

National Associations as Actors of Social Management in Modern Russia (on the Example of the Republic of Bashkortostan)

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Abstract — In modern conditions, the issue of effective social management is crucial for Russia. Its important component is activities of national or ethnocultural associations. They are mediators between society and governments representing interests of various ethno-national groups. Contradictory conditions of globalization, complex and long-lasting modernization of Russia, weak civil identity make the issue of ethno-national associations a sensitive indicator of the Russian civil society. Under social instability, they represent a serious resource of ethnicity which allows them to be in demand in the multinational state. They are contradictory. It aggravates their position as influential actors of social management. On the one hand, they express and defend interests of their peoples; on the other hand, they are forced to adapt to aspirations of political elites or pursue ambitions of their own leaders. This dualism can cause a loss of the social base. The article analyzes activities of the most influential and numerous associations of Bashkortostan - associations of the Russian, Bashkir and Tatar peoples. The documents and materials of national associations and survey results were used. The historical chronological method was used. For two decades, associations have gained experience which is understudied. This experience can contribute to effective state national policies and social management.

Keywords — *challenges and risks of globalization, civil society, interethnic consent, modernization, nation building, social interests, ethno-national associations, pro-government associations, social tension, social management*

I. INTRODUCTION

The President of the Russian Federation Putin said that “for Russia, with its diverse languages, traditions, ethnic groups and cultures, the national issue is crucial” [1]. At the same time, currently, interethnic and interfaith tensions aggravate. “Nationalism and religious intolerance become an ideological basis for the most radical groups and movements. They destroy and undermine states and divide societies” [1]. Modern conditions of Russia actualize the concept of social management which is necessary to avoid development of destructive phenomena, destabilization of social life in the face of challenges, risks of globalization and modernization of the Russian state. Social management impacts on the community of people. Its goal is to streamline relationships in society, ensure its stable development, coordination, and

regulation [2]. Management of social systems is the most complex type of management.

II. MAIN BODY

During the post-Soviet era, Russia has increased ethnic, religious and cultural diversity [3]. At the same time, the experience of the USSR and Russia demonstrates an enormous destructive potential of politicization of interethnic and interethnic contradictions [4]. Therefore, national associations can and should be considered as significant actors of social management. For two decades, they have gained experience and have resources for social integration and mobilization, articulation, aggregation and representation of social needs and problems. The relevance of activities of national associations is due to the fact that “national policies cannot be implemented by officials. National and public associations should be involved in their discussion and implementation” [1].

The modern national movement in Bashkortostan was born in the conditions of reorganization and democratization of the Soviet society in the late 1980s, when both the national question and activities of the national elite of the autonomy were actualized.

The causes for development of national movements in the USSR in the late 1980s were similar for all the regions: unsolved socio-economic and cultural problems, ethno-linguistic problems; low credibility, a negative image of government authorities, trade unions and political parties; desire of ethno-national elites to possess economic resources and political power.

Four main stages of the national movements in Bashkiria can be distinguished:

- Stage I – the end of the 1980s-1994,
- Stage II – 1994-2000,
- Stage III – since 2000,
- Stage IV – since 2010.

The intelligentsia played a leading role at all stages. The unions of all three nations took an active part in major federal and republican political events.

The first stage was the most active and productive for the national movements. Its demonstrated power and potential of ethnicity against the background of unresolved ethnopolitical problems.

At the first stage, under the influence of the political situation in the country from September 1989 to mid-October 1990, clubs and centers of the Bashkir and Tatar intelligentsia were established. They aimed at the revival of national cultures. They rapidly developed into the largest and most influential national movements of the Bashkir and Tatar peoples and became politicized.

The Bashkir national movement has become the most active, consolidated and largest in the history of the modern national movement in Bashkortostan. The Bashkir political elite interested in the sovereignty of the republic and the Bashkir intelligentsia played an important role in the development of the national movement. It should be emphasized that at the initial stage of development, the movement was independent. It was supported by the Bashkir population. The associations demanded cultural revival, socio-economic development and solution of environmental problems in the republic. The ideologemes of the image and the psychology of the "victim" gradually formed. Attention was paid to the assimilation of the Bashkir ethnos by the Tatars Russians, consolidation of the Bashkirs to preserve the ethnic group and positions of the titular nation, migration problems. The status of the Bashkir language was catastrophic. In the management and education spheres, demands for unilateral advantages only for representatives of the Bashkir nation have been put forward. The ideas of national separatism and national radicalism began to penetrate into the ideology of the movement. Young Bashkirs were active participants of the movement [5].

In the first half of the 1990s, the most influential national cultural association of the Bashkir people and the republic was the Bashkir People's Center (BPC) "Ural". The basis of the association was the Bashkir scientific and humanitarian intelligentsia, supported by the rural population, part of the urban Bashkirs moved from the countryside. Initially, the BPC criticized the official policy. However, since 1993, they began to support the policy of the official authorities of the republic.

The social basis of the Tatar associations was the urban and rural intelligentsia. In the first half of the 1990s, the Tatar public center (TPC) of Bashkortostan became the most influential association of the Tatar people in the republic. The main goal of the association was to protect political and cultural rights of the Tatar population of the republic. They demanded to create conditions for free development and use of the Tatar language in the republic, cultural and linguistic consolidation of the Tatar population. They talked about the constitutional status of the Tatar language recognizing it as one of the official languages of the republic [6]. As far as they were not supported by the republican authorities, the association criticized their policies.

The unions of the Bashkir and Tatar peoples discussed the issues of sovereignty of the republic and were involved in political activities aimed at sovereignization of the republic. The Bashkir associations supported this process, while the

Tatar associations supported the process under the condition of granting constitutional rights to the Tatar population and the official status of the Tatar language.

The Declaration on State Sovereignty of the Republic, adopted on October 11, 1990, reproduced the provisions of the BPC Ural project, which defended interests of the Bashkir people as a titular, indigenous nation, and was of sharp nationalistic nature.

Contradictions in the demands and activities of the Bashkir and Tatar associations intensified. The ethno-linguistic problem became acute. The republican authorities did not support the Tatar associations which became more politicized. They demanded to ensure proper representation of Tatars in all government structures taking into account their share in the population structure.

In the early 1990s, the deepening economic crisis caused radicalization of political activities. During this period, national movements held rallies, meetings, hunger strikes in order to bring their demands to the public, Russian and regional authorities.

All the Bashkir associations of the titular nation were against the Federative Treaty. The resolution adopted by the VI Extraordinary All-Bashkir Congress stated that in case of refusal to grant Bashkiria the status of an independent state, the Congress reserves the right to demand secession of Bashkiria from Russia and creation of a confederation of Turkic peoples. In response, the Tatar national movement put forward a project aimed at the recreation of Ufa region as part of Russia. It became the most radical project of the Tatar associations.

In March 1992, the political association "Rus" declared the need to protect civil and cultural rights of the Russian and other peoples of the republic.

The "Rus" and the TPC of the Republic of Bashkortostan united efforts. They criticized the policy of the government and emphasized the merging of national cultural associations of the titular ethnic group with the state nomenclature, violation of the rights of non-Bashkir peoples living in the republic. The Tatar centers stepped up their activities to protect linguistic interests of the Tatar-speaking population, "Rus" – to protect the status of the Russian language. The confrontation of the Bashkir national movement with the unions of the Tatar and Russian peoples began. Due to the policy of the republican authorities and activities of the national movements, open confrontation was prevented.

The most influential associations of the republic expressed their attitudes toward the Federative Treaty, the no-confidence vote referendum and Presidential policies, the Russian Constitution draft and its entry into force, adoption of the RB Constitution, election of the first President of the RB.

At the second stage, activities of the associations were conditioned by development of republican identity, strengthening positions of the federal authorities, further indigenization (Bashkirization) of the government authorities and actualization of the state language policy. In the mid-1990s, activities of the republican authorities were

aimed at strengthening social functions of the Bashkir language in school education. This stage was characterized by further solidarization of the Tatar national organizations with the Russian social movement “Rus” and activities of the Tatar organizations aimed at the protection of ethnocultural interests of the Tatar-speaking population and giving it the official status.

On February 15, 1999, the republic adopted the Law “On the languages of the peoples of the Republic of Bashkortostan”. The republican authorities sought to avoid open conflicts with the Tatar associations supported by neighboring Tatarstan. Despite the activities of the Tatar associations aimed to change the status of the Tatar language, the Law declared Russian and Bashkir official languages. The status of the Tatar language was a crucial issue at the next stage of development of the Tatar national movement in the republic.

Whose interests were expressed by national associations – peoples or political elites? The 1993 survey showed that the republican political elite knew about activities of the national associations. 91.2% of representatives of the Bashkir elite knew about ideas and activities of the BPC “Ural”. 92.3% of the Tatar elite knew about activities of the TPC of the RB, and 88.9% of the Russian elite knew about ideas of the association “Rus” [7]. At the same time, the survey data show that only a small share of respondents knew about the existence of their national associations. Thus, unlike the political elite, the population of the republic did not know about the national associations which confirms the absence of interest in activities of the associations and indicates the absence of close relations of the associations with represented communities and a narrow social base of the national movements.

In 1994, there was a serious decline in activities of the national movements. The ethnosocial base of the movements began to decline. This was identified by sociological surveys which showed a decrease in the number of citizens knowing about the national movements. For example, if in 1993, 25.8% of respondents of the Tatar nationality knew about activities of the Tatar associations, in 1995, the share decreased to 23.1%. In August 1993, 15.7% of Russian respondents knew about activities of the Russian associations, while in August 1995, the share decreased to 14.3%. The share of Bashkir respondents knowing about activities of the national movements was 41.1% in 1993, and 28.4% - in 1995 [5].

Despite the crisis in activities and popularity of the national movements of the republic, the potential of ethnic mobilization remained untapped. The government tried to control the national movements and organized pro-government associations. On the one hand, this step aimed at strengthening the role of the republican government in the face of the Russian government; on the other hand, it made it possible to control the ethno-political situation in the republic, prevent radical nationalism and strengthen legitimacy of the authorities. The progovernment associations supported the policy of the republican government. The Bashkir progovernment associations supported the government policies until 2010, when the republican government was changed.

However, they did not express real interests of the represented national communities, despite their high official status.

The beginning of the third stage of the national movement in the republic was connected with the election of V. Putin as president of the Russian Federation and consolidation of the federal government in order to create a new “vertical of power” strengthening the Russian statehood. The slogans of ethnic mobilization lost their relevance. The ethnopolitical situation in Russia was quiet. The relationship of associations with the represented national communities was formal.

During this period, the independence of the Russian republics reduced which caused criticism from the government of the Republic of Bashkortostan and the progovernment Bashkir national associations. At the same time, the Russian associations supported the policies of the federal authorities.

In 2000, V. Putin initiated the process of bringing regional legislations in line with federal ones. The Constitution of the republic was revised. The concepts of sovereignty, ownership of natural resources, the chapter on the supremacy of republican laws, etc., were removed from the 2002 Constitution which caused public outcry.

At this stage, ethnicity remained a serious political resource. It was demonstrated during the election of the President of the republic in 2003. During the election campaign, Tatar and Russian public associations formed a basis for the opposition. It accused the republican authorities of creating an ethnocratic regime, violating civil rights of the population, and ignoring ethnocultural demands of non-titular peoples. The leader of the Tatar national movement R. Bignov said that “interethnic peace and harmony and equality of peoples living in the republic is a myth” [8]. The Bashkir National Movement supported current President M. Rakhimov, the Russian movement supported S. Veremeenko, and the Tatar movement supported R. Safin. The election campaigns of these candidates exploited ethnopolitical issues. “Bashkir ethnocracy” and the language issue were exploited by S. Veremeenko who promised the Tatar associations to change the status of the the Tatar language. M. Rakhimov using the so-called administrative resource was elected President.

Since 2004, the federal policy aimed at narrowing republican powers has been criticized by the national movements. The associations hold meetings and rallies. The main focus of the Tatar national associations is the language problem and cultural needs of the Tatar and Tatar-speaking population of the republic. The common issues of the Tatar and Russian associations were the ethnocratic regime, corrupt policies, violation of civil rights of the non-Bashkir population of the republic.

The fourth stage of the national movement began in 2010 when R. Khamitov was elected President. The position of national associations of the Bashkir people has changed dramatically. They refused to support the government policies and decided to criticize them. Instability of the socio-economic situation of the republic, environmental problems strengthened the positions of the associations.

III. CONCLUSION

The prominent Soviet and Russian scientist R.G. Kuzeev came to the conclusion that activities of the national movements of the twentieth century did not exhaust themselves [9]. He identified two closely and organically interrelated aspects of ethnic problems: democratic and ethnic. The scientist said that in Russia, ultimately, ethnic societies are involved into the democratic movement preserving their ethnicity [9]. This point of view is directly related to the modern Russian problem of nation-building and points to potential activities of national associations in the conditions of Russia and Bashkortostan. A number of modern Russian researchers argue about the need to combine or maintain a balance of civil and ethnic identities [10].

Today, a number of unresolved problems are unsolved. They affect interethnic relations. The socio-economic situation is complicated. Environmental problems are serious. Consequences of globalization and long-lasting modernization cause tension in society which can allow destructive forces to aggravate the situation by manipulating ethnic and confessional feelings. This situation creates a basis for considering associations as long-term institutions of civil society and actors of effective social management. However, there are certain conditions and requirements. National associations should be supported by the communities; program requirements should not be formal; they have to express real interests of people. It is necessary to find a "golden mean". On the one hand, national egoism of the nations should not be exacerbated; on the other hand, it is not recommended to violate the boundaries of sovereign rights of peoples and resist political elites and their power aspirations in the context of the weak civil society in Russia.

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