap, 1994), pp. 65-75, 213-294; Interview with Mazhitov (March 4, 2000, Ufa). One linguist also supports Rudenko's hypothesis. Sh.V. Nafikov, "S.I. Rudenko i nekotorye voprosy etnogeneza bashkir po dannym sovremennogo iazykoznaniiia," in *S.I. Rudenko i bashkiry* (Ufa: Gilem, 1998), pp. 88-98.

103 Interview with Kuzeev (March 4, 2000, Ufa). In relation to Moscow's recent demands to bring Bashkortostan's laws into line with federal norms, the head of Bashkortostan's parliament, Konstantin Tolkachev, emphasized that it is necessary to understand the mentality of Bashkirs, who "do not want to give up gains achieved since the time of Ivan the Terrible." *RFE/RL Russian Federation Report* 2:24, 28 June 2000 [<http://www.rferl.org/russianreport/2000/06/24-280600.html>].

104 Tatars and Bashkirs often dispute whether such famous figures as Zaki Validov and Rizaetdin Fakhretdinov were Bashkirs or Tatars. Salavat Iskhakov, "Istoriia narodov Povolzh'ia i Urala: problemy i perspektivy 'natsionalizatsii'," in Karl Aimermakher & Gennadii Bordiugov, eds., *Natsional'nye istorii v sovetskom i postsovetskikh gosudarstvakh* (Moscow: AIRO-XX, 1999), pp. 275-298.

printed alongside the author's picture in the first few pages, as if he were a true follower of their scholarly tradition; in the introduction, a doctor of philology praises the book as a "serious scientific study."¹⁰⁵

CONCLUSION

Central Asia (Transoxiana) and many other Muslim regions possess rich pre-modern historiographical traditions, though historical works were usually dedicated to rulers and described the history of dynasties and deeds of well-known figures, and had little to do with the collective identity of ordinary people. By contrast, in the Volga-Ural region, which was incorporated into Russia as early as the sixteenth century, there is no tradition of court historiography. Although it is possible to assume that there *were* historical works written in the Courts of the Bulghar state and the Kazan khanate, almost none has survived and their tradition was discontinued. Instead, in the nineteenth century, "Bulgharist" historiography emerged. While it did not explicitly represent an ethnic identity and had much in common with tribal and local historiography, it manipulated historical symbols in even more mythical ways than later ethnic histories in order to connect Volga Bulghar with groups of people of the nineteenth century.

The classification of ethnic groups by Russians, especially the use of the ethnic name "Tatars," does not seem to have seriously influenced the identity of the region's people for a long time. In the second half of the nineteenth century, however, Russo-European scientific methods of historical research and linguistic nationalism made a strong impact on local intellectuals. They corrected factual and logical mistakes made by old Bulgharist historians, began to argue for ethnic continuity between the Bulgars and the Chuvash or the Tatars on the basis of linguistic materials, and disputed whether the Middle-Volga Muslims were "Tatars" or "Turks." Instead of Bulgharist genealogies of notables, ethnic history began to be written as history of communities, to which all people are considered to belong on an equal basis.

The Soviet leadership encouraged the writing of ethnic history, probably in order to prove historical correctness of its policy of creating Union and autonomous republics on the ethnoterritorial principle, although this aim was never clearly stated. Methods that were markedly different from "bourgeois" sciences were preferred, and Soviet ethnogenetics was established, borrowing – more precisely, abusing – Marr's linguistic theory. Official nationalism of the

105 Salavat A. Galliamov, *Velikii Khau Ben: Istoricheskie korni bashkordsko-angliiskogo iazyka i mifologii* (Ufa: Bashkortostan, 1997). For more details on discourses on history in Bashkortostan, see: Igor' Kuchumov, "Kriuch'ia pod rebro istorii: etnicheskoe proshloe v ideologicheskoi sisteme postsovetskogo Bashkortostana," in MATSUZATO Kimitaka, ed., *Vesna narodov: novaia volna v izuchenii etnokonfessional'noi istorii Volgo-Ural'skogo regiona* (Sapporo: Slavic Research Center, forthcoming in 2002).

late 1930s and the 1940s strongly influenced Soviet "Marrist" ethnogenetics, disregarding Marr's own views on ethnicity. After 1950, elements directly connected to Marr were eliminated, but the primordialist character of Soviet ethnogenetics and the tendency to trace the origins of an ethnic group as far back as possible were not changed. To be precise, in the West, too, primordialist approaches to nations and ethnic groups predominated for a long time and the shift to instrumentalism/constructionism occurred after the 1960s. But Soviet ethnogenetics was so well organized and equipped with a scientific appearance that it seems difficult even now to overcome its legacies.

Although the Soviet regime after World War II severely restricted possible anti-Russian elements in the historiography of non-Russian peoples, it allowed discussions of ethnic origins, which sometimes provoked conflicts amongst neighboring peoples. The dispute over the Bulghar legacy between the Chuvash and the Tatars is one important example. In a sense, the energy of nationalism (and such supranational ideologies as Turkism), so strictly controlled in other fields, was poured into scientific discourses. But the Bulghar dispute, unlike the Azerbaijani-Armenian and Georgian-Abkhazian disputes, had little to do with territorial claims, and did not turn into violent conflicts during *perestroika* and in the post-Soviet period. The two sides sought to enhance their pride in cultural authenticity, rather than to make political demands. Unlike its Caucasian equivalents, the dispute concerned neither ethnic minorities within the republics nor recent migrations. After all, both Tatarstan and Chuvashia were autonomous republics that had not even possessed the nominal right of secession from the Soviet Union.

In the post-Soviet period, debates about ethnic history are very active in Tatarstan, while they are not so intense in Chuvashia and Bashkortostan. The Tatars are the most ambitious people in the region, seeking to gain more freedom, if not outright independence, from Moscow. The image of the great Golden Horde well serves their purpose, but it could come into conflict with various types of Bulgharism and cause disputes. A common feature of discourses in the three republics is that fewer scholars stand on autochtonist positions than, for example, in Central Asia. This tendency appeared already in the Soviet times and can be explained again by the difference of status of the republics, because it was and is more important for the Union (now independent) republics of Central Asia to emphasize the historical rights to their territory.

Not all varieties of ethnic history, however, can be explained by political motivations. One of the characteristics of the Soviet regime (and also, in most cases, post-Soviet states) is that the authorities try to control scholarly activities but, at the same time, try to give their policies a scientific appearance. This produces mutual dependency between the authorities and scholars, and scholars can to some extent include their own thoughts into their works, even when the latter have important political meanings. It is also noteworthy that amateur writers (most typically, Galliamov of Bashkortostan) often refer to famous scholars and pretend that their own books, too, are scientific works. Analyzing So-

viet and post-Soviet discourses on ethnic history, we have to take into consideration not only politicism but also scientism (at least in appearance) and individuality.