

ETHNOPOLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE NORTHERN CAUCASUS AND THEIR ASSESSMENT BY THE POPULATION

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The events of recent years in the Northern Caucasus have captured the attention not only of Russians, but also of many foreign politicians, which shows the extreme importance of the processes going on here. Today, "Russian statehood, new Russian federalism, is undergoing a test of strength" in the Northern Caucasus.¹ It is always difficult to find a peaceful way in an urgent ethnic, socioeconomic and political crisis.

At the end of the 20th century, Russian society became the "boxing ring" for two opposing trends: national-religious delimitation (even opposition), on the one hand, and national rapprochement and unification, on the other. The national movements which started their activity in several regions and under the present conditions acquired ambiguous ethnopolitical and ethnocultural hues are, in one case, the expression of awakened national self-awareness, and, in the other, a catalyst of national discontent.

The tempestuous growth in political activity, on which the national factor is based, prompted many researchers to begin talking about an "ethnic explosion." But this particular "ethnic phenomenon" is not peculiar to the 20th and beginning of the 21st centuries. "Ethnic activity throughout the history of mankind was one of the main driving forces behind the historical process. It was thanks to the activity of particular ethnic groups that the political map of the world was redrawn, and vast empires were created and destroyed." We should only welcome the fact that the scientific community has at last begun studying ethnopolitical processes as a vital factor of political life.²

Public opinion polls in the multiethnic regions of the Russian Federation show that ethnic tension on the whole is caused by the following reasons: the deterioration in the country's economic situation (60-65%), shortcomings in national policy (40-45%), and the unstable situation in society (40%). In so doing, the respondents named purely ethnic differences as the least pertinent cause of tension.³

This is no coincidence, since purely ethnic conflicts do not occur in real life. Ethnic self-identification and solidarity are only a way of protecting our goals, interests, values, and so on. The specific traits of axiological ethnic conflicts are manifested in contradictions related to differences in language, culture, religion, and to other sociocultural characteristics of ethnic groups.

The Northern Caucasus is a unique cultural mosaic of different races (according to some researchers, a unique kind of "Caucasian civilization"), regarding which the Russian government does not have an adequate (scientific, well-thought-out, and so on) policy. By the same token, the importance of the

¹ V. Pechenev, "Severokavkazskie zhernova. Rossiia smozhet uderzhat v svoei orbite etot region, tolko esli proiavit voliu," in: *Sovremennye etnopoliticheskie protsessy na Severnom Kavkaze*, Makhachkala, 1999, p. 97.

² V.Iu. Butuzov, "Vliianie etnicheskogo faktora na rossiiskoe obshchestvo i politicheskoe povedenie studenchestva," in: *Problema 2000: psikhologo-politicheskaia kultura sankt-peterburgskoi molodezhi*, Collection of Scientific Works by Young Scientists of the St. Petersburg State University Political Psychology Department, St. Petersburg, 2000, pp. 32-33.

³ See: G.I. Kozrev, *Vvedenie v konfliktologiiu*, Moscow, 2000.

ethnocultural factor has been extremely exaggerated, making it essentially the main reason for the local problems and conflicts.

An analysis of the crisis situation in the region shows that it began as early as the Soviet era and is a result of projects aimed at defining territorial-administrative borders, anti-Russian manifestos and declarations, and actions aimed at forming a "Caucasian confederation." In some territories, the local power structures initiated radical ethnic nationalism and drew citizens out of the legal codes of conduct, going as far as arming them illegally. In particular, they organized an armed coup in Grozny and declared a move toward independence. In this way, both the central administration, and the regional politicians, social activists, and intelligentsia are responsible for the current situation, since it was they who formulated the ideas, programs, and slogans that mobilized the political forces.

One of the defining factors of the current ethnopolitical situation in the region is the integration and disintegration processes. It is expedient to study them in two main areas of ethnic interaction. The first vector is ethnic contacts between the so-called "titular peoples of the Caucasus" and the Russian-speaking population of the republics, and the second is the specific characteristics of ethnic relations among the Caucasian peoples themselves. The situation in this area is developing along with processes that are common for all the North Caucasian ethnic groups. This applies in particular to striving for sovereignty and political self-organization, during which the ethnic component of social identification is becoming increasingly apparent.

What is more, in our opinion, the system of federative formations that has developed in the form of ethnoterritorial autonomies (republics) should not be changed, apart from probably defining a new status for the Chechen Republic.

The existence of both state and traditional legal systems (the latter as supplementary) is possible in the Northern Caucasus. Legal pluralism, which is developing in many countries, may be more efficient in our region than a "single legal space." The main thing in this process is not administrative border redivision, but improving governance. In some republics, positive political innovations are already appearing in the sphere of collective governance and community representation, although the principle of ethnic parties, tukhums or teips has serious limitations, since it has a conflict-prone potential. In terms of socio-political structuring, it would be more expedient in our opinion not to aim for ethnic corporatism, but to build an administration on the basis of mixed ethnic political coalitions (which actually already exist and function), general democratic election norms and regular changes in power, and training a new generation of managerial and legal staff.

The pronounced "national-territorial" complex, which is characteristic of the region, shows that the national-state status of territories is acquiring increasing importance at the level of ethnic self-awareness and so may become one of the main reference points in the choice of ethnic interaction strategy. The sociopolitical reality of today poses a dilemma for the North Caucasian peoples: either self-organization and sovereignty, which will lead to self-isolation of each ethnic group, or ethnic cooperation based on a broadly understood ethnic identity.

The situation within and around the region is rapidly changing. The long rivalry among the political groups, which formed mainly on the basis of ethnic-confessional characteristics, very frequently changes the character and also the orientation of its slogans and actions. The diaspora type of seasonal (labor) migration is also promoting this activity, "when a migrant can rely on the existing structures of employment within an ethnic community."⁴

Demographic changes are also very conducive to destabilization of the situation, but here we will focus on the main aspect—population migration. In terms of character, V.S. Belogurov singles out two zones. The first is primarily territories with a Russian population: the Stavropol and Krasnodar territories, and the Rostov Region. The second is the North Caucasian republics, from which Russians are primarily leaving. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Chechen Republic became a "cone of migration depression" within this zone.⁵

⁴ D. Nikitin, A. Khalmukhamedov, "Migration as a Destabilization Factor in the Northern Caucasus," *Central Asian and the Caucasus*, No. 2 (14), 2002, p. 165.

⁵ See: V.S. Belogurov, *Etnodemograficheskie protsessy na Severnom Kavkaze*, Stavropol, 2000, pp. 11-12, 85.

These processes complicated the ethnopolitical and socioeconomic situation, stimulated the crime rate, and significantly raised the load on the labor market in the areas where migrants settled—the Northern Caucasus accounted for approximately 20% of Russia's migration growth. But it should be noted that from the “purely” demographic viewpoint migration is a blessing for the region, since it curbed the decline in the natural increment of the population.⁶

Forced migrants have predominated in the migration flows of recent years. According to the relative indices, North Ossetia, the Stavropol Territory, and Ingushetia are experiencing the greatest load in this area, which in no way reduces the tension in other parts of the region. For example, the attacks by armed gangs on the border regions of Dagestan in 1999 left about 17,000 people homeless, and many of them became forced migrants.⁷ The problems of forced migrants from the Ossetian-Ingushetian conflict zone have still not been resolved. Whereas the problem of returning forced migrants (approximately 60,000 of them) to the Prigorodniy District and Vladikavkaz is still one of the most urgent problems for the Ingushetian government, the authorities of North Ossetia think that repatriation is progressing quite satisfactorily. “But while there is even one person who is unable to return home, this situation can be considered problematic.”⁸ The problems of forced migrants from Chechnia to Ingushetia have not been resolved, or of migrants in the Stavropol Territory, where their number, according to different estimates, amounts to between 200,000 and 500,000 people.⁹

Migration flows are changing the ethnic composition of residents, aggravating ethnic relations, and forming negative stereotypes about the newcomers, which often leads to open clashes and even to violence. One of the most conflictive groups in the indigenous population is the Cossacks. The significant influx of representatives of certain nationalities, the ousting of Russians from the republics of the former U.S.S.R. and Chechnia, the numerous kidnappings, the terrorist acts in Budenovsk, Kizliar, Pervomaiskoe, Makhachkala, Kaspiisk, Piatigorsk, Mozdok, and so on, and the increase in crime rate at the beginning of the 1990s initiated several major campaigns by the Stavropol Cossacks. In so doing, the victims were usually migrants from different ethnic groups.¹⁰ In the Krasnodar Territory, Cossacks quite actively come out against Armenians, Meskhetian Turks, Kurds, and “people of Caucasian nationality” in general. The contradictions and conflicts with migrants of non-Slavic nationalities (according to unofficial data, the total number of those who arrived in the territory in the 1990s exceeded one million) and the followers of other national and ethnoeconomic cultures led in 2001 to ethnic conflicts in the Dinskaia, Krymsk, Abinsk, and Kanevskaia regions, as well as in the city of Slaviansk-na-Kubani. In the Rostov Region, conflicts between non-Slavic migrants and local residents often occur at the everyday level, particularly among young people.¹¹

An important factor of instability is ethnic tension and ethnic conflicts, particularly their political component. In the 1990s, power-hungry Islamic extremist groups increased their attempts to manipulate ethnic consciousness in the region, slogans on political and sociocultural domination of the titular nations were stirred up, separatist sentiments and claims to special territorial rights fomented, and instances of discrimination for national and confessional reasons became more frequent. “The constant increase in the number of these occurrences and the level of their tension threatens to paralyze social life not only in the Northern Caucasus, but also far beyond it.”¹²

The existing ethnic borders, which are regulated on the one hand by geopolitical factors (a single administrative-political space, proximity of territorial borders, economic ties, and so on), and by factors of culturological property on the other (historical past, confessional orientation, sociocultural manifesta-

⁶ See: S.V. Riazantsev, “Demograficheskaia situatsiia na Severnom Kavkaze,” *Sotsis*, No. 1, 2002, p. 80.

⁷ See: *Ibid.*, p. 81; G. Kovalskaia, “Rukotvornaia katastrofa,” *Itogi*, 26 October, 1999, p. 12.

⁸ I. Maksakov, “Posledstvia osetino-ingushskogo konflikta ne preodoleny,” *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, No. 207, 1 November, 2000, p. 2; see also: A. Mal'sagov, “Respublika Ingushetiia razvivaetsia dinamicno,” *Severniy Kavkaz*, No. 38, October 2000, p. 13.

⁹ See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Migratsionnaia situatsiia v Stavropolskom krae v novykh geopoliticheskikh usloviakh*, Stavropol, 1999.

¹⁰ See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Demograficheskaia situatsiia na Severnom Kavkaze*, pp. 83-84.

¹¹ See: D. Nikitin, A. Khalmukhamedov, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹² V.I. Chuprov, Iu.A. Zubok, K. Williams, *Molodezh v obshchestve riska*, Moscow, 2001, p. 61.

tions of the vital activity of ethnic groups: traditions, customs, and so on) play a structure-forming role in ethnic communication.

Today, the need for moving toward new social relations based on principles of tolerance, a peacekeeping policy, dialog, and compromise is obvious, without which it is impossible to reach a certain level of tolerance and acknowledge the rights of others to their own opinion, to a different culture, and to different moral values.

The mentioned factors and their components are much more pernicious than they may seem at first glance. Social psychologists are well aware that “when there is a sudden change in social ideals and morals, certain social groups stop feeling they belong to that society and become alienated, while rejecting the new social norms and values, including the socially declared models of behavior, and instead of trying to achieve individual or collective goals by conventional means, they promote their own methods, which are frequently against the law.”¹³

The Northern Caucasus differs from several other Russian constituencies in that the centuries-old traditions of *masliat* (Arabian for consent), which regulate relations between peoples in our multicultural region, still have a positive influence on keeping the peace. But social psychologists wonder how long these traditions can serve as a foundation for stabilizing the situation and to what extent society itself is willing to retain and develop the traditions of folk diplomacy.

Sociological surveys must be conducted in order to clarify these questions and develop an efficient peacekeeping policy. The results of polls conducted in 1990, 1997, and 1999 among the Russian youth convince us of this, which led corresponding specialists to the following conclusion: “Spiritual reproduction today reflects the coexistence of two processes—the succession of traditional values reflected by the historical consciousness of young people and the establishment of new liberal identities characteristic of contemporary society.”¹⁴ This trend is not only inherent of young people in the Northern Caucasus, but of the whole world. When analyzing the real state of tolerance among the population, its various communities and groups, at least two important questions arise. First, can the level of tolerance required for the functioning of democracy be at least sort of established between the “elite” and “electorate”? According to some researchers, there is essentially no answer to this based on empirical facts. Further, according to a conceptual analysis by V.P. Makarenko, the prospects for democracy in the Caucasus are determined by the influence of its imperial neighbors, Turkey and Russia, where “money is made with the help of power; in Europe, power is bought with the help of money. The long influence of these models on political life in the Caucasus has turned the countries of the region into a technological and political dumpsite.” In this respect, the author asks (the second question in our context): “Will these countries be able to change the situation, or will they passively play the role, in an ‘arc of instability,’ they have been prescribed by the directors of geopolitics? Neither the near and distant neighbors, nor the governments of the Caucasian countries have programs for counteracting the processes and phenomena described. This makes their theoretical systemization and study even more important.”¹⁵

The urgency of this last question emphasizes again the pertinence of studying the ethnopolitical and confessional situation in the Northern Caucasus in order to identify its influence on the peacekeeping activity in the region, as well as the prospects for putting the principles of tolerance into practice.

A study of the dynamics of the changes in social structure of the axiological orientations in the Russian Federation has shown that education level is one of the most valuable factors influencing Russians’ tolerant acceptance and attitude toward other people’s views, values, cultures, and so on. The country’s educated citizen is a more reliable positive force in further democratization of society (but, we will note that the importance of education level should not be exaggerated). It is capable (under certain conditions) of resolving many social and ethnopolitical contradictions and helping to establish and develop a law-based state.

¹³ A. Yuriev, *Mentalitet—osnova sostoiianiia gosudarstva v Rossii*, Speech topic at a round table called “Russia’s Human Resources and Globalization,” St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 6.

¹⁴ V.I. Chuprov, Yu.A. Zubok, K. Williams, op. cit., p. 97.

¹⁵ V.P. Makarenko, “Kavkaz: kontseptologicheskii analiz,” *Sotsis*, No. 1, 2001, p. 40.

The Northern Caucasus is the most developed Russian region in the cultural sense and is characterized by a high concentration of professional cultural, higher education, and scientific institutions. Among the representatives of non-Russian people, the percentage of the population with a higher education and university students is higher than throughout the country as a whole (only the Chechens and some of the Daghestani ethnic groups represent a lower than average percentage), and a system of multicultural education has essentially formed with a dominating role played by Russian-language study. But during recent years due to economic difficulties, conflicts, and xenophobia in the leading universities of the country, including in Rostov, Stavropol, and Krasnodar, the number of students from among non-Russian North Caucasians is declining. Some of these young people prefer to receive a religious education at relevant universities in Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. Some of those who return home after study abroad become the bearers and spreaders of ideas of the most radical trend of Islam—Wahhabism, while others cannot get jobs.

In order to identify the ability of our young people to objectively evaluate the situation in the republic and in the region, in February 2002, the students of two Daghestani state universities were polled: Daghestan State University and Daghestan State Pedagogical University, and their branches. Five hundred and sixteen first- through sixth-year students participated in the poll, 48.7% of whom were males and 51.3% females (age of the respondents ranged from 17 to 26).

To the question of how efficiently the state structures are conducting peacekeeping activity and their role in stabilizing the sociopolitical situation in the Northern Caucasus and Daghestan, 63.2% of the respondents (questionnaire No. 1) replied that this activity is not very efficient, or even inefficient, only 16.8% considered it efficient or quite efficient, and 20% did not know.

The role of public organizations in stabilizing the sociopolitical situation in the region and resolving ethnic conflicts was assessed as not very high by 54.9% of the respondents, as irrelevant by 26.3%, and as high by only 10.2%, while 8.6% did not know.

The role of the national movements in the peacekeeping activity was characterized as positive by 25.9%, as negative by 24.5%, as irrelevant by 32.8%, and 16.8% did not know.

But 43.8% considered peacekeeping activity in resolving military conflicts positive (this is largely explained by the attacks of armed gangs from Chechnia in 1999), although 34.7% of the respondents believe that it is irrelevant, 7.9% think it plays a negative role, and 13.6% do not know.

In the opinion of 39.8% of the respondents, ethnic relations in the republic are not stable enough and tense, 28.7% believe conflicts are possible, 25.6% think ethnic relations are stable, and 5.9% do not know.

Twenty-four point four percent of the respondents think that tension in ethnic relations is caused by a socioeconomic crisis. Among its other reasons, 23.3% of the respondents named various manifestations of nationalism, 16.3% political opposition among parties, national movements, and groups, 14.2% mistakes in the state's national policy, 7.7% the publications in certain mass media and some television programs that provoke national intolerance, 7.5% the increase in unemployment, and 6.7% national prejudice of the mass consciousness.

The students assessed the role of religious organizations in regulating ethnic conflicts and in peacekeeping activity (questionnaire No. 2) as follows: not high—42.5%, active—20.9%, not high enough—16.8%, irrelevant—15.6%, and 4.2% did not know.

Forty-nine point three percent of the respondents were against religious organizations participating in the republic's political life, 38.4% were in favor, and 12.3% could not decide or did not know.

To the question: "Is an increase in religiosity among the population helping to harmonize ethnic relations in the republic?" the responses were broken down as follows: 54.6% of the respondents believe it is not, 40.3% think it is, and 5.1% do not know. This shows that despite the increase in the influence of the clergy on young people, confessional organizations have still not justified the hopes placed on religion regarding its ability to promote rapid and effective regulation of the situation in Daghestan and in the region.

In our opinion, the situation will not radically change any time soon, which means we should look for other levers (mechanisms) capable of establishing tolerant relations among the representatives of dif-

ferent confessions. The need for a comprehensive and universal approach to resolving this question is dictated by the fact that two religions are traditionally the most popular in the region: Islam and Christianity. There has always been a discourse between them, but no matter how hostile the precepts of one toward the other, they have always communicated and latently exchanged values. One religious culture borrowed from the other primarily what was lacking in its own potential. Today's reality says that the situation has changed in the 21st century, and as A. Zhuravskiy noted: "...by religious dialog, we are coming to increasingly understand not the spontaneous and latent process of exchanging cultural information, but a creative orientation toward mutual understanding."¹⁶

Students evaluated the ethnocultural situation in the republic in the fall of 2001 (questionnaire No. 3) as follows: 50.2% said it had calmed down, 22% believed it was more tense, 18.6% thought it tended toward aggravation, and 9.2% said it had not changed.

To the question: "Between which confessions are contradictions seen?" the following responses were given: 73.3% said between the representatives of traditional Islam, Tariqat followers, and Wahhabis, 20% between Muslims and Protestant communities (Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and so on), and 6.7% between Russian Orthodox and Protestant communities (Jehovah's Witnesses, Pentecostals, and so on).

The greatest intolerance toward people of a different faith, according to the respondents, is shown by the representatives of the following confessions and movements: Wahhabis—63.3%, traditional Muslims—25.9%, Russian Orthodox—10.8%, Tariqat followers (murids)—0%, and Protestants—0%.

An explanation should be given with respect to Protestants. A preliminary review of a poll just recently started by the author of this article on Protestantism and its trends in Daghestan showed that most students, particularly first and second years, have at best a very superfluous idea of the problem. So the "percentages" obtained in no way reflect the actual situation with Protestantism in the republic and its relations with other confessions. Incidentally, the results of our other polls¹⁷ also show that students know very little about Christianity in general, i.e. Orthodoxy and Catholicism. This is largely explained by the fact that most of the young people we polled identify themselves as follows: "we are Muslims!" Nevertheless, all the respondents believe that no one should force their religion on someone else.

The results of our studies show that ethnic opposition in terms of identification in Daghestan, as throughout the entire Northern Caucasus, is developing among young people "not in terms of Orthodoxy—Islam, Slavs—non-Slavs, as might be expected. It is developing on different grounds, primarily along the lines of the Caucasus—other ethnic groups."¹⁸ This is manifested for example in the incorrect and humiliating cliché of "people of Caucasian nationality."

Sixty point four percent of the respondents believe that religion is having a positive effect on the state of ethnic relations in Daghestan, while 27.6% believe that it is negative, and 12% do not know.

The opinion that the role of peacekeeping organizations in Daghestan has increased (questionnaire No. 1) was divided into three almost equal parts: 34.9% of the respondents said "yes," 33.5% said "no," and 31.6% did not know. This may reflect the state of uncertainty that reigns among the Daghestani youth (the three thirds rule). But it could also be the result of insufficient knowledge about the activity of the peacekeeping organizations. (It could also be a mixture of the two.)

According to 35.6% of the students, the authority of elders and influential people plays an important role in resolving conflict situations, and the traditions of folk diplomacy are widely used: masliat—29.8%, Islam—26.3%, other religions—1.6%, don't know—6.7%. Some respondents wrote: "the traditions of internationalism," and "solidarity of the Daghestani people, which was vividly manifested in 1999 during the attacks by Chechen gangs."

The contribution of the mass media in harmonizing ethnic relations and forming ethnic and confessional tolerance was assessed by 62.6% of the respondents as insignificant, by 20% as significant, and

¹⁶ A. Zhuravskiy, "Khristiane i musul'mane: ot konfrontatsii k dialogu," in: *Khristiane i musul'mane: problemy dialoga*, Moscow, 2000.

¹⁷ See: S.I. Murtuzaliev, "Khristianstvo i molodezh Dagestana," in: *Problemy polikul'turnogo obrazovaniia*, International Collection of Scientific Articles, Makhachkala, 2001, pp. 97-108.

¹⁸ V.I. Chuprov, Iu.A. Zubok, K. Williams, op. cit., p. 211.

17.4% did not know. We think one of the reasons for this is that the peacekeeping policy conducted in the republic and in the region is not given sufficiently qualified coverage, so students do not have a clear picture of the problem as a whole. Another reason in our view is that most of the republic's population does not know exactly what is meant by tolerance and by peacekeeping.

In our opinion, the mass media should publish the main provisions of the Declaration of the Principles on Tolerance (Arts 1-6) approved by the General Conference of UNESCO as early as 16 November, 1995. In the Russian translation of this document, the term "tolerance" was replaced with "acceptance." During personal conversations the author of this article had with residents of the republic it was revealed that most people understand the word "acceptance," as it is used in everyday speech, as the "ability to accept, to resign oneself to other's peoples opinions, to make allowances for the actions of other people," it is frequently associated with a passive attitude to the world around, non-resistance to evil, and the ability "to turn the other cheek." So specific efforts should be made through the mass media to explain that tolerant precepts are on the contrary an active vital stance aimed at protecting the rights of every person and intercepting any manifestations of intolerance.¹⁹

So we can conclude that while the republic's population does not consider the peacekeeping role to be the main contribution to stabilizing the ethnopolitical and socioeconomic situation in the Northern Caucasus, it is nonetheless a significant one. However, the people also think that peacekeeping activity is not very effective in preventing military conflicts (clashes) and resolving ethnic confrontations, while the older generation, mainly men over 50, believe the traditions of folk diplomacy are more effective for regulating the situation in this sphere.

Underassessment of the destabilizing factors characteristic of recent decades has led to the power structures and Russian public thought being unprepared to provide answers to the problems of ethnopolitical and ethnic relations that have "suddenly" appeared, and their inability to foresee potential religious collisions and adjust state national policy in keeping with the demands of the times.

At the turn of the century, the intricate intertwining of different political, ethnic, territorial, economic, confessional and other conflicts has become an everyday reality in the Northern Caucasus. In so doing, it is usually not the entire ethnic group, but only a small part of it, that expresses ethnopolitical and other interests—those elite members who are usually trying to achieve their own personal goals.

The contents of any national policy is not only and not so much the "removal" of contradictions and negative phenomena that already exist, as the ability to forecast them and create mechanisms that defuse ethnic and ethnoconfessional tension and national intolerance. This requires an objective and unprejudiced analysis of the processes of ethnopolitical, socioeconomic and spiritual life, looking for the best ways for political, social and ethnic structures to cooperate, forming ties within and between ethnic groups, and striving for national and confessional harmony.

This analysis should focus greater attention on studying the migration flows. "Today, in the Russian regions of the Northern Caucasus we are witnessing the beginning of a trend that might develop either into a positive factor of integration of the migrants (through national-cultural autonomy, for example) or into a destructive factor (which is more probable). Being a smaller part of the region's population as a whole, an ethnic minority may dominate in certain areas (district, village) and affect the ethnic and political situation there."²⁰ The activists of different national movements used and could still use this situation to their ideological advantage.

For example, forced migration of the Russian-speaking population from the region is fraught not only with difficult economic and social consequences for the country, but also with likely ethnic and national-territorial alienation of the North Caucasian constituencies of the Russian Federation, which could lead to Russia losing its territorial integrity.

In order to make radical changes in the situation, emergency measures much be taken at both the federal and regional level aimed at ensuring law and order, promoting socioeconomic revival of the de-

¹⁹ See: A.G. Asmolov, G.U. Soldatova, L.A. Shaigerova, "O smyslakh poniatiiia 'tolerantnost,'" in: *Vek tolerantnosti: Nauchno-publitsisticheskii vestnik.*, Moscow, 2001.

²⁰ See: D. Nikitin, A. Khalmukhamedov, op. cit., p. 165.

pressed North Caucasian constituencies, regulating the migration flows, and finding a comprehensive solution to the problems of forced migrants.

The Caucasian noosphere, or great Caucasian tradition, and the phenomenon of “Caucasian-ness” itself correlate primarily with the ideal of the “enlightened Caucasian,” that is with an ideal which is currently doomed to oblivion by the state mass media and which they are pushing to the periphery. Whenever yet another restoration of border status, an inter-civilizational border, an Islam-Christian boundary is imposed on the region, primarily Daghestan, the problem of marginalization is aggravated. If we recognize this danger, we must exert maximum effort to combat any increase in the spirit (trend) of intolerance and violence, which poses a threat to all the peoples of the Northern Caucasus.

The Caucasus has always been famous for its experience in peacekeeping and achieving peace between conflicting sides. As early as the 19th century, S. Bronevskiy noted that if the Caucasus had not recognized “friendship and hospitality” as the foundation of relations “between different tribes, there would have been no other relations apart from military.”²¹ In the Caucasus, not only the “jigit” (a Caucasian horseman) cult, but also the cult of peacekeeper, is promulgated—after all, a mountain saying goes: “War does not give birth to sons.”

Mixed marriages are an important consolidating factor and effective way to inculcate world culture. These families are natural ways to spread bilingualism, a cultural dialog, and the ideals of tolerance (sabor), which is one of the moral imperatives of the traditional mountain ethics.²²

Harmonization of ethnic relations should be a special area of state policy on raising the next generation, aimed at forming a tolerant consciousness in civil society by means of the comprehensive and targeted use of the mass media among others.

²¹ S. Bronevskiy, *Istoricheskie izvestiia o Kavkaze*, Moscow, 1825, pp. 127-128.

²² See: Kh. Khasbulatov, “Tolerantnost i noisk sovremennogo dialoga,” *Dagestanskaia pravda*, 1 July, 1999.