ETHNOPOLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE ROSTOV REGION, THE KRASNODAR AND STAVROPOL TERRITORIES: PROBLEMS, CONTRADICTIONS, AND PROSPECTS

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Ethnopolitical processes in the so-called Russian regions of the Caucasus should be studied not only for academic but also for practical purposes. All students of the Caucasus concentrate either on Chechnia or the armed conflicts in Abkhazia, Nagorny Karabakh, South Ossetia, etc. Experts tend to pay attention to the latent conflicts in the North Caucasian republics and the South Caucasian states (the conflicts in Karachaevo-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria, the Lezghian question, the Armenian-Georgian relations in Samtskhe-Javakheti). The Rostov Region and the Krasnodar and Stavropol Territories, however, on the whole have so far remained outside the scope of the expert community's attention.

In fact, the geopolitical and socioeconomic role of the so-called Russian regions of the Northern Caucasian can hardly be overestimated. Together, the three federation constituencies cover 68.5 percent of the Russian Northern Caucasus, while their 12 million-strong population comprises 68.35 percent of the total North Caucasian population and 8.25 percent of Russia's population. The Krasnodar Territory is the third in Russia where its population size is concerned; it comes after Moscow and the Moscow Region. The Rostov Region is the sixth among the 89 RF constituencies, with Moscow, the Moscow Region, the Krasnodar Territory, St. Petersburg, and the Sverdlovsk Region having larger populations. The Krasnodar Territory boasts of the Black Sea coast with large recreation centers of international importance: Sochi populated by about 345,000 and Novorossiisk with the population of 189,000. The latter also has terminals for the Azeri and Kazakhstani oil and gas. The Novorossiisk and Tuapse ports are the country's first and third freight haulage centers. In the future the Krasnodar Territory will become the main Black

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Sea naval base of the RF. Rostov-on-Don is the capital of sorts of the North Caucasian Military District (the only one in the country involved in hostilities). The ecological resorts of the Caucasian Mineral Waters set up in 1993 by a presidential decree[1] is part of the Stavropol Territory. At the same time, the Stavropol Territory is found in the very heart of the Russian Caucasus and its ethnopolitical landscape, and borders on the seats of the most complicated ethnic conflicts (Chechnia, North Ossetia, and Daghestan). The Krasnodar and Stavropol territories and the Rostov Region are Russia's largest grain producers that ensure the country's food security. The Russian North Caucasian regions are very important at the time of federal elections: today there are 18 deputies of the State Duma elected in single-member districts (the Krasnodar Territory and the Rostov Region are represented by seven deputies each, while the Stavropol Territory has four deputies). This shows that the future of Russia's policies in the Greater Caucasus, its security in the south and across the country depend, to a great extent, on continued stability, ethnic harmony and prevention of conflicts in the Russian regions of the Northern Caucasus.

[1] See: *Politicheskiy almanakh Rossii 1997,* Vol. 2, ed. by M. MacFall and N. Petrov, The Moscow Carnegie Center, Moscow, August-November 1998, Book 1-2.

The Rostov Region: An Island of Stability in the Turbulent Sea

Traditionally this region is regarded as the socioeconomic and military-political center of the Russian Northern Caucasus (until May 2000 this status was an unofficial one). The region covers the territory of 100,800 sq km (it is the 35th among the RF constituencies where its size is concerned) on the lower Don and serves as a gateway of sorts to the Caucasus. It houses the military, socioeconomic, scientific and academic structures of importance for the entire Caucasus: the North Caucasian Military District, the North Caucasian Scientific Center of Higher Education, the North Caucasian Customs Administration, the directorate of the Northern Caucasus Association of Socioeconomic Cooperation. In May 2000 Rostov-on-Don that was founded in 1749 became the capital of the North Caucasian federal okrug (today the Southern federal okrug). The region borders on the Voronezh and Volgograd regions, the Stavropol and Krasnodar territories, and the Republic of Kalmykia. It has a state land and sea border with Ukraine. The region was formed in 1937. Before that it was part of the Southeast of Russia (1920-1924), the North Caucasian Area (1924-1934), the Azov-Black Sea Area (1934-1937). In the prerevolutionary period it was part of the Don Cossack Host Region (the administrative-territorial unit of the Host of the Don Cossacks based in Novocherkassk, the largest in the Russian Empire) and the Great Don Host (the Cossack state of the Civil War period). The symbols selected for the Rostov Region stress this continuity. The flag nearly faithfully reproduces the flag of the Great Don Host: three horizontal blue, yellow, and red lines that back in 1918 symbolized the unity of the Cossacks, Kalmyks and "aliens" (the Russian non-Cossack population). A new element—a white vertical line—symbolizes the region's unity with the Russian Federation. Its hymn was borrowed from the same Great Don Host; the coat of arms is formed of the symbols of power of the Cossack atamans.

The region is home for 4.4 million of which 89.6 percent are Russians. They are by no means a homogeneous ethnic community. With a certain degree of conventionality we can identify its five historically shaped components: the first is made by the Don Cossacks that began moving into what was known as the Wilderness (Dikoe Pole) at the turn of the 16th century. There they came into contact with nomadic Turks (the Crimean Tartars and the Nogais), the Ottoman Empire, and the North Caucasian peoples from whom they borrowed many of their traditions and customs. This was how a highly specific Cossack culture of the Don came into being that gives grounds for regarding the Slavic-Russian part of the Don Cossacks as a sub-ethnos of the Russians. The peasants that came to the Don in the early 18th century when the Cossacks were forbidden to give shelter to fugitive peasants from central Russia formed the second com-

ponent. The third one is made of the so-called aliens who settled on the lower Don when serfdom was abolished in 1861. (By 1917 the peasants and aliens outnumbered the Cossacks.) Today, according to different estimates, Cossack descendants comprise about 15 percent of the region's population. People described as "specialists in national economy" in Soviet times form the fourth component, while the fifth component comprises migrants from the Near Abroad and the RF republics. The Russian migrants from Chechnia are most prominent on the public scene: in 1996 they set up a Movement of Those Who Suffered in the Chechen Conflict and started their own newspaper *Biulleten pereselentsa* (Migrant's Bulletin). Between 1992 and March 2002, 44,162 people out of the total 159,129 applicants received the forced migrant status. Even though the bulk of the migrants came from Chechnia, and from the Central Asian and South Caucasian states the majority among them (87.2 percent) were Russians.

Ukrainians (3.45 percent) are the second largest ethnos; by the beginning of the 21st century many of them were Russified. The Armenian diaspora is one of the oldest in the South of Russia; its share in the total population is 1.8 percent. The first Armenians moved to the Don in the latter half of the 18th century; they opened the first printshop in the South of Russia in 1790; founded a small town of their own called Nakhichevan-on-Don merged with Rostov-on-Don in 1928. Today it is the Proletarskiy District of the region's capital. (There are also compact Armenian communities in the Miasnikovskiy District: in the villages of Chaltyr, Bol'shie Saly, and Krym.) After 1991 ethnic Armenians from Armenia and other post-Soviet states started coming to the region; there are members of other ethnic groups: Azeris (17,000), Chechens (17,000), the Meskhetian Turks (16,800), Georgians (9,900), Darghins (6,000) and Avars (4,000).[2]

The eastern districts, the zone of traditional sheep breeding that needs shepherds, has a special ethno-political role to play. In the 1960s-1970s Chechens and Daghestanis came there as shepherds. In the 1990s ethnic and political tension in Chechnia created waves of migrants from the "rebellious republic" who came to settle in the east. According to the regional administration, in 2002 there were about 1,300 Chechens in the Dubovskoe District, over 200, in the Zavetnoe District; over 1,200, in the Zimovniki District, and approximately the same number in the Remontnoe District. People of Daghestanian extraction live in compact groups in the Remontnoe (over 1,200), Zimovniki (over 900), Dubovskoe (about 1,200), and Zavetnoe (about 300) districts. In 1989, driven by the ethnic clashes the Meskhetian Turks left Uzbekistan to settle densely in the east and south: there are 1,400 of them in the Zimovniki District, about 6,000 in the Martynovka, about 3,000 in Sal'sk, and about 1,600 in Volgodonsk districts.[3] On the whole the situation in the most polyethnic districts is stable and controlled, yet sporadic conflicts between members of Caucasian ethnoses and Russians cannot be avoided. This is what causes conflicts:

- Criminal behavior of the newcomers and the local people (fights, murders, robberies, and crop damaging);
- Self-isolation of ethnic groups, the members of which refuse to abide by the rules and norms of the ethnic majority and look at their ethnic authorities for guidance rather than heeding laws and power;
- Active migration activity and an inflow of new migrants;
- Migrant-phobia of the local people;
- Delayed response of the authorities to conflicts, insufficient methodological support of ethnic tension prevention;
- Continued Chechen crisis.

Conflicts have become a more or less regular local feature since the 1970s when the murder of two girls, graduates of a local school in the Remontnoe District in 1976 connected with Chechens caused an

[2] See: L.L. Khoperskaia, "Rostovskaia oblast," in: *Bezhentsy i vynuzhdennye pereselentsy: etnicheskie stereotipy (Opyt sotsiologicheskogo analiza),* Vladikavkaz, 2002.

[3] See: V.L. Marinova's contribution published in *Materialy konferentsii "Formirovanie kul'tury mezhnatsional'nogo obshchenia na Donu: opyt i problemy,* Rostov-on-Don, 2003, p. 32.

upsurge of negative sentiments among the local people. In the 1980s-2000s this repeated itself elsewhere in the region. In March 2000, a conflict between the locals and Chechens in the Martynovka District ended with the demand that a referendum should be conducted on evicting the Chechens and Daghestanis from the district. In October 2000, a fight between groups of Russians and Daghestanis developed into a massive unsanctioned rally at the Rostov-Sal'sk highway that demanded that all "people of the Caucasian origin" should be re-registered. In 2001, ethnic tension between the Russians and Chechens was registered in the Peschanokopskoe and Zavetnoe districts. In February 2002, a fight between the local people and Chechens in the Zimovniki District triggered an anti-Chechen rally that insisted that a representative of the regional administration in the east of the region should interfere. The more or less common pattern of ethnic tension is the following: a conflict (a fight, assault, etc.)—demands that extraordinary measures should be applied against the "aliens"—interference of regional or local powers that settle the conflict. On the whole, the region's administration is coping with ethnic tension much better than its North Caucasian neighbors. The local authorities avoid alarmist undertones in their calls and other actions; they refuse to exploit the myth that migration threatens the local Russians, while the local elite never uses nationalism for political purposes.

There is a community of Meskhetian Turks in the region that is as large as a similar community in the Krasnodar Territory, yet throughout the years of V. Chub governorship not a single political threat was pronounced against the Meskhetian Turks. There are conflicts between them and the local people. In 1994, for example, the Cossack meeting of the Krasny Kut village (the Vesely District) passed a decision on their deportation. This and similar initiatives were never approved of or supported by the regional authorities; the regional administration never initiated deportations for ethnic reasons and never looked at them as a means of defusing ethnic tension. It was on its initiative and with its support that Councils of Ethnic Agreement and Councils of Representatives of Ethnic Groups were set up in the east, in the potentially unstable districts. In 1999 the Consultative Council of Ethnic Public Associations at the region's administration condemned the anti-Semitic pronouncement of deputy of the RF State Duma Albert Makashov.

The Kuban Area: A Zone of Latent Ethnic Conflicts

The Krasnodar Territory that covers 76,000 sq km and holds the 45th place in the Russian Federation by its size borders on the Rostov Region, the Stavropol Territory, Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and Adigey. It also borders on Georgia and on the unrecognized Republic of Abkhazia, a de jure part of Georgia. It is washed by the Black and Azov seas and has 38 districts and 15 large cities. Its administrative center, Krasnodar since 1920, was founded in 1793 as Ekaterinodar. As an administrative unit the Territory appeared on the maps in 1937; before that in 1924-1934 it was part of the North Caucasian Area and in 1934-1937, part of the Azov-Black Sea Area. Before the revolution the Territory was the Kuban Region (the administrative-territorial unit of the Kuban Cossack Host created in 1860, the second largest Cossack army of the Russian Empire) and the Black Sea Gubernia (the smallest in czarist Russia). The Kuban Cossack Host territory also included Karachaevo-Cherkessia (the Batalpashinskiy division), Adigey (the Maykop division), and the Stavropol Territory. During the Civil War there was a Cossack state on this territory; in 1921 the Kuban Area and the Black Sea Region were united into the Kuban-Black Sea Region. In 1991, the newly formed Adigey Autonomous Region was founded as an independent RF constituency. After 1991 the Krasnodar Territory has been attracting the leaders of the Russian ethnic movement of Adigey, as well as of the Urup and Zelenchukskaia districts of Karachaevo-Cherkessia. The symbols selected for the Krasnodar Territory emphasize its ties with its predecessor—the Kuban Region. Its hymn, "Kuban is Our Homeland," was written before the revolution by Chaplain K. Obraztsov.

The Territory's population size of 5 million has put it on the third place in the Russian Federation; Russians, the dominating ethnic group, comprise 84.6 percent of the total population. The group is much more varied than the Russians of the Rostov Region where their roots are concerned. Academic and pub-

licist writings of Ukraine look at the Kuban Area as one of the ethnic Ukrainian lands. It was incorporated into the Russian state when the Crimea had been joined to Russia: before 1783 Kuban was part of the Crimean Khanate. The Black Sea Cossacks were one of the important instruments used to consolidate Russia's positions in the area. They are descendants of the Zaporozh'e Cossacks of Ukraine. In 1788 the Camp of the Loyal Zaporozh'e Cossacks was renamed the Host of the Loyal Black Sea Cossacks; in 1792 they were rewarded "for perpetuity with the Island of Phanagoria with lands between the Kuban and the Azov Sea."[4] Later, those who came to the area from Malorossia (the old name of Ukraine) were also counted as members of the Black Sea army. In 1860, the Black Sea Cossacks were merged with the Caucasian Line Cossack Host (of ethnic Russians) into a single army. In this way, in the mid-19th century Kuban became a Cossack melting pot of sorts that created a mixed Russian-Ukrainian Kuban identity. During the Civil War the heads of the Kuban Council, who were all Ukraine-philes, rejected the great power policies of the White Cause leaders.

Later, in the course of the 1926 All-Union population census the Kuban Cossacks were registered as Ukrainians because of Ukrainization of the language and educational spheres. Later, this trend subsided: during the 1930-1980 population censuses these people were registered as Russians. Under the influence of these processes as well as industrialization and urbanization many of the Ukrainian-speaking Cossacks identified themselves as Russians or as members of a specific ethnic group that differed both from the Russians and Ukrainians. There is also an ethnic group of Russians formed by the descendants of the Kuban "aliens" (Soviet specialists who struck root there), as well as Russian-speaking migrants from other CIS countries and non-Russian RF republics.

In 1989, the Ukrainians formed the second largest ethic group in Kuban (there were 182,128 of them, or 3.9 percent of the total population). Early in the 21st century they became the third largest group after the Russians and Armenians who in 1989 comprised 3.7 percent of the Kuban population (171,175 people). According to expert assessments, early in the 21st century there were about 244,000 Armenians living in the area (or about 5 percent of its population). Certain publications insisted that there was half a million of them. The Armenian community increased because of the migration of the 1990s. They mainly live in compact groups in cities along the Black Sea coast: in Sochi they comprise 14.6 percent of the total population; in Tuapse, 12 percent; in Adler, 38 percent; in Anapa, 7.27 percent. There are large compact Armenian groups in other places as well: the Apsheronsk District, 7.9 percent; Armavir, 6.98 percent; Otradnaia District, 5.29 percent. Members of the Armenian community are prominent in the area's economy, science, and culture.

Greeks form another prominent socioeconomic community in the Kuban Area. They comprise 0.6 percent of its population and live compactly in Gelenjik (6.87 percent), Krymsk (3.49 percent), and Anapa (2.58 percent).[5]

According to the 1989 All-Union population census, there were 2,200 Meskhetian Turks living in the area. Late in the 1970s-early 1980s heads of local collective and state farms invited Meskhetian Turks from Uzbekistan (where they had been moved in 1944 from Georgia's Samtskhe-Javakheti and Ajaria for alleged cooperation with the Turkish special services) to develop crop husbandry and grow tobacco. By the irony of fate, their massive resettlement to Kuban after a series of ethnic conflicts in Uzbekistan in 1989 caused ethnic tension and conflicts in the Krasnodar Territory. Today, academic writings call the Meskhetian Turks (the Akhyska Turks) the twice-deported nation. Driven away from Central Asia by ethnic conflicts with the Uzbeks in the Ferghana Valley some of the Meskhetian Turks settled in Kuban. By the early 21st century there were about 13,500 of them (the local administrations supply the figure of 18,000). Even though the figure increased by 6 to 8 times as compared with 1989 their share in the area's total population is negligible. They live mainly in the Krymsk, Abinsk, and Anapa districts, in Novorossiisk (nearly three-fourths of their local community), as well in the Apsheronsk, Belorechensk, and Labinsk districts.[6]

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[4] *Kazach'i voyska. Kratkaia khronika kazach'ikh i irreguliarnykh chastey,* St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 112.

[5] See: M.V. Savva, E.V. Savva, *Pressa, vlast, etnicheskiy konflikt (vzaimosviaz na primere Krasnodarskogo kraia),* Krasnodar, 2002, pp. 40-41.

[6] See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Sovremenny demograficheskiy i migratsionny portret Severnogo Kavkaza,* Stavropol, 2003, p. 125.

The "Armenian question" and the "Turkish question" are two most acute issues of the post-Soviet Kuban area. They share many common features despite the fact that the two communities have different past. The following factors breed conflicts:

- An intensive numerical natural and migration growth that started back in 1989-1990;
- Weak integration into the Kuban socium (this mainly applies to the Meskhetian Turks) and their nearly complete alienation;
- Concentration of their communities in certain districts;
- A conflict between ethnic and state loyalty with an obvious predominance of ethnic authorities and priorities;
- Occupation of the most competitive economic niches (this is especially true of the Armenians);
- Xenophobia among the ethnic minorities;
- A growth of xenophobia and migrant-phobia among the local people fanned by the media, the area administration, and the local authorities.

In 1992, Armenians were attacked in Anapa, Krasnodar, Armavir, and Timashevsk; in the summer of 1993 there were clashes between Russians and Armenians in Anapa; in March 1994, in the Prikuban District of Krasnodar. In 1997, a mass rally in Korenovsk demanded that all Armenians should be evicted; in the same year there was a Russian-Armenian conflict in Slaviansk-on-Kuban. The Armenian pogroms of 1999 and 2001 were explained by the Armenians' illegal activities.

According to sociologist S. Riazantsev, between 1989 and 2003 there were over 50 conflicts that involved Meskhetian Turks.[7] The leaders of the local neo-Cossack movement insisted that the Turks and the Cossacks (Russians) could no longer live side by side. The conflicts between them that took place in the 1990s were unfolding according to the following pattern: document checking—identification of people without documents—public punishment. The Meskhetian Turks are denied temporary or permanent residence permit: this is their main problem. The area authorities argue that until the issue of repatriation of the Meskhetian Turks to their historic home area in Georgia is settled between the RF and Georgia this ethnic group should not be granted residence permit in Kuban and should be refused Russian citizenship. In fact, the majority of those who came to the Kuban Area are citizens of the non-existing state—the Soviet Union. After joining the Council of Europe in 1999, Georgia pledged itself to create conditions for their repatriation and to adopt, within the next two years, a law on their repatriation and citizenship. It promised to complete repatriation in the next 12 years. Today, Tbilisi has not yet acquired conditions for the project's successful realization. In 2004 the United States announced that it was prepared to receive the Meskhetian Turks on its territory. The neo-Cossack leaders and the area authorities welcomed the offer.

As distinct from the Rostov Region the leaders of the Krasnodar Territory have made ethnic nationalism their official ideology. Rather than seeking speedy social integration of the ethnic minorities the area authorities created an image of enemy and artificially fanned the problem of migration and ethnic minorities. In one of his speeches delivered in 2000 Ataman of the All-Kuban Cossack Host (he fills the post of the Territory's vice-governor) V. Gromov said: "We (the Cossacks.—*S.M.*) are the autochthonous Kuban people. By the way, we are the only Federation constituency the Charter of which says that the Kuban Area is the home of the Kuban Cossacks and Russians. This should be taken into account when the bodies of power are formed."[8] On 23 June, 1995 the Legislative Assembly of the Krasnodar Territory adopted the Law on the Order of Registration and Residence in the Krasnodar Territory. In 1996 and 2002 the legislature passed several regulations under the common title On the Additional Measures Designed to Alleviate Ethnic Tension in Places of Compact Settlement of the Meskhetian Turks Temporarily Residing in the Krasnodar Territory. These documents raise barriers between the Meskhetian Turks and their chance of obtaining permanent or temporal residence permit.

[7] See: S.V. Riazantsev, *Sovremenny demograficheskiy i migratsionny portret Severnogo Kavkaza,* Stavropol, 2003, p. 125.
[8] Quoted from: M.V. Savva, E.V. Savva, op. cit., p. 41.

In 1996-2000 the then governor Nikolay Kondratenko preferred to fight the Zionist plot, thus fanning anti-Semitic sentiments in the area, while the present governor Alexander Tkachev repeatedly offered anti-Armenian, anti-Turk, and anti-Kurd slogans. In March and June 2002, for example, he spoke about the need to drive out "illegal migrants" en masse. In April 2002 at least two Kurd families were deported to the Rostov Region. On 18 March, 2002, speaking at a meeting on the migration issues held in Abinsk Governor Tkachev said: "It is our task to protect our land and our autochthonous population… This is the Cossack land and everybody should be aware of this. We play according to our rules." In 2004, at a press conference dedicated to the problem of emigration of the Meskhetian Turks to the United States he pointed out: "We have been waiting for a long time for this. Both the Meskhetian Turks and the local people will profit from this. The Meskhetian Turks have failed to adapt themselves to the closely-knit Kuban family of nations. They preferred to live separately in their enclaves; they never adopted the traditions, the way of life and the language of the people among whom they lived."[9]

Early in the 1990s the Krasnodar elite demonstrated two typical features: the ideological and political opposition to the federal center actively exploited by the then governor Kondratenko who looked at the federal authorities as an anti-Russian force controlled by the "Zionists." It was at that time that the concept of the "creative opposition" to Moscow was coined by deputy governor N. Denisov.[10] Nikolay Kondratenko never tired of repeating that his area was self-sufficient and that Moscow was pursuing a "policy of plunder," that his area needed an economic model different from what the center was promoting. In 1997-1999 the governor limited export of agricultural products to other Russian regions. The second typical local ideological novelty is the idea of a "special Kuban development pattern." The opposition to Moscow molded a special attitude to the North Caucasian regional regimes. Kondratenko insisted on special ties between the Cossacks and the Adighes: "There is nothing over which we may quarrel with other local peoples, our kunaks—the mountain peoples with whom we have been living side by side for centuries."[11] In this way the "local people" were opposed to the aliens even though the Cossacks themselves had settled in the area in the late 18th century. In 1997, Kondratenko visited Chechnia (then under the separatists' control), where he met Aslan Maskhadov. Later, he offered his positive opinion about the president of self-proclaimed Ichkeria. In 2000 Kuban acquired a new governor, under whom opposition to Moscow was replaced with an opposition to what was called "domination of the alien ethnic migrants." Meanwhile, the thesis about the mounting migration threat and the radical change of the area's ethnic composition has nothing in common with facts and is rooted in emotional stereotypes. In fact, the migration flow is subsiding. While in 1990 and in 1992 the difference between the arriving and leaving migrants was 47,136 and 91,855, respectively, in 2003 it was merely 10,849. According to the leading ethnopolitical expert of the Krasnodar Territory M. Savva, "in the registered migration flow of the past fifteen years the share of Russians who arrived in Kuban was stable—between 80 and 85 percent, that is, it corresponded to the share of Russians in the area's population structure."[12]

The Stavropol Territory: The Russian "Borderland" in the Northern Caucasus

The Stavropol Territory is found in the very center of the Northern Caucasus and borders on eight constituencies of the Southern Federal Okrug (six of them are republics). It covers an area of 66,200 sq km (0.4 percent of the Russian territory; 19 percent of the territory of the Northern Caucasus). Its border with

[9] M. Kondratieva, "Turetskiy iskhod," *Gazeta,* 22 July, 2004.

[10] See: S.S. Mints, "Formy tolerantnosti v politicheskoy zhizni rossiiskoy provintsii," in: *Tolerantnost i polikul'turnoe obshchestvo*, Moscow, 2003, p. 86.

[11] V. Konovalov, "Obrashchenie k slavianam iuga Rossii," *Kuban segodnia,* 12 March, 2001.

[12] M.V. Savva, *Migratsionnye mify Krasnodarskogo kraia* (manuscript). The author thanks M.V. Savva for this material.

Chechnia is 118,700 km; Daghestan, 197,800 km, and Karachaevo-Cherkessia, 248,100 km. Its capital Stavropol was founded in 1777; between 1935-1943 it was called Voroshilovsk. In 1777 this territory became part of the Azov-Mozdok Line, the Caucasian Region, and the Caucasian Gubernia. In 1847 it became part of the newly formed Stavropol Gubernia that until 1898 remained within the Caucasian Viceregency; later it became a gubernia like any other in the Russian Empire. In the 1920s the Stavropol Territory and the Terek Region were transferred to the Southeast of Russia; in 1924-1934 it was part of the North Caucasian Area. In 1934, when the Azov-Black Sea Area was created the Stavropol Territory became part of the Kuban-Black Sea Area (the Orjonikidze Area since 1937); Stavropol became its capital in 1937. In 1943 the area received its current name the Stavropol Territory; in 1957 it lost some of its districts (Naurskaia and Shelkovskaia) that were made part of the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In November 1990, when Karachaevo-Cherkessia adopted a Declaration of Independence this autonomous region (formerly part of the Stavropol Territory) became a RF constituency on its own right. The Stavropol Territory remains the magnet that pulls Russians from all other North Caucasian districts with a large share of Russian populations. Representatives of the Mozdok District of North Ossetia, the Kizliar and Tarumovka districts of Daghestan, the Zelenchukskaia District of Karachaevo-Cherkessia, and the Naurskaia and Shelkovskaia districts of Chechnia repeatedly asked or even demanded that they should be included in the Stavropol Territory. In the 1990s the slogan of "reunification" with the Stavropol Territory was exploited by the leaders of the Russian and Cherkess movements of Karachaevo-Cherkessia.

Today, there are 26 districts and two large cities in the area. According to the preliminary results of the All-Russia population census of 2002, its population is 2,727,000. Russians comprise 83 percent of the total population; together the Slavic population groups make 87 percent. Similarly to the Don and Kuban areas here, too, the Russians are not homogenous where their origins are concerned. As distinct from the Krasnodar Territory and the Rostov Region, however, the Cossack component in the Stavropol Territory is much smaller. The Stavropol Gubernia, the predecessor of the Stavropol Territory, never was a territory of Cossack armies (like Don and Kuban) or the place where Cossack troops were deployed (like the Orenburg and Astrakhan gubernias). It was the territory of peasant and military colonization. After the numerous administrative-territorial changes the area acquired part of the Kuban Region (the Kochubeevskoe and Izobil'ny districts, as well as stretches of the Shpakovskoe and Andropovskoe districts). Before the revolution the south (the Caucasian Mineral Waters and the Kurskaia District) was part of the Terek Region.[13]

At all times the Stavropol Territory has been regarded as a polyethnic region. Armenians comprise the second largest population group (4 percent), followed by Ukrainians (3 percent), Darghins (1.4 percent), and Greeks (1.2 percent). Despite their negligently small shares in the area's total population the ethnic communities of the Chechens (0.5 percent), Nogais (0.7 percent), and Turkmen (0.5 percent) play an important role in the area's ethnopolitical developments. The Armenian community appeared at the turn of the 19th century; the process was considerably accelerated in the mid-19th century and later, in 1917-1939, 1959, and in the late 1980s-early 1990s. Armenians live compactly in the village of Edissia (the Kurskaia District), notorious Budennovsk (formerly Sviatoy Krest), the area of the Caucasian Mineral Waters, and Stavropol. The Armenian diaspora is prominent in the economic, intellectual, and even administrative spheres. Armenians form the largest migration group.[14] Their stronger positions and the considerable numerical growth of 1990-2000 became the factors of conflict. In 1995, for example, a meeting in Georgievsk demanded that the Armenians should be deported. In 2001-2002, conflicts between young Armenians and Russians took place in Stavropol and Piatigorsk. The massive clashes were followed by nationalistic leaflets; both sides started formulating radical ethnopolitical demands.

By the number of the permanently settled Chechens the Stavropol Territory comes third after Chechnia, Ingushetia, and Daghestan. In 1970-1980 the Chechen community was expanding (while in 1970 there

[13] See: V.A. Koreniako, "Kazachestvo v Stavropol'skom krae—faktor stabilizatsii ili konfliktogeneza?" in: *Vozrozhdenie kazachestva: nadezhdy i opasenia,* ed. by G. Vitkovskaia and A. Malashenko, Moscow, 1998, p. 105.

[14] See: M.A. Astvatsaturova, *Diaspory v Rossiiskoy Federatsii: formirovanie i upravlenie (Severo-Kavkazskiy Region),* Rostov-on-Don, Piatigorsk, 2003, pp. 494-495.

were 4,400 Chechens living in the Stavropol Territory; in 1980, there were 9,400 of them; in 1989, 15,000). They live compactly in the south (the Kurskaia, Stepnoe, and Andropovskoe districts), in the west and north (the Kochubeevskoe, Trunovskoe, and Grachevka districts). Here (like in the Rostov Region) they are mainly engaged in animal husbandry. Late in 1991, in anticipation of the "second Kuwait" in independent Ichkeria they went back to Chechnia in great numbers; in 1995 their return was caused by the Budennovsk tragedy. The Khasaviurt Agreements signed in 1996 and Chechnia's de facto sovereignty started colonization of the border areas. According to M. Astvatsaturova, an expert in the Stavropol Territory's diasporas, the diaspora is constantly acquiring new members who emigrate from the Chechen Republic.[15]

The Chechen crisis exerts a serious or even the determining influence on the ethnopolitical situation in the Stavropol Territory. In 1990-2000 it was a territory of active terrorist actions and attacks of Chechen separatists. Shamil Basaev's raid into Budennovsk on 17 June, 1995 shattered the world community. Terrorists were active in Piatigorsk, Essentuki, and Nevinnomyssk. In 2002 alone, 10 trials of Chechen fighters were completed in the Stavropol Territory. The events in the rebellious republic caused important shifts among the top figures of the Territory's administration. The Budennovsk tragedy, for example, cost Governor E. Kuznetsov, deputy head of the Territory's Administration of Internal Affairs M. Tretiakov and several officials of lower ranks their posts. The local elite concentrates on the common desire to protect the Territory against Chechnia and ensure its safety. In May-June 1992 Chechens were evicted en masse. The Territory's Charter passed in 1994 established a status of local residents that amounted to the local Stavropol citizenship. In 1995, the Territory acquired the Law on the Status of the Resident of the Stavropol Territory that borrowed the Moscow model of paid registration. In February 1997 the local administration adopted the Immigration Code (Russia's only regional document designed to regulate migration). Later the documents were annulled as contradicting federal legislation. Still, the local administration is insisting on its ethnic policy designed to control migration. In 2002, the local Duma passed the Law on the Measures Designed to Cut Short Illegal Migration in the Stavropol Territory. It should be said here that in 2001 the population increase through migration was 16-fold lower than in 1997.[16]

Turkmen (Trukhmen) form a very specific diaspora of the Stavropol Territory. They first came to the Northern Caucasus together with other nomads in the 17th century. Today, they form the largest Turkmen diaspora in Russia. According to the All-Union population census of 1989, there were 11,100 of them (today, there are 13,000 of Turkmen living there). In 1920, the Turkmen District was formed within the North Caucasian Area; in 1956 it was destroyed only to be restored in 1970 within new limits and with the administrative center in the Letniaia Stavka village. There the Turkmen form the second largest population group (about 15 percent) after the Russians. Members of the same diaspora also live in the Ipatovo, Neftekumsk, and Blagodarny districts. Religion is the main cause of conflicts between Russians and Turkmen. Experts believe that propaganda of the Salafi of Daghestan in 1998-1999 created even more tension in the Turkmen and other districts. On 19 January, 1999, the clashes between Russians and Turkmen in the Kenje-Kulak village developed into a massive fight. In 2000-2002 conflicts between these two groups regularly flared up.

Nogais live in compact groups in the Territory's eastern steppe part (in the Levokumskoe and Neftekumsk districts). Before the revolution they were allowed to use about a third of the gubernia for roaming. In 1957, their ethnic region was divided between Daghestan, the Stavropol Territory, and Chechnia. Today, 20.6 percent of the total number of the Nogais of the South of Russia lives in the Stavropol Territory. Their economic situation is better than of the parts of the same ethnos in other places, yet the issues of their involvement in the administrative structures is much more acute. The problem of their restored ethnic unity and their social marginalization cause conflicts with the Russian and other ethnic groups. In 2000-2002 there were ethnic clashes between Russians and Nogais in Neftekumsk and Stepnoe districts.

[15] Ibid., p. 513.

[16] See: M.A. Astvatsaturova, *Pressa Stavropol'skogo kraia: mezhetnicheskie otnoshenia i etnokul'turnye obrazy kak ob'ekty professional'nogo interesa,* Rostov-on-Don, Piatigorsk, 2003, p. 16.

Meskhetian Turks came to the Stavropol Territory late in the 1970s at the invitation of the heads of the local agricultural enterprises who needed them as skillful crop and tobacco growers. According to the 1989 All-Union population census, there were 1,623 Meskhetian Turks in the Stavropol Territory. The events of 1989 in Uzbekistan brought large groups of Meskhetian Turks to the area; the next migration wave brought Meskhetian Turks from Chechnia. According to expert assessments, early in the 21st century there were 3,500-3,800 Meskhetian Turks living in the Stavropol Territory. Until recently they lived in compact groups in the Kurskaia and Kirovskiy districts (nearly three-fourths of their total number), as well as in the Blagodarny, Budennovsk, and Novoaleksandrovsk districts. Their social niches (trade and "gray" business) are a constant source of conflicts with the local Russians. Since 1994-1995 members of this ethnos living in the Sovetskoe village (Kurskaia District) have been under constant attacks. In 1995-1996, criminal cases were opened against those who started and some of those who took part in them.

There is an opposition between members of non-Russian ethnic groups as well. Darghins who are actively settling in the eastern districts of the Stavropol Territory claim the competitive economic niches (they belonged to them in other parts of the same territory). This makes conflicts inevitable. In 1999, there was a clash between Darghins and Nogais in the village of Irgakly (Stepnoe District) that required interference of the law enforcing structures. In 2001-2002 there were conflicts between Darghins and Turkmen in the Neftekumsk and Stepnoe districts; there were clashes in places where Meskhetian Turks and Nogais or Meskhetian Turks and Darghins lived side by side.

This gave rise to Russian nationalism and xenophobia. At the elections to the first RF State Duma the Liberal-Democrats gained there 38.85 percent of the votes (the second largest share across Russia). In 1995, the Congress of Russian Communities got 8.5 percent of the votes; even though they overcame the 5 percent barrier in the Stavropol Territory this was not enough to get seats in the parliament. The Stavropol branch of the Russian National Unity organization is one of the strongest regional structures in Russia. At the same time, as distinct from the Krasnodar Territory, the local elite is keeping away from nationalism despite the very "troublesome" community of the Meskhetian Turks and the area's direct proximity to the region of the Chechen crisis. Nationalism is restricted by hard migration control.

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Reality is far removed from the declared image of the North Caucasian Russian regions as an oasis of peace and stability in the turbulent sea of conflicts. However, this should not cause alarm even though there are numerous sore spots and potentially conflict situations between the autochthonous population and migrants and between various ethnic groups. The local situation has revealed urgent problems to be addressed by the federal center rather than by the area and regional administrations. The priorities are the following:

- Creation of a single political nation—the people of Russia—to integrate all ethnoses (local and migrant);
- Better regulation of migration in order to turn it into an effective social and economic instrument rather than a threat;
- Ethnic and migration myths should be exposed as false: they interfere with the efforts of creating normal relations among different ethnoses;
- Local particularism should be overcome to include the South of Russia in the country's single legal field.

To a great extent stability and security of the Russian regions, the entire Caucasus and the Russian Federation as a whole depend on the regional leaders; the national interests should prevail over the local short-term advantages.