

# **LITTLE MOTHERLAND**

The Role of School-Museums and Kraevedenie in the Contemporary Russian Historical Politics

By

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Submitted to

Central European University

History Department

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2013

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## Abstract

After the political transition in postsocialist states the reconsideration of socialist past became a crucial part of historical politics. The abolition or rearrangement of monuments and museums have been the clearest and the most visible manifestations of new historical interpretations, but in many countries political judgments of certain events in the past have been adjusted to the present-day situations, as well. Scholars have been highly engaged with the scrutiny of the phenomenon in large-scale, however, there is less research devoted to the role and changes of local perceptions and representations of history in the broader and narrower political contexts and the agency of local actors.

The aim of Russian historical politics was to create historical continuity between the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation, preserve the relevance of memory of the Great Patriotic War in the national historical memory and solve the integration of the multiethnic nation. The issue of multiethnicity was especially crucial in Bashkortostan; therefore minorities living there have got broader space for the representation of their identity and political lobby. Due to these political circumstances Trans-Kama Udmurts could take advantage of certain institutional and financial sources and revived their ethnic culture.

The most visual and complex manifestations of these different politics are the school-museums and kraevedenie-classes (local history). I have chosen three Udmurt museums located in the same district to analyze their exhibitions and highlight the local actors' motivation and agency. Through my analysis I intend to show (1) how these school-museums reflect different levels of history; (2) what leaders of museums consider to be relevant in their work; and (3) how this work is affected by the republic and the federation.

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## Introduction

*“Rodnik (spring) and Rodina (Motherland) have common stem.  
The little spring flows into great rivers  
and the knowledge of the history of our own Little Motherland  
serves the fundament of every people’s life.”<sup>1</sup>*

After the political transition in postsocialist states the reconsideration of socialist past became a crucial part of historical politics. The abolition or rearrangement of monuments and museums have been the clearest and the most visible manifestations of new historical interpretations, but in many countries political judgments of certain events in the past have been adjusted to the present-day situations, as well. Scholars have been highly engaged with the scrutiny of the phenomenon, however, these works pay attention mostly to, first of all, institutions and state-museums financed and controlled by governments,<sup>2</sup> secondly, a large-scale overview of the politicians’ historical-political agency<sup>3</sup> and thirdly, academic debates on the official position of certain historical questions.<sup>4</sup> There is less research devoted to the role and changes of local perceptions and representations of history in the broader and narrower political contexts and the agency of the local actors.

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<sup>1</sup> Quotation from a local historian’s report of a school-museum in Tatyshly district.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, “Unraveling the Threads of History: Soviet-Era Monuments and Post-Soviet National Identity on Moscow” in: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*. 92 (2002); Frazon Zsófia, *Múzeum és kiállítás. Az újrarajzolás terei* [Museums and exhibition. Spaces of re-design] (Budapest, Gondolat, 2011)

<sup>3</sup> Stefan Berger, “German History Politics and the National Socialist Past” in *The Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Budapest – New York, Central European University Press, 2012); Alexei Miller, “The Turns of Russian Historical Politics, from Perestroika to 2011” In: Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, “The Convolutions”

<sup>4</sup> Maciej Janowski, “Jedwabne, July 10, 1941: Debating the History of a Single Day” in: Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, “The Convolutions”

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the new state intended to create a historical continuity between the Soviet and Russian past. The intention was manifested not only in politics and science, but also in symbolic fields like renaming of streets, rearranging of monuments or revising the content of textbooks. The issue is examined and discussed by many scholars and from many aspects,<sup>5</sup> but not from the angles of local communities and actors. My intention is to bring the dimension of locality into the scale and highlight different interests, motivations and manifestations of local actors' agency in order to receive a more refined and sophisticated image of the present-day usage of history for political motivations in the Russian Federation.

Kraevedenie (local history) and school-museums are excellent examples of that how different historical politics contest or complete each other in accordance with their political interests. In the Russian Federation there are approximately six thousand school-museums named museums of kraevedenie and located in the schools of small villages all over the country. Approximately one tenth of these museums are located in Bashkortostan: six hundred sixty museums, which possess official certifications, besides there are as many "unofficial" school-museums as certificated ones.<sup>6</sup> These school-museums are deemed to be the treasure chests of schools, which keep and contain the local knowledge of the local and/or ethnic communities. The museums usually consist of many parts such as the memory of war heroes, the history of

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<sup>5</sup> Forest and Johnson, "Unraveling; Miller, "The Turns"; Lev Gudkov, "The Fetters of Victory. How the War Provides Russia with its Identity" in: *Eurozine*, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2005-05-03-gudkov-en.html>, accessed: 28-05-2013; Elizabeth A. Wood: "Performing Memory: Vladimir Putin and World War II in Russia," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 38: 2 (2011); Vera Tolz, "Homeland Myths and Nation-State Building in Postcommunist Russia." In: *Slavic Review*. 57:2; Tatiana Zhurzhenko, "Heroes into Victims. The Second World War in Post-Soviet Memory Politics" in: *Eurozine*, <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2012-10-31-zhurzhenko-en.html>, accessed: 28-05-2013

<sup>6</sup> "Guidebook of School-Museums of Republic of Bashkortostan", (Путеводитель по школьным музеям Республики Башкортостан; Putevoditel' po shkol'nym muzejam Respubliki Bashkortostan), Ministry of Education Republic of Bashkortostan – National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion, Ufa 2010: 4.

school, the history of agriculture and kolkhoz, famous writers and artists born in the village and ethnographic materials from the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are the primary places of the so-called patriotic upbringing held in the framework of kraevedenie-classes. Although the foundation of the museums is initiated and organized by local actors willingly, but since museums and kraevedenie-classes play very important role in the patriotic upbringing and their reputation and success bear significant prestige among teachers and the local elite, more and more museums are established and recognized officially by the state. The content and the design of the school-museums are influenced in three levels. First of all, local teachers and students collect artifacts and create exhibitions, so they have a direct impact on the museums. Secondly, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Bashkortostan – National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion coordinates the work of all school-museums in the republic, thus methodological brochures and contests organized by the Center shape museums to a large extent, too. Thirdly, the reinterpreted Russian history serves as a basic background of all exhibitions, without which local histories cannot be interpreted.

In my thesis I use the expression of ‘Little Motherland’ (Malaya Rodina) borrowed from local people in order to reflect on this high complexity of multilevel embeddedness. ‘Little Motherland’ means the native land where somebody was born and refers to its whole-part relationship with the greater Motherland. ‘Little Motherland’ is not only a symbol, but also an analytical term in this thesis. As I am going to explicate later, it is a special interpretation of locality, which delineates the place of my fieldwork as well.

Anthropology has had its own particular method for the scrutiny of small-scale communities for more than eighty years, and that is the so-called long-term and intensive fieldwork. The participant observation is one of the most characteristic features of this method,

according to which the anthropologist lives and works together with a certain community, participates in its everyday life including all its spheres and through this process is able to know the local social structures and institutions, emic worldviews or local receptions and narratives of regional, ethnic, national, state or global phenomena. The parallel monitoring of different levels initiates the mapping of discourses going on among these levels and the more comprehensive understanding how social and cultural institutions are constructed by the dialectical relationship of these groups.

The disadvantage (or the beauty) of humanities, that the scholar cannot distil herself out of her work entirely, is especially true for the anthropological fieldwork. An anthropologist lives together with her examined subjects, involuntarily shapes events and relationships in the field with her mere presence, even if she is very prudent and careful. Some people are more opened and tell their entire life-stories her without any reservations; others are self-contained and suspicious, because they simply do not understand what a young girl is doing in a small village in the middle of nowhere. This unique situation has a huge influence on the people who are willing to show and reveal details of their every-day life to the researcher; thus, her comprehension is always fragmented and partial. However, the researcher's large involvement in the local life is the reason, due to which she can reach a deeper understanding of social and cultural phenomenon. Therefore, I argue in science that the combination of different methods and interdisciplinary work can facilitate more thorough and comprehensive research and analysis, which are also important aims of my thesis.



## Theoretical and Historical Backgrounds

### Historical Politics in the Russian Federation

Socialist regimes in Eastern European countries intended to keep under control all spheres of life, not only politics, economy and social issues, but the tiniest things as well. In his book “The Good Stalin” based on autobiographic motives, Viktor Yerofeyev reports about this omnipresent authority not without a good deal of irony: [Stalin and Molotov] required that all problems of the extremely centralized state should reach them from global issues to the tailoring pattern of women's pullovers or to the question of Moscow's public toilets, the lack of which made Stalin rebuke Khrushchew in the midst of the great terror. Even for his citizens' spending a penny Stalin took responsibility.”<sup>7</sup>

Science was not an exception to the rule, but one of the most important tools of the legitimization of socialist ideology. Especially the study of history, which was supposed to augment the glory of socialist peoples, but was under high pressure of censorship, ideological monopoly and administrative control.<sup>8</sup> After political transformations new states went through essential changes and tried to acquire a new political culture with democratic values including freedom of speech, which enabled historians to broaden theories and methods of their discipline in accordance with researches. However, history has not remained a politics-free sphere; it became a very significant part of politics of memory, that is to say, historical politics.

The original term of historical politics – *Geschichtspolitik* – was coined in Germany during the famous *Historikerstreit* (Historians' Controversy). Helmut Kohl, after his coming into office in 1982 as the new West German Chancellor, urged to revise the German past

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<sup>7</sup> Viktor Jerofejev, *A jó Sztálin* [The Good Stalin] (Budapest, Európa: 2005), 121

<sup>8</sup> Alexei Miller, “Historical Politics: Eastern European Convolutions in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman “The Convolutions”, 3

associated with 1968 and its moral connotations. Many historians got involved in the issue, but it did not stay a purely academic matter, since all participating historians had a political agenda.<sup>9</sup> The battle of German historians led to new perspectives in academic researches and historians began to study how “history politics use scholarliness to legitimate and delegitimize particular political positions which are being debated because of their wider relevance to society.”<sup>10</sup>

The German debate was not the only case, but historical politics mushroomed among the political strategies of Eastern European countries and played an important role in strengthening patriotism. According to Alexei Miller, “it represents a new set of practices concerning the political utilization of history typical only of pluralistic non-Communist societies.”<sup>11</sup> In his book edited by him and Maria Lipman, a group of historians provide an overview and comprehensive study of the new phenomenon focusing on the political agenda of different actors which meant individual political leaders and parties as well, institutions, media and political strategies of various countries.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, as they admit, although “individual activists of historical politics also deserve special study, but this topic gets on only fragmentary treatment in [their] volume.”<sup>13</sup> Among others, there is less research on how local actors and

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<sup>9</sup> Berger, “German History”, 30-36

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 23

<sup>11</sup> Miller, “Historical”, 5

<sup>12</sup> Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, “The Convolutions”

<sup>13</sup> Miller, “Historical”, 8. Maybe the most telling example of this lack is the famous Jedwabne-case, which was discussed not only in Miller-Lipman book, but also in other discourses; however, nobody scrutinized local interpretations and local political usage of the issue in Jedwabne so far. Gabriella Vincze, an MA-student at the Department of European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in the University of Pécs (Hungary) had fieldwork in Jedwabne in 2012 in order to study the local aspects of the Jedwabne-case. Gabriella Vincze: “Ez már túlmutat a pajtán...” A történelem aktualizálhatóságának és felhasználhatóságának kérdése a Jedwabne-vita kapcsán [“This Is Beyond the Barn...” Applicability of History in the Case of Jedwabne-Dispute.] Paper presented at the conference “Borders of Our World” Eötvös Collegium, Budapest, Hungary, 22-24 February 2013

local institutions contribute to historical politics and how they cooperate with official and state institutions or on the contrary, how they take a stand against them.<sup>14</sup>

This absence is especially typical of studies on Russian historical politics, where scholars discuss the changes of political positions on Russian history, its symbolic and educational manifestations like the rearrangement of sculptures in Moscow<sup>15</sup> or new textbooks.<sup>16</sup> The most unique peculiarity of Russian changes is the intention to create continuity between the Soviet and Russian past. While most of the postsocialist countries intended to distance themselves from their socialist past and create a tabula rasa for the new democratic states and to bridge the gap caused by socialist regimes in civic development, the Russian Federation aimed at embedding the Soviet past into the wider historical context. This was essential, because the exclusion of the glorious peak of Soviet history, the great Victory in the World War II was unimaginable.<sup>17</sup> First of all, the memory of the Great Patriotic War creates continuity not only between the Soviet and Russian past, but obscures ethnic and religious differences as well, because it delineates the boundaries of the community of Soviet/Russian peoples in opposition to the enemy. As Elizabeth E. Wood explains “the suffering of the war can have an effect on each individual person, drawing them into a collective sense of belonging and redemption. (...) The nation is sacred in its suffering and rebirth, in its role as savior of Europe from the evils of the barbarian Nazis.”<sup>18</sup> That is to say, the war is interpreted as a moral victory as well. Accordingly, the soldiers who participated in this victory are perceived as

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<sup>14</sup>Gábor Gyáni deals with the issue of “alternative” histories and second-rate historians’ agency in Hungary. In this context he mentions local Trianon-monuments supported by local authorities, but he does not unfold entirely the related local aspects. Gábor Gyáni, “The Memory of Trianon as a Political Instrument in Hungary Today” in: Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, “The Convolutions”, 109

<sup>15</sup> Benjamin Forest and Juliet Johnson, “Unraveling”, 3

<sup>16</sup> Alexei Miller, “The Turns”, 256-263

<sup>17</sup> Lev Gudkov, “The Fetters”

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth A. Wood: “Performing”, 175

heroes by Russian society, but not victims like in other national memories.<sup>19</sup> The legacy of the memory of war heroes provides the concept of Russian patriotism: the proper citizen is loyal to the motherland and willing to defend it and die for it – that is the way one can be included in the nation.

### Motherland(s)

Barrington, Herron and Silver states in their article: “While national identity may or may not be based on ethnicity, it always contains a territorial component.”<sup>20</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen also emphasizes the territorial aspect, or rather the claim for statehood, which is the main distinctive feature between nation and ethnic group.<sup>21</sup> In his opinion, ethnic identity and ethnicity are based on contacts with other groups and they can be perceived only through the experience of ‘otherness’. “It is through contact with others that we discover who we are, and an ‘isolated ethnic group’ may therefore be compared with the sound of one hand clapping – an absurdity.”<sup>22</sup> Namely, ethnicity is not a feature of a group, but an aspect of the communication or connection between two or more groups. The core of ethnic identity resides in the imagination of historical and cultural continuity of the given group, which offers a “feeling of cultural belongingness and security.”<sup>23</sup> Practically, they manifest in common myths and history of the group, nominal kinship, endogamy and shared traditions.

Compared to the notion of ethnic group, the idea of nation always has territorial components. In the case of the Soviet Union and minorities living there, this aspect meant the

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<sup>19</sup> Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “Heroes”

<sup>20</sup> Lowell W. Barrington et al, “The Motherland Is Calling: Views of Homeland among Russians in the Near Abroad” in: *World Politics* 55:2 (2003), 292

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Etnicitás és nacionalizmus. Antropológiai perspektívák*. [Ethnicity and Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives] (Budapest – Pécs: Gondolat Kiadó, 2008), 22

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Small Places, Large Issues. An Introduction to Social and Cultural Anthropology*. (London: Pluto, 2001), 263

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 267

main political playground for the regime. In 1913 Stalin defined the nation as “a historically constituted, stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture.”<sup>24</sup> Stalin emphasized the territorial determination of the nation to a large extent, an approach which was manifested in the administrative system of the Soviet Union. Titular nations had the legal right to own their territory and cherish their culture and traditions in an institutionalized form:

Cultural institutions in the national republics organized the creation, not simply of a national culture in general, but of one that would contribute to the identity-formation and ethnic cohesion of the politically designated titular nationality of each republic. In the realm of culture, the interconnection between the institutional form of the national republic and the program of nativization and nation-building became most apparent. The formation of cultural organizations and the organization of cultural practice reflected a politically inspired operational code of “one republic—one culture” that fit securely within the institutionalization of the Stalinist troika: one nation—one territory—one republic. In this sense, the status of “titular nationality” in a national-state administrative territory provided more than merely a nominal prestige; in fact, such status entitled the given ethnic community to cultural hegemony within its own territory.<sup>25</sup>

Due to this ethno-territorial arrangement titular nations had a relatively independent cultural autonomy; however, the territory of the administrative entities and the areas inhabited by the ethnic groups did not entirely overlap each other. While the majority of the group became a titular nation in one republic, the rest was defined as trans-border minority living in neighboring republics and counties. This arrangement controlled the territorial distribution of the ethnic groups and thus, their political potency, too and it resulted in two basic peculiarities of the Soviet nations. On the one hand, a very special nation-image came into being: a political nation led by an ethnic group, the titular nation. The paradox of this resided in that only a part of the ethnic group constituted the titular nation, while the rest of the political nation did not

<sup>24</sup> Saroyan quoting Stalin. Mark Saroyan, “Beyond the Nation-State: Culture and Ethnic Politics in Soviet Transcaucasia”, In: Ronald Suny ed. *“Nationalism and Social Change”*, (University of Michigan Press, 1996), 137

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, 138-139

practice equal rights because of the privileged status of the titular nation. On the other hand, the administrative structure affected the minority politics as well, in which titular nations were responsible not only for their own citizens, but also for the trans-border members of their ethnic group. According to Rogers Brubaker, this aspect is a distinctive feature between nationalizing and “homeland” states:

Against nationalizing states' characteristic assertion that the status of minorities is a strictly internal matter, "homeland" states claim that their rights and responsibilities *vis-a-vis* ethno-national kin transcend the boundaries of territory and citizenship. "Homeland," in this sense, is a political, not an ethnographic category. A state becomes an external national "homeland" when cultural or political elites construe certain residents and citizens of other states as co-nationals, as fellow members of a single trans-border nation, and when they assert that this shared nationhood makes the state responsible, in some sense, not only for its own citizens but also for ethnic co-nationals who live in other states and possess other citizenships.<sup>26</sup>

The peculiarity of the entire Soviet system of nationalities is that the system shifted national character and nationality as the organizer of the social and political order from the level encompassing the entire state to beneath state level, while the Soviet state was not formulated as a nation but an international and supranational entity.<sup>27</sup> This administrative legacy of the Russian Federation influences contemporary politics and I will go back to this question in the next chapter.

The ethnographic or cultural category of homeland is also connected to geographical territories of the nation, although its imagined boundaries do not always overlap the official borders of the state. Homeland is a heterogeneous emotional space with intensive points, places and zones, which show a completely different structure than the homogeneous segment-

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<sup>26</sup> Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed. Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), 5

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 37-38

categories of political territory.<sup>28</sup> Maybe, one of the most telling examples is Hungary, where certain radical right movements want to restore the Great, so-called Historical Hungary, that is to say the borders of the Kingdom of Hungary. In their perception the Hungarian homeland implies not only the territory of contemporary Hungary, but also the former parts of the kingdom annexed in 1920. A more gentle form of this homeland-concept was manifested after the political transition in 1989, when the government initiated national funerary rites called political reburials. András Zempléni in his article explains how all Hungarian ‘homelandless dead’ were reburied, namely, the hidden martyrs or exiled patriots, who were considered to be the victim of the communist regime and died abroad or were buried without funeral. The dead were recalled from New York, Portugal or even from Austria, however, none of them were repatriated from Slovakia or from Transylvania, where the imagined Hungarian homeland extends. What is more, when in 1996 the Slovakian government offered to return the relics of Prinze Rákóczi, the Hungarians of Slovakia and Hungary refused it: “the prince’s relics should remain, and do remain where they are, in the sepulchral land of his homeland, even if their place of worship is not located any more on the present territory of Hungary.”<sup>29</sup>

In the case of Russia, obviously the state aims at building one nation from a strongly heterogeneous community. In Russian history – from the Russian Empire up to the present-day Russian Federation – the creation of a common national identity and loyalty has always been a crucial point. After the victory of the Great Patriotic War the most important pillars of the nation-building have been the memory of the war and the concept of Soviet/Russian motherland, which was personified as Motherland-Mother (Rodina-Mat’) during the war. The word ‘rodina’

<sup>28</sup> András, Zempléni: Political Reburials. Academic course, Department of European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Pécs, Hungary. 2007-2008/Spring semester

<sup>29</sup> András Zempléni, “Sepulchral Land and Territory of the Nation: Reburial Rituals in Contemporary Hungary” in: András A. Gergely ed., *A nemzet antropológiája* [The Anthropology of Nation] (Budapest, Új Mandátum, 2002), 76-77

derives from the verb ‘rodit’, to give birth. Both of them have the same stem ‘rod’, which means clan or kinship, accordingly, Rodina implies social and genealogical connotations as well (unlike the Hungarian Haza, which is associated only with dwelling-place because it goes back to the word ‘ház’, house). Moreover, the gender of the word is feminine, as her visual manifestation, Motherland-Mother also shows. The complementary word of Rodina is ‘otechestvo’, fatherland, which are included in the Russian name of the Great Patriotic War: Velikaya Otechestvennaya Voyna. It is interesting how these expressions engender certain national symbols and project social roles onto categories related to the nation; while Motherland is a female who has to be protected, the war and the defense itself are articulated in the masculine aspect. Therefore, in this paper Motherland or Rodina always refer to the feminine version, Fatherland does to the masculine one, and homeland is used in broader contexts.

Malaya Rodina, namely Little Motherland, expresses her inclusion in the greater Motherland. It is used as a synonym for moya zemlya (my land), krai, rodnoi krai as well as the districts (raion). It is difficult to give an accurate translation of the word ‘krai’, because it includes many synonyms of the meaning. First of all it refers to geographical and relatively small (or smaller) territory like region, land, area with natural borders. Secondly, it can be meant the border itself or the edge of a given region, to which the name of Ukraina deriving from the expression of ‘u krayu’, at the borders, refers. Finally, ‘krai’ indicates administrative territories as well – while from the end of XVIII. century up to the beginning of XX. century krai was an official or semi-official administrative unity including gubernias (provinces) like Kavkazskii or Turkestanskii Krai; in the contemporary Russian Federation it denotes smaller administrative subjects like Altai Krai, Perm Krai or Kamchatka Krai.



‘Rodnoi krai’ is a more specific term – it is used for native land, where somebody was born, however, it does not include obvious borders of the territory. When I asked my informants about the meaning of ‘krai’ and ‘rodnoi krai’, they often mentioned their villages, their districts or Bashkiria itself. Seeing my incomprehension, one of them summed it with the expression of Malaya Rodina; that is Little Motherland. This comment and the multivocal meaning of these words highlight a very important aspect of them: the inclusion of a small part into the larger and larger whole growing gradually.

The expressions Malaya Rodina and rodnoi krai usually refer to locality and local identity, that is to say, village and district. Therefore the term ‘local’ used in this thesis is considered to be their synonym and its usage is not limited to any of them as the Russian expressions also implies more levels of locality. However, I am going to specify the meaning when necessary. Although these words might express Bashkortostan as well, I am going to differentiate the republic level from locality in order to avoid misunderstandings.

### The History of Kraevedenie

The field of kraevedenie focuses on the knowledge of rodnoi krai or Malaya Rodina, which are connected to geographic or administrative categories, but not ethnic or national territories. Kraevedenie is a field of study, which includes the research, preservation and transmission to younger generations of the lore of local communities. It is not reduced to history of villages, but it implies the local knowledge of all spheres of life like geography, biology, archeology, ethno-history, history of the local economy, etc. This colorful content of kraevedenie has been shaped for centuries from the Russian Empire till nowadays and its history is intertwined constantly with educational aspects as well.

The interest in geography and mineralogy was the first trigger of the study of small regions in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In 1761 Mikhail Lomonosov, the famous Russian writer and scientist, had intended to map the mineral sources of the entire empire and involve local people in his research. Lomonosov sent questionnaires consisted of thirty questions all over the Russian Empire, which included information about villages, cities, districts, counties and provinces. Schools became primary places of the research, where students and teachers studied local and regional geography together. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the field still concentrated mainly on geography, but it was extended to other study-areas such as demography, trade, agriculture and cultural traditions. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it received an institutional background by the foundation of the Russian Geographical Society, which initiated a new movement called *otechestvovedenie* (deriving from the word ‘otechestvo’, fatherland) or *rodinovedenie* (deriving from the word ‘rodina’, motherland). The essential idea of this movement was the education of basic geographical concepts through direct observation of the surrounding environment and nature. They published textbooks and methodological papers in order to facilitate the teachers’ work in elementary schools in the countryside as well. In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century *otechestvovedenie* developed spontaneously and not only teachers, but also local priests became experts of this field.<sup>30</sup>

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the field of local and regional geography was still flourishing. Before the Great October Socialist Revolution there were 160 local history and geography societies with 15 million members, by the end of 1922 there were 516 organizations including 285 museums. In 1927, there were already 1,765 societies and 560 museums. In 1922 the Central Bureau of Kraevedenie was founded in the Russian Academy of Sciences, which

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<sup>30</sup> K. F. Stroev, *Kraevedenie*, (Moskva, 1974) 14-34; source: <http://kraevedenie.chat.ru/stroev/stroev2.htm>, 27-05-2013

supported the foundation of several museums.<sup>31</sup> In the 1930s organizations of kraevedenie became more and more problematic for the Soviet regime. The experts of the field were always on the side of the cultural and economic diversity and therefore they did not agree with the unification and centralization of the economy. That is to say, their work was considered to be a barrier to the Soviet planned economy and kolkhozation and it was necessary to take control over their agency. Museums were closed, a number of specialists were exiled or executed and their field was in turn entirely reformed according to the new Soviet interest.<sup>32</sup>

The fundament of the Soviet kraevedenie consisted of local revolutionary movements and the history of local industry and agriculture, especially the history of kolkhoz. It was turned into an official Soviet science with a strong political and ideological background. As one of the articles in Pravda said:

Study your land, your region, its history, its richness in order to know what hide in the depths of his native land, to discover the nature. Not only study it, but learn how to use it for the benefit of man, for the benefit of socialist society. What a noble and grateful occupation, what a powerful source of knowledge, what a great educational tool of the youth! Its name is kraevedenie.<sup>33</sup>

After the victory over Germany in World War II, kraevedenie was completed with the local memory of the Great Patriotic War. In the 1960s associations of veterans, local organizations of the Komsomol and the Pioneer Movement began to participate in researches related to kraevedenie to a larger and larger extent. The first initiation was the All-Union Hiking Tours of Places of Military Glory by the so-called “Red Pathfinders” in 1965, which became a mass-movement during the year of the fiftieth Anniversary of the Revolution. More

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<sup>31</sup> Zolotoe desyatiletie kraevedeniya (Golden decade of kraevedenie), source: <http://cribs.me/kraevedenie/zolotoe-desyatiletie-kraevedeniya>; accessed: 27-05-2013

<sup>32</sup> Sovetskoe kraevedenie (1917-1989) ili istoriya s geografiei (Soviet kraevedenie or history with geography), source: <http://vlzverev.narod.ru/index/0-12>, accessed: 27-05-2013

<sup>33</sup> ‘Zolotoe’, <http://cribs.me/kraevedenie/zolotoe-desyatiletie-kraevedeniya>

than thirty million young people took part in hiking tours organized by the Komsomol, the Voluntary Society for Assisting the Armed Forces, the political departments of army units and by activists of the Defense Society. During the tours participants visited all the “places of military glory” of a given region; they collected relics and documents of soldiers, made interviews with eyewitnesses. Sometimes, due to their thorough work, they could reconstruct the course of a battle or identify soldiers and they created small museums and obelisks of military glory. “Evenings of Military Glory” were a more analytical activity. In the framework of these thematical evenings veterans and fighters imparted their war-experiences to younger generations and they facilitated “the instrumental activity of uncovering the details of one aspect of the heroic past by various kinds of documentation, such as eyewitness reports, film clips, lectures and relevant music.”<sup>34</sup> The students could represent the results of their research and their knowledge during the All-Union competitions called Summer Lightning or Eaglet. Due to these movements and the memory of the Great Patriotic War the idea of patriotism and heroism became integral parts of education of kraevedenie.

As results of these consistent researches more and more local museums were founded. In Tatyshly district, where school-museums examined in the present thesis are located, the first museum came into being in 1976, the second in 1981 and others after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. After 2000 they especially mushroomed not only in the district, but in Bashkortostan as well. The process has been connected to the new federal programs called Patriotic Upbringing of the Citizens of the Russian Federation, which has had three five-year programs in 2001-2005, 2006-2010 and 2011-2015. The program has aimed at improving the

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<sup>34</sup> Christel Lane, *The Rites of Rulers. Ritual in Industrial Society – The Soviet Case*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981) 148-150

patriotic upbringing of younger generations, which had a crisis during the entire 1990s.<sup>35</sup> As Ovchinnikova and Ul'yanovna discussed the essence of the program:

To be a patriot means to serve the motherland, to work for the country's benefit, to enhance its glory, and if necessary to sacrifice one's personal wealth, prosperity, and, under extreme conditions (in a time of war) one's life. This is a truth that is eternal. Now, in the first years of the twenty-first century, bringing up the kind of person who is a citizen and a patriot is the priority task of the system of education. Today, patriotism is identified with qualities of personality such as one's love for one's motherland as well as one's home region, one's readiness to fulfill one's constitutional duty, and one's sense of social tolerance, including national and religious tolerance. Present-day pedagogical science looks at patriotic upbringing as a component of the complex and comprehensive process of the shaping of the personality.<sup>36</sup>

School-museums and kraevedenie-classes are integral parts of civic patriotic upbringing, because they transmit values mentioned in the quotation through the study of the past and Rossiyskiy<sup>37</sup> history. That is to say, museums and their work have a strong ideological background and they represent the official national history and historical concepts. In the 1980s, the theory of museumisation had a paradigm shift connected to the postmodern turn in humanities and social sciences. Since then, the museum is considered to be, on the one hand, a cultural representation reflecting certain cultural aspects of the social life and on the other hand, a constructed text, which can be read and analyzed as a narrative.<sup>38</sup> The museum became the subject of observation especially as a representative space of science, politics and their relationship.

After the political transition in Eastern Europe, the new museology has proved to be a very applicable and useful method in the analysis of rearranged museums and monuments in postsocialist states. As I mentioned above, monuments and museums in the Russian Federation

<sup>35</sup> N.P. Ovchinnikova – N.S. Ul'yanovna, "Problems of the Patriotic Upbringing of Rural School Students", *Russian Education and Society*, 52:3: 73

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, 72-73

<sup>37</sup> The term 'Rossiiskii' is based on citizenship and used all citizens of the Russian Federation regardless to their ethnic belonging, while the word 'russkii' refers to Russian as an ethnic category.

<sup>38</sup> Frazon Zsófia, *Múzeum*, 11

have been crucial parts of the representation of the reinterpreted history, which is supposed to create historical continuity between the Soviet and Russian past.<sup>39</sup> However, not only the state-museums, but also the discussed school-museums are excellent examples of these processes. Therefore, in this thesis I analyze three school-museums as narratives, elements of which are constructed in order, following certain concepts and ideas affected by local actors, organizations, the actors of republican or state-institutions.

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<sup>39</sup> Cf.: Forest-Johnson, “Unraveling”

## A Flower with Seven Petals

In the present chapter I am going to discuss the issue of multiethnicity and minority-policy after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in Bashkortostan in order to see which political circumstances have affected the Udmurt revival and ethnic identity-policy. I discuss the educational aspects of the changes, too, which facilitated and provided institutional background for school-museums and kraevedenie-classes.

In this chapter I am going to process inwards and firstly discuss the republic, secondly the Udmurts and finally the district as well. I intend to describe the general picture of the everyday life in Tatyshly district and provide some additional details about it in order to highlight the texture of the very field and thus further the imagining of social contexts of the observed phenomenon.

### Political contexts in the contemporary Republic of Bashkortostan

Bashkortostan is located between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains and bounded by the Republic of Tatarstan, Udmurt Republic, Perm Krai as well as Sverdlosk, Chelyabinsk and Orenburg Oblast. Its total area is 143,600 km<sup>2</sup> divided into fifty-four districts and the capital of the republic is Ufa. According to the 2010 census, the population is 4,072,292 people, of which ethnic composition is very heterogeneous<sup>40</sup>: Russian (36%), Bashkir (29,5%), Tatar (24,5%) Chuvash (2,7%), Mari (2,6%), Ukrainian (1%), Mordvin (0,5%) Udmurt (0,5%) and others (2,7%) inhabit the republic.

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<sup>40</sup> Religious composition: Muslim (38%), Russian Orthodox (25%), Atheist (8%), Other (14% - Krishna believers, Baptist, other Orthodox, etc.) A separate category in the survey those people, who believe in God, but did not confess any official religion; they are 15% of the population. Source: Arena, Atlas religiy i natsional'nostey Rossii [Atlas of religions and nationalities of Russia] <http://sreda.org/arena>, , accessed 26-03-2013



1.) The location of Bashkortostan in the Russian Federation<sup>41</sup>

It is important to bear in mind that census-data usually does not precisely reflect reality. The results of the 2010 census were rooted in the data of the 2002 census, in the course of which the Bashkir political elite's unconcealed aim was the reversal of Tatar and Bashkir ratio in the population.<sup>42</sup> According to the previous census in 1989, the ethnic composition had a different picture, which affected to a large extent the unsuccessful separatist claims of Bashkortostan after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The majority of the population was Russian (39%), in the second place stood Tatars (28,5%) and Bashkirs were only the third biggest ethnic group in their own republic (22%). This encouraged the Tatars to initiate a strong ethnic revival movement in Bashkortostan, who wanted to make the Tatar language an official language. The movement was unsuccessful, only Bashkir and Russian languages became recognized as official state languages in the constitution, but in response a law was passed, giving cultural autonomy to ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the Bashkir political elite intended to

<sup>41</sup> Source: Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia, article: Bashkortostan; <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bashkortostan>, accessed: 21-05-2013

<sup>42</sup>“Isskustvennaya respublika, fal’shivaya perepis’.” *Ufimskiy Zhurnal*. [Artificial Republic, False Census. Ufa Journal] Published: 19-12-2011 <http://journalufa.com/2204-iskusstvennaya-respublika-falshivaya-perepis.html>, accessed: 2012-01-18



find a solution to increase the Bashkir population and their political potential. In the next census the manipulation of ethnic identity was based on the high degree of similarity of the two languages and cultures and it aimed mainly at the Tatar-speaking Bashkirs living in North-Western areas of the republic.

The process of Bashkirisation appeared in many spheres of life in the 1990s, especially to economic and political context, about which Dmitriy Gorenburg provides a very comprehensive overview in his works. In Tatarstan separatist ambitions were based primarily on the ethnic majority of Tatars,<sup>43</sup> while the case of Bashkirs was more complicated due to the presence of a Russian and Tatar majority in Bashkortostan. Thus, since the independence of Bashkortostan could not be established on ethnic grounds, ethnic claims disappeared from political rhetoric. Instead, Bashkortostan tried to maintain and strengthen its relative independence from Russia through its strong economy and industry, which permitted a high degree of economic self-sufficiency that, could be used to press for sovereignty. Oil extraction and refining, coal and heavy industry enabled the republic to maintain a positive financial balance with the Russian central government. The economic reinforcement provided opportunities not only for the republic, but also for Bashkirs. They got into a privileged situation considering especially the sphere of economy and employment:

The south-eastern regions of the republic, where the Bashkir population is concentrated, have received development credits, and the bulk of foreign investment projects have been located there. (...) The program for Bashkir development calls for expanding the

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<sup>43</sup> Tatarstan also emphasized its strong economy, industry, it wanted to fully control these fields, but the main argument for sovereignty was the ethnic majority of Tatars bolstered by a historical rhetoric recalling their past political glory. It resulted in the direct promotion of Tatar culture and dissemination of Tatar folklore, laws for the development of Tatar education and the usage of Tatar language in offices, public spaces and schools. „The plan provides for mandatory Tatar language instruction for Russian children. (...) This provision requires that Russian and Tatar be studied in equal measure in all schools and kindergartens in Tatarstan.” That is why nowadays Tatarstan is considered to be „the most nationalistic” republic and the Tatar ethnic-movement and nation-building is a sort of ideal for other titular nations living in the Russian Federation. Dmitriy Gorenburg, “Regional Separatism in Russia: Ethnic Mobilization or Power Grab?” *Europe-Asia Studies*. 51:2 (1999): 262

socio-economic infrastructure of Bashkir-populated regions, giving preferences to Bashkirs (...) in all spheres of employment.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, the Janus-faced Bashkir political elite communicated a completely different concept of the nation of Bashkortostan; it is the multiethnic<sup>45</sup> political nation, of which cultural diversity is deemed to be a national value of the republic. A multiethnic nation seemed to be more comparable to the Rossiiskii nation as well, which based the symbolic integration of Bashkortostan into the Russian Federation. As Halyaf Ishmuratov, Minister of Culture and Nationalities Policy (1994-1995, 2001-2005) wrote:

For all its multi-ethnic and multi-religious character, Bashkortostan is, as before, relatively stable ethno-politically. The accumulated experience of interethnic harmony may be of interest of other regions in Russia. Its components are a dialogue that national-cultural societies maintain with the state and among themselves, efforts to create favorable conditions for the development of cultural diversity, a policy to preserve languages and cultures, and other things. All of that can be described by the common term “tolerance”. In this connection, we see as symbolic what President Vladimir Putin of Russia said during one of his visits to the Republic: “...All of Russia is reflected in Bashkortostan like in a drop of water.”

The ideas of tolerance at this stage in development should become the decisive factor in interethnic cooperation in Russia and the main principle of interethnic intercourse in the Russian space as it gets integrated in the world community.<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, the leading role of Bashkirs is also articulated in his propagandistic paper:

A culture for interaction between Russians, Bashkirs, Tatars, Udmurts, Maris and Chuvashes and others took shape in Bashkortostan over centuries. Thus the Bashkirs emerged as a unique nation oriented to the peaceful solution of interaction problems.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid: 264-265

<sup>45</sup> The Russian term of multiethnicity, ‘mnogonatsionalnost’, implies the word nationality instead of ethnos. This preference is based on different traditions of terminology in the Russian social sciences. As Vladimir Zorin, professor of the Institute of Anthropology and Ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences said, the well-known term ‘ethnos’ used and spread among Soviet scholars by Yulian V. Bromley has been displaced by terms of ‘narod’ (people) and ‘nacionalnost’ (nationality). According to Zorin, it is due to the work of Valeriy Tishkov, director of the Institute, who is engaged in research of ethnicity in the contemporary Russian Federation and prefers these terms. (Vladimir Zorin, State National Politics in the Russian Federation: New Proposals and Decisions. Paper presented in the Institute of Ethnology, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Budapest, Hungary 13-12-2011)

<sup>46</sup> Halyaf Ishmuratov, “Following Ancestors’ Behests” *International Affairs* (2005, No 1.: 144-152): 146

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

The new concept of nation and the ambiguity of its interpretation were manifested in national symbols as well. The national flag of Little Bashkiria was constructed in 1918 and used till 1924 when it was replaced by the red state flag of Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic with an image in the upper corner of a gold sickle and hammer, and under them a red five-finger star with a gold border. Until this moment the Bashkir flag had three isometric horizontal stripes — of blue, green and white. The dark blue color meant Bashkir belonging to the Turk group of peoples, the green stripe was a symbol of adherence of Bashkir people to Islam, and the white color was the sign of peace, prosperity and happiness of the people of Bashkortostan.<sup>48</sup> After having the red flag almost for seventy years, in 1992 the new Republic of Bashkortostan confirmed a new state flag. Although its colors are the same as those of the former Bashkir flag, the order of the colors and their meanings are changed. The dark blue color today means a clarity, goodwill and cleanness of thoughts of the people of the republic; white is the peaceful nature, openness, readiness for mutual cooperation; green is the symbol of freedom and eternity of life. The flag is completed by a new symbol located in the center of the white stripe, the kurai flower. The famous Bashkir flute, which is also called kurai, is made of the stem of this plant, but the state symbol consists of only the flower and its seven petals. The petals represent the seven main nationalities living in Bashkortostan, namely, Russians, Bashkirs, Tatars, Maris, Chuvashes, Udmurts and Mordvas.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> 450 years with Russia! Official website devoted to the celebration of the 450-anniversary of Bashkiria free-will joining the Russian state. <http://www.bashkortostan450.ru/authorities/symbolics/flag.html>, accessed: 27-03-2013

<sup>49</sup> Ishmuratov, "Following", 145



2.) Flag of Little Bashkiriya, 1918-1922<sup>50</sup>



3.) Flag of Republic of Bashkortostan, 1992<sup>51</sup>

While the reinterpretation of the national flag reflects the new concept of the political nation of Bashkortostan and the idea of multiethnicity draws a parallel between the republic and the Russian Federation, the coat of arms communicates a different nation-concept. Although it includes the colors of the national flag and the kurai as well, the figure of Salavat Yulaev dominates the whole symbol. Salavat Yulaev, the Bashkir hero, who was the head of the revolting Bashkir peasants in the rebellion in 1773-1775, joined the revolted troops of Yemelian Pugachev, who led an uprising against the reign of Catherine II, her reforms and suppression, and aimed at abolishing the controlling tsarist power. The monument to Salavat Yulaev was erected in 1967, whose stylized image became the coat of arms of Bashkortostan in 1993. Thus, the state symbols has dissonancy, because while the national flag symbolizes the ideas of multi-ethnic harmony and the national anthem emphasizes unity with Russia (“We are united with Russia”), the coat of arms and Salavat Yulaev as a national hero have the implicit meaning of freedom, the fight against suppression and ruling power.

<sup>50</sup> Source: Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia, Russian version, article: Flag Bashkortostana (Flag of Bashkortostan);

[http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B3\\_%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0](http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A4%D0%BB%D0%B0%D0%B3_%D0%91%D0%B0%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%BE%D1%80%D1%82%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B0), accessed: 21-05-2013

<sup>51</sup> Source: Official website of Republic of Bashkortostan; [http://bashkortostan.ru/republic/state\\_symbols.php](http://bashkortostan.ru/republic/state_symbols.php); accessed: 21-05-2013



4.) Monument of Salavat Yulaev, Ufa<sup>52</sup>



5.) Coat of Arms of Bashkortostan<sup>53</sup>

As the most elemental concept of Bashkir autonomy is manifested in the economy, politics and state symbols, national education also played an important role in the sovereignty project of Bashkortostan in the 1990s. Reforms included the republicanisation of the former branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences located in Ufa, which was declared the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Bashkortostan. A new educational publishing house called Kitap (the Bashkir word for book) was opened in Ufa, and in 1997 the Ministry of Education created a new institute to design textbooks for Bashkortostan's schools. In the academic year 1990/91 a new subject, the 'History, Literature and Culture of Bashkortostan', was introduced in 35 class hours a year for all levels, which means one class per week. Basically, the entire system of education was reformed in accordance with the Bashkir separatist claims.<sup>54</sup>

The most important project of this reform was the Celebration of Family-Tree (Шежере Байрамы; Sezhere Bairamy), according to which all schools and kindergartens had to involve

<sup>52</sup> Photographs in the present thesis are taken by me in the periods of August 2008, October 2011, April-July 2012

<sup>53</sup> Source: Official site of Republic of Bashkortostan; [http://bashkortostan.ru/republic/state\\_symbols.php](http://bashkortostan.ru/republic/state_symbols.php); accessed: 21-05-2013

<sup>54</sup> Katherine E. Graney, "Education Reform in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects in Post-Soviet Russia" *Europe-Asia Studies* 51:4 (1999): 616

the method of genealogical-tree research in the curricula and encourage students to keep searching and studying their roots. Although the program was obligatory for every institution, as an originally Bashkir tradition, the family-tree making was most important in the transmission of Bashkir culture and ethnic identity. For this purpose ethnic belonging of every member of the family has to be indicated. Libraries received financial support for creating centers of family-tree research inside the libraries, where people can study the history of their family and use computer-programs to elaborate their own family-trees.



6.) The research-center of family-tree in Verkhnie Tatyshly Library

In villages the official Day of the Family-Tree was celebrated in club-houses, where some families gathered and displayed their family-tree to the audience. After the celebration every family-tree was exhibited in the school-museums and became integral part of kraevedenie-classes. This initiation strengthened not only the Bashkir national identity, but also others, because due to the visual map of kinship, people found common relatives and discovered new family ties among themselves.

The Janus-face of the Bashkir politics was manifested in the new concept of education, which was situated in a multicultural context as well. On the one hand, the new educational projects aimed at shaping the civic mindedness of students with the help of teaching about the constitution of Bashkortostan and the official state symbols of sovereign Bashkortostan. Moreover, a special program has been developed to help teachers to achieve these goals, which includes such events as 'Republic Day' and activities organised around the theme 'I am a citizen of my Republic'. On the other hand, the curricula of the new subject, the 'History, Literature and Culture of Bashkortostan' focuses on the cultural and historical legacy of Bashkirs and textbooks barely mention other ethnic groups living in Bashkortostan.<sup>55</sup>

In the educational project these minorities have had the possibility to transmit their knowledge based on ethno-history, literature and culture only in the framework of new federal educational reforms, namely in the so-called local component:

The [Federal] Law on Education delegated to the regions greater responsibility for curricula and schools as part of a broader political effort to break up the centralized Soviet Communist state. The ministry has decided that 60 per cent of the school curriculum should be set at the center, 30 per cent by regional authorities, and 10 per cent by local schools.<sup>56</sup>

Although the local component intended to strengthen local identity, ethnic groups found some space in it to express their traditions and lore in school-museums and facultative kraevedenie-classes. Sometimes, teachers explain local or ethnic parallels of the given theme in history-classes, connotations and contexts of certain historical events like the Great Patriotic War. Moreover, textbooks also encourage teachers and students to broaden their knowledge on local history and they include tasks and questions related directly to the students' family

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 624

<sup>56</sup> Janet G. Vaillant, "Civic Education in a Changing Russia", In *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof et al. (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 235.

histories and the history of their towns or villages.<sup>57</sup> Thus, personal, local, ethnic and national memories are intertwined continuously.

#### Genuine Udmurts – Trans-Kama Udmurts in Bashkortostan

The new forums of education have a special role not only in patriotic upbringing, but also in creating the ethnic consciousness of students. In Udmurt school-museums, the ethnography of the far past and the contemporary ethnic revival are also represented; however the continuity of ethno-history is broken by displays of Soviet times in the framework of kolkhoz-, school- and war-history. Although the Soviet regime supported ethnic culture and folklore, it did not tolerate religions. In turn, the essence of Trans-Kama Udmurt identity has been religious for centuries.

According to verbal folklore, Udmurts living in Bashkortostan had fled from the forced Christianization and settled among Muslim peoples in Southern territories, over the Kama River – this is why they are called Trans-Kama Udmurts. Muslims did not have to convert to Christianity; therefore Udmurts adopted their names in order to deceive missionaries and tax-gatherers and thus, they could keep and practice their pagan sacrifices in the course of time. For this reason they consider themselves genuine Udmurts compared to Udmurts living in the Udmurt Republic, who left their original Udmurt religion and became Orthodox. Scholars partly share this ethnic concept of origin, but they usually complete it with economic and social factors as well, which contributed to the Udmurt migration in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>58</sup> Nevertheless, the most important aftermath of the migration undoubtedly was the preservation of Udmurt

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<sup>57</sup> Vera Kaplan, “History Teaching in Post-Soviet Russia: Coping with Antithetical Traditions”, In *Educational Reform in Post-Soviet Russia*, ed. Ben Eklof et al. (London: Frank Cass, 2005), 261.

<sup>58</sup> Tatiana Minniyakhmetova, *Kalendarnye obryady zakamskikh udmurtov*. [Ritual Calendar of Trans-Kama Udmurts] (Izhevsk: RAN, 2000)



animist faith, which was practiced secretly even in Soviet times and after the dissolution it became the most vivid ethnic identity marker of Trans-Kama Udmurts.

The ethnic revival was initiated and organized by a very charismatic Udmurt leader, Renat Biktimirovich Galyamshin, who searched for Udmurts in Bashkortostan and listed all villages.<sup>59</sup> It was essential in the revival, because Udmurts living in neighboring districts did not know each other earlier. Galyamshin as a talented agronomist led the local kolkhoz<sup>60</sup> and later became the head of one of the rural settlements in Tatyshly district. He has had all political and social capital to facilitate and ensure opportunities “to flourish the Udmurt faith”<sup>61</sup> and he took advantage of the changed political context in Bashkortostan. Accordingly, all political and economic power is concentrated in his hands among Udmurts, therefore he is considered to be their main leader.

In the framework of the official multiethnic policy, Udmurts received institutionalized opportunities to declare their ethnic identity, practice their ethnic religion and cherish their language and traditions. Firstly the Udmurt National-Cultural Center (NKC) was founded by Galyamshin in 1996. The center is located in the so-called “Udmurt capital” of Bashkortostan, in Novye Tatyshly and cooperates with the Historical-Cultural Center of Udmurts (IKC). IKC was set up in 2004, as a branch of the House of Friendship of Peoples founded in 1995 for the support of multicultural traditions. The differences between the two institutions are based on financial and institutional backgrounds; while the workers of IKC get their salary from the state and their programs are covered by the state-budget, colleagues in NKC are volunteers and seek sponsors constantly in order to organize the renewed sacrifices during the year. These

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<sup>59</sup> Udmurts live in eight districts in the North-Western part of Bashkortostan.

<sup>60</sup> He was the president of the local kolkhoz till 2010, when his son took over the leadership. Meanwhile, Galyamshin introduced his son into the control-mechanism of Udmurt institutions and his social network, too; accordingly, probably he will continue his father’s work in other spheres as well.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Renat B. Galyamshin, 11.08.2008., Novye Tatyshly

differences have permitted a constructive cooperation with a steady financial background and facilitated projects like the building of Udmurt worship-houses. Although Udmurt sacrifices always happen in open-air groves and people never use these church-like houses for sacrifices, these buildings made Udmurt religion more visible in the landscape, which was dominated by Muslim mosques before.

The ethnic revival is manifested not only in religious gatherings, but also in the ethnic media. The Udmurt newspaper, *Oshmes* (Spring), had its first number in 1999 due to Galyamshin's initiation and it is the official state newspaper of Udmurts living in Bashkortostan. It has an electronic version sent via e-mails to readers who moved to other regions of Russia. The journalists constantly propagate *Oshmes* among Udmurts – during my fieldwork they visited a village and went house by house to collect readers, and later they started to organize cultural evenings with concerts and folk groups for Udmurts living in the Permskiy Kray in order to advertise the newspaper.

Without the organized communication, contacts and institutionalization of Udmurt traditions the Udmurt ethnic revival would not have been carried out. The ethnic nurturing of new generations intends to ensure the continuity of this process; therefore the centers organize a number of children programs like folksong contests, folkdance groups and folklore events. The most famous program for children is a camp called Town of Masters, where Udmurt children from Bashkortostan and from neighboring territories as well (Udmurtia, Perm, Tatarstan) can participate. In the camp children can learn several kinds of traditional handicrafts, folk songs and dances, but what is more important, they make acquaintances with other Udmurts.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> The so-called VKontakte, the Russian version of Facebook functions as a main tool of keeping contact among children or organizing ethnic events.

Udmurt traditions and history appear in school-museums and kraevedenie-classes as well, which strengthen the ethnic identity of children; however, classes focus on knowledge related to locality. It is important to bear in mind that different identity-levels (local, ethnic, republican or federal) do not exclude each other, but rather overlap. The district-identity is important as much as ethnic identity and it is considered to be the fundamental basis of Malaya Rodina. In order to understand more deeply the issue discussed in my paper, I am going to give a general overview of Tatyshly district in the next part.

#### Tatyshly District – The Texture of the Field

Tatyshly district is located on the northernmost part of Bashkortostan and it is the smallest one among fifty-four districts of the republic. Its territory is 1376 km<sup>2</sup>, of which more than 54% is agricultural territory consisting of 81% ploughed fields, 2% hay fields and 17% pastures. So, as can be seen, the living is based on agriculture primarily, but many people have oil rig jobs in Siberia and they work there in fortnight-shifts. Besides, every household has a smaller or bigger allotment, where they grow vegetables (potato, cabbage, beetroot, carrot, tomato, pepper, dill, etc.) and raise animals like cows, pigs, sheep and poultry.



7.) The location of Tatyshly district in Bashkortostan<sup>63</sup>



8.) Tatyshly district<sup>64</sup>

There are seventy-eight villages in thirteen rural settlements of the district and the distance between villages is about ten kilometers on the road. Only one highway goes across the district, which connects the district-center, Verkhnie Tatyshly with the Permskii Krai and the centers of the neighboring districts. Ufa, the capital of Bashkortostan is located 220 kilometers from Verkhnie Tatyshly.

The inhabitants are 23,873 and the population-density is approximately 17 people per km<sup>2</sup>. In the center approximately five thousand people dwell and the population of villages is around 300-500. It is difficult to define precisely the ethnic composition, because while according official data 70% of the population is Bashkir and 5,5% is Tatar, the people labeled by the ethnonym ‘Bashkir’ call themselves Tatars or Bashkirs speaking Tatar.<sup>65</sup> More than 21%

<sup>63</sup> Source: Wikipedia – The Free Encyclopedia; Russian version, article: Tatyshlinskiy rayon (Tatyshly district); <http://ru.wikipedia.org/>; accessed: 21-05-2013

<sup>64</sup> Source: Bashkiriya Turistskaya (Tourist Bashkiriya); [http://bashturist.ru/maps/sity/details.php?image\\_id=400](http://bashturist.ru/maps/sity/details.php?image_id=400); accessed: 21-05-2013

<sup>65</sup> My paper does not focus on this question, to this issue see: Dmitry Gorenburg, “Identity Change in Bashkortostan: Tatars into Bashkirs and Back”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 22:3 (1999): 554-580; Dmitry

of the district population is Udmurt, therefore it is deemed to be “the most Udmurt” district in the republic.

The language usage depends on different circumstances. In schools<sup>66</sup> the education is based on Russian and children have five Russian classes per week. Bashkir and English are mandatory languages and students can learn their native language in two classes per week. Nevertheless, the first spoken language is always the mother-tongue – Udmurt or Tatar –, at home every family communicates in their own language. Besides, Tatars comprehend Udmurt more or less, but they just rarely speak the language itself. Moreover, because Udmurts living in Bashkortostan have a very special dialect, even if Tatars understand this dialect, they cannot read the Udmurt newspaper, because it is written in literary Udmurt.<sup>67</sup> Udmurts always learn Tatar as well, because they have to use it on public transport, offices and institutions, because Tatars are in majority in the district. At the same time, Udmurt can be very useful when they do not want Tatars to understand their conversations. Of course, everybody knows Russian, because it is the language of education, the official language of the Russian Federation and a common language among different ethnic groups. Although Bashkir is mandatory in schools and official state language, only a few people speak it in everyday life. Tatars can read and speak Bashkir, because the two languages stand very close to each other, but Udmurts have difficulties acquiring Bashkir knowledge.

Due to the linguistic diversity, the languages of the local media are also multiple. There are three newspapers having editorial offices in Verhnie Tatyshly and each of them is written in

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Gorenburg: Tatar Identity: A United Indivisible Nation? accessed: 03-04-2013, <http://www.scribd.com/doc/130618530/Tatar-Identity-A-United-Indivisible-Nation-Dmitry-Gorenburg-Harvard-University-July-19-2004-pdf>,

<sup>66</sup> There are fifty-three schools in the district including sixteen secondary schools, twenty-six libraries, fifty-one clubhouses.

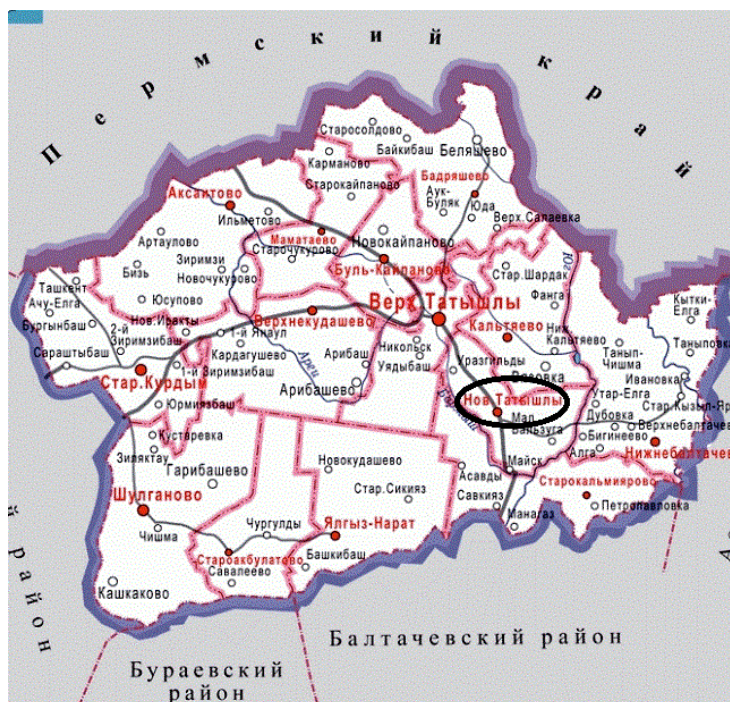
<sup>67</sup> Udmurts from Udmurtia have jokes on this dialect – they often say that even they do not understand Udmurts from Bashkortostan. Nevertheless, Udmurts in Bashkortostan have fewer problems with literary language except for some misunderstandings.

different languages. The Tatyshly Herald – the official newspaper of the district – has two versions: a Russian one (Татышлинский Вестник; Tatyshlinskiy Vestnik) and a Tatar one (Тәтешле хәбәрләре; Tāteshle khäbärläre), which were founded in 1935, in the same year, when the district itself was organized. The third one is the Udmurt Oshmes.

The journalists and correspondents fill mandatory topics assigned by the Ministry of Mass Media with their articles on local or ethnic issues and news; therefore they play a very important role in the field of *kraevedenie* (local historians). Kraevedes also publish in newspapers and some of these articles can be found in museum-exhibitions as well. Because the *kraevedenie* of Tatyshly district has not been published in a summarizing book, the main sources are these articles written by them in the local media. These articles are collected by local librarians and kept in thematic folders in the library. These materials are considered to be *kraevedenie* of Tatyshly district. There are several folders: History of Tatyshly District; History of Verkhnie Tatyshly; We and Nature, Nature and Ecology of Bashkortostan; Family – Pillar of Happiness; Afghanistan; Chechen Tragedy; Our Fellows in the Great Patriotic War, etc. These folders usually include articles from Tatyshly Herald or state-newspapers written in Russian or Bashkir language, but Udmurt articles from Oshmes cannot be found among them. This can be explained by practical reasons – librarians working in the library of the district center are Tatars, who have difficulties to read and understand the literary Udmurt language. Therefore, Udmurts collect articles in their centers, for example in the Udmurt Historic-Cultural Center or in the library of Novye Tatyshly, the so-called Udmurt capital of Bashkortostan.

Novye Tatyshly (its Udmurt name is Vylgurt, which means ‘new village’) is the non-official center of Udmurts. The inhabitants are around 500-600. The village is located ten kilometers from the district-center, so many people from the village work there. 80-85% of the inhabitants are Udmurt and the rest is Tatar. The ethnic composition of the village can be seen

in the landscape and the structure of the space as well: the Udmurt worship-house is located on the one side of the village, while the Muslim mosque is placed on the other, where Tatars live together. Novye Tatyshly is the administrative center of a rural settlement with four villages and it has a kolkhoz, where the four brigades are organized according to village-belonging. There is a school, a library, a kindergarten, a post-office, a hotel working periodically and three small shops financed by local businessmen.



9.) The location of Novye Tatyshly in the district

Novye Tatyshly is the main center of the Udmurt ethnic revival as I explained above. I carried out two anthropological fieldworks in Bashkortostan in August of 2008 and April-July of 2012. During my fieldworks I participated in sacrifices and other Udmurt celebrations, school- and district rituals like the Victory Day. I spent a lot of time in IKC and NKC studying their work and visited school-museums all over the district. Due to my trips I have seen not only Udmurt, but also Tatar museums. In the focus of my analysis are the Udmurt school-museums and their activity, but I am going to reflect on Tatar exhibitions for two reasons. On

the one hand, Tatar museums serve as control-material for my argument, thus in the light of the comparison, differences based on ethnic dimension can be seen vividly. On the other hand, as I emphasized before, these museums are local institutions focusing on locality and district and their ethnic separation and classification is slightly artificial, but still valid taking into account the first room of museums: ethnography.



## Treasure Chests of Schools

In this chapter I am going to describe three museums in order to see more precisely what the main and relevant subjects of kraevedenie are in Tatyshly district. It is necessary to give a thick description of them in order to highlight which fields constitute kraevedenie in localities and how they are structured and designed in school-museums. In addition, the display of exhibitions provides the possibility to see not only similarities, but also differences between them, which tell about local (village) aspects of content.

I used various kinds of primary sources situated from different angles. First of all, I relied on the materials of museums, their collections and the thoroughly structured exhibitions themselves. I argue that exhibitions can be interpreted as narratives, elements of which are constructed in order, following certain concepts and ideas affected by local actors, organizations, the actors of republican or state-institutions. This approach helps to find general aspects of exhibitions and define specific characteristics as well. Secondly, this corpus of materials is completed by interviews made with teachers about the work proceeding there and contests, which are very useful to understand what *they* consider as essential and noteworthy in the collections, kraevedenie-classes and patriotic upbringing. Thirdly, I am going to cite their reports written for the museum of district-center and National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion led by the Ministry of Education Republic of Bashkortostan. These reports are parts of the two main databases of “Museums of Bashkortostan” and “School-museums of Republic of Bashkortostan” of the National Museum located in the capital, therefore it has to be taken into consideration that reports reflect not only the teachers’ own thoughts about their work, but also the expectations of these upper institutions. Finally, the views of local society represented formally in local media and

informally in rumours are also quoted in this chapter. Although the local narratives are not the subject of the present thesis, I am going to refer to them at certain points in order to see the relevance of school-museums not only in the education and among teachers, but also in the broader local society.

In my analysis I am going to focus on how the local contents of exhibitions are embedded in broader historical and political contexts and to what extent this arrangement is affected by teachers, local societies, other museums or methodological brochures published by the National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion. Finally, I am going to illuminate the teachers' personal motivations in this work by means of reports written by them and interviews made during my fieldwork.

### School-museums

One of the leaders of school-museums wrote in her report: "Museum is a place devoted to Muses, an institution of tangible and intangible culture and collection of natural history; it is a completion, guardian, study, exhibition and popularization of them."<sup>68</sup> According to this approach, the museum is supposed to possess everything related to culture and the nature of locality as well as it treasures and cherishes this local lore in order to pass on constantly to younger generations. Because of this great importance of school-museums, almost every school has a smaller or bigger museum, which means that approximately fifty museums can be found in the district.<sup>69</sup> Fourteen of them are deemed to be the biggest, most prominent and most active institutions, which hold kraevedenie-classes, work together with students and participate in

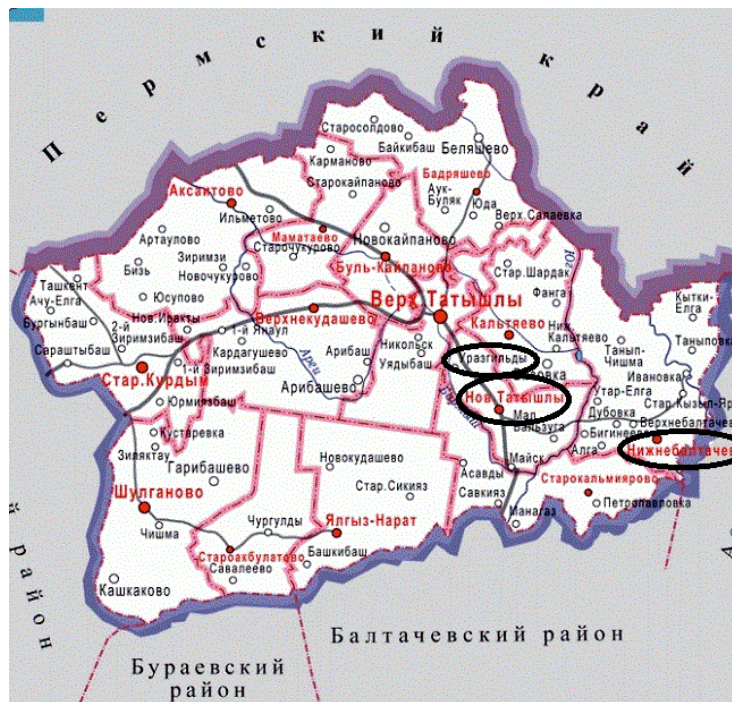
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<sup>68</sup> Nizhniy Baltachevo. Report written by G. M Samirzyanova

<sup>69</sup> Even kindergartens have a small corner or room with exhibitions functioning as museum. They usually consist of only one part: the ethnic culture.

contests every year. Among them seven possess certification declaring museum as an official institution, which is the highest prestige among schools.

I am going to describe three Udmurt museums located in Urazgilydy, Nizhniy Baltachevo and Novye Tatyshly. In the description I am going to follow the order of exhibitions that teachers gave in their reports and they followed it when they guided me in the museums.



10.) Urazgilydy, Novye Tatyshly, Nizhniy Baltachevo

They are the largest and the most significant Udmurt museums in the district, what is more, the first two museums are considered to be models for other museums (including Tatars as well), where the most fruitful work is produced, while the third museum has an exceptional situation regarding its institutional background and study groups as well. All of these museums are characterized by symbols of bright candle, a treasure chest or a warm corner of a house, the light of which shows proper ways for students and therefore they are worth cherishing. As can be read in an article by Oshmes: “The museum is a treasure chest for children, teachers and the

whole society of school, it teaches the history of your people and your country and it is a luminous light for the people of the village.”<sup>70</sup>

### Urazgildy

Urazgildy takes pride in the first and eldest school-museum of the district. F. G. Sagadiev started to collect materials in the 1960s and involved students into his work as well. Almost all artifacts were collected from the families living in Urazgildy by students and teachers. The first version of the museum was created in the corridor of the school in 1976. In the course of time the museum was moved frequently, but finally it received a spacious room in the new building of the school. A number of persons initiated the foundation and the work of the museum, especially the director, the presidents of kolkhoz and A.V. Gil'maev journalist, to whom one of the exhibitions is devoted nowadays. The museum received a certification in 1981, the first in the district.

Although this museum is the smallest one among the three Udmurt museums, it has the most artifacts, namely 1857. They are separated and exhibited thematically in four rooms. The first room called “History” is supposed to introduce the history of the village; the kolkhoz and the school as well as family-trees of local families. These family-trees are very telling examples of the new educational program initiated by Murtaza Rakhimov. Lineages are designed and painted in beautiful trees, flowers and different kinds of pictures; therefore they are also worth being exhibited in the museum. They facilitate to get familiar with kinship and history of families in the village, thus the study of them supports the cohesion of society.

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<sup>70</sup> Irina Khuziakmetova, “Treasure Chest of School”. (Школатэн зарни шыкысез; Shkolalen zarni shykysez) *Oshmes*, 17-05-2012



11.) Family-tree in the museum

The exhibition of “Military Glory” includes relics of the Civil and Great Patriotic War, like different kinds of weapons and guns, lists of veterans and soldiers having orders, letters from the frontline and military uniforms. This part is completed with titles like „They returned with victory” or „Nobody is forgotten, nothing is forgotten”.



12.) “Relics of the war”



13.) “Courage! Bravery! Honor!”



The next part, the “Implements of Work and Everyday Life” gives place for traditional agricultural tools, numismatics and various other objects from the old times. In this part visitors can see archeological artifacts as well, which were found during the building of the new road. The last exhibition, the „Peasant House” is decorated with traditional folk costumes, a cradle, jewelry and household objects.



14.) Woman jewelry

The fame of the museum is intertwined with the name of its leader, Zidymakova Anita Dil'mukhametovna. She is considered to be the most prominent teacher in Tatyshly district because of her persistent and tenacious work in the school-museum of Urazgildy and the successes of her students in competitions. She began to work in the museum in 2001. She not only maintained the quality of the museum-work, but also improved it with new approaches and projects: she has applied new methods of professors from universities and uses computers in the course of classes, which is deemed to be a great step in a small village. She has got a number of certificates of merit, she was chosen for the title of “Teacher of the Year” in 2008 and she

received republican recognition for her work in 2011. In 2004 the museum won the title of “The Best School-Museum of the Republic of Bashkortostan”

Students are always involved in museum-work: they guide guests in the exhibitions and share their knowledge with them, study kraevedenie of Urazgildy and Tatyshly district and participate in contests. Dil'mukhametovna's group often wins prizes; her supervision is equal with victory: her students received second prize in the contest “By the Roads of the Fatherland”, third prize in “Malaya Rodina” and second prize in “Bashkortostan – Protected Country”.

#### Nizhniy Baltachevo

When I was in Tatyshly for the first time in 2008 I did not decide precisely the focus of my research and I let the people show me what is important for *them*. Schools and museums were a crucial part of sightseeing, thus I could recognize the importance of these institutions. Its reputation preceded the school-museum of Nizhniy Baltachevo, because it is the most acknowledged museum in the district; so I definitely had to visit it. During my fieldwork in 2012 I already knew that I was going to study museums and whoever I asked about them, everybody said that I must see Nizhniy Baltachevo.<sup>71</sup>

Khuziakhmetova M. Kh., teacher of chemistry and biology began to collect ethnographical materials in the 1980s. The initiation was supported by the local kolkhoz, teachers and children as well. The school could not provide room for exhibitions till 1996, when it moved to a new building. In that year the school-museum was opened and later it received official certification as well.

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<sup>71</sup> The school has a web-site with information about the museum as well:  
[http://nijnebaltachevo.myl.ru/index/muzej\\_shkoly/0-20](http://nijnebaltachevo.myl.ru/index/muzej_shkoly/0-20), accessed: 24-04-2012

The museum incorporates six rooms. The first one is devoted to nature, where visitors can get to know the flora and fauna of the native land. In the background the wall is decorated by a huge painting of the landscape of the native land, which was made together with children. The history of education displays not only the school and its teachers, but it concentrates on the work of pioneers and Komsomol organization as well. It is a very important room, because it gives home to celebrations and meetings of the present-day pioneer organization called “Golden Bees”.



15.) Attributes of the Pioneer Organization and photos of graduated students

The exhibition of Military Glory consists of many parts. Most boards and placards are devoted to veterans of the Great Patriotic and Soviet-Afghan War, who returned from the frontline to their native land. The second part describes women’s situation during war-times,



who worked in kolkhozes, cut trees, drove herds and drove tractors instead of men. The final section of Military Glory commemorates soldiers who died in the war. This is the only museum where we can meet the memory of the Chechen War, because the village lost two soldiers in Chechnya. Their biographies and photos are exhibited under the inscription “Chechnya – Our Pain”. This room is the primary place for lessons held by veterans, when they speak about war and the importance of patriotism for children.



16.) “Our fellows” (The four main heroes of the district)



17.) “Chechnya – our pain”

The collection called Agricultural Implements covers more spheres than agricultural materials; therefore it could seem to be chaotic at first sight. The theoretical focal point of the exhibition is that “every people have to know the life of their ancestors, customs, tradition and life-style of the nation.”<sup>72</sup> The word ‘ancestors’ refers to peasants who lived before the Russian Revolution in 1917, thus, everything in this room illustrates the life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Coins, kitchen utensils, agricultural and hunting implements are exhibited, all of which were collected

<sup>72</sup> Nizhniy Baltachevo, report written by G. M. Samirzyanova

in the village and possessed by local inhabitants. Two boards are devoted to different themes: the role of Udmurt prayers and the history and the family-tree of the Baymiev family. These stories go back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, that is to say, they belong to the knowledge of ancestors' life: Udmurts, who settled down in the village. This part is intertwined with the next one, the Peasant House, where an entire Udmurt interior is built with a woman- and man-side and a real stove. The exhibition is full of Udmurt costumes and jewelry, which are titled in Udmurt. The heart of the room is a very old loom, which was given by an old woman from the village, on which children can learn weaving.



18.) The Peasant House

The last section introduces the history and life of the kolkhoz. The visitors can read the biographies of Heroes of Labor and they can get familiar with the stories of the building of the school, the dairy product company and tractor park. It includes the biography of the most emblematic Udmurt figures, like kolkhoz presidents and R.B. Galyamshin as the founder and leader of NKC.



19.) Prides of Udmurts



20.) Honoured Workers

From 2000 the leader of the museum is Gul'fira Mukhametgayanovna Samirzyanova, who holds kraevedenie-classes, initiated many projects and works together with students continuously. One of her most famous programs was the so-called "Experts" in 2004-2010, in the framework of which she and her students studied kraevedenie systematically, completed the museum with new contents, organized thematic tours in the museum and camps for children from neighboring villages.

### Novye Tatyshly

The school-museum of Novye Tatyshly has a slightly different story than other museums. It was built in 1996 by the initiation of R.B. Galyamshin as president of NKC and it has got a place in the building of the club-house. Although the museum is considered to be a school-museum, originally it belonged to NKC, and then later IKC took control. Nowadays teachers want to maintain the museums, because its leader does not have enough time to care

about and renew exhibitions. Tat'yana Nikoleavna Shaybakova is a prominent kraeved among Trans-Kama Udmurts and director of IKC. Initially she organized study groups for students in order to broaden their knowledge of Udmurts and Tatyshly district, but – as she said – students are too busy to participate in these groups, therefore she stopped holding them.<sup>73</sup> On the other hand, she is also engaged with the work of IKC and organizations of Udmurt performances, programs and prayers. Thus, the school-museum, which has doubled the area than others do, is open for visitors and school-lessons as well, but systematic research and work does not proceed there. Nevertheless, it has got second prize in the republican contest organized on the occasion of 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Victory in 2005.

The museum is devoted to the history and culture of all Udmurts living in eight districts in Bashkortostan. However, it does not cover entirely the description of all territories inhabited by Udmurts; rather it represents a generalized picture of Udmurt culture and the display of the most emblematic figures of contemporary Udmurt life and politics. The introductory exhibition located in the corridor is dedicated to the memory of Mensadik Garipov, the famous Trans-Kama Udmurt painter, who was born in the neighboring village. On the left wall his biography and nine original paintings are displayed, while on the opposite wall visitors can see maps and figures of the district and its former administrative entity (volost') from the 18<sup>th</sup> up to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first room, the 'Udmurt House' is supposed to introduce Udmurt ethnography with a furnished interior from the 19<sup>th</sup> century decorated with costumes and kitchen-utensils. The room of 'Peasant Lifestyle' is a usual representation of traditional implements of agriculture, but it is completed with old coins and banknotes as well.

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<sup>73</sup> Interview made with Shaybakova, 21-05-2012





21.) The Udmurt House



22.) Peasant Lifestyle

The 'Education in the Village' gives a comprehensive overview of the history of the school and the pioneer organization, as well as introducing the next part of the museum with separated boards of teachers who fought in World War II.



23.) Education in the Village

The fourth section called Military Glory commemorates veterans and soldiers who died in the Civil, Great Patriotic and Soviet-Afghan War. In the middle of the room a small shrine-like structure stands devoted to heroes of the Great Patriotic War. The structure painted in red has the shape of a pentagon and the five walls start from the five points of the red star, in which the ceiling ends. The ceiling is depicted by heroic scenes of war like soldiers in action, air fights or idealistic depiction of strong and muscular men. At the entrance of the shrine; the first picture shows the date of the beginning of the war and the last picture shows the date of the end of the war, while in the middle of the shrine an obelisk with a red star on top can be seen with the names of the dead written on a board.





24.) The obelisk and lists of heroes in the structure



25.) The ceiling of the structure

The last exhibition gives an account of the History of the Development of Agriculture, namely the kolkhoz. It focuses on the biographies of presidents, especially R.B. Galyamshin's

work; prizes and achievements of the kolkhoz and economic indicators of production. In this room visitors can see a number of photos depicting Galyamshin with the ex-president of Bashkortostan, Murtaza Rakhimov.



26.) History of the Development of Agriculture

### Different Levels of History Represented in the Museum

As I mentioned before, kraevedenie can cover more levels of local history: the district, the rural settlement and the village. Exhibitions incorporate all these levels, therefore their characteristics are very similar but different at the same time: they follow the same structure and have exhibitions of the same fields, but their content is more variable.

Based on the above, five elemental parts can be differentiated. One of these main fields, the so-called “Peasant lifestyle” or “Peasant house” is manifested in a typified version of a furnished house-interior from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but it is completed with folk costumes and traditional agricultural instruments as well. The next topic devoted to school tells the history of



the institution and its building, it has lists of teachers and graduated students and it often includes an account of the local organizations of the pioneer movement. The history of kolkhoz focuses on the leaders and the achievements of brigades and different sections of labor. The next part, the memory of war heroes commemorates soldiers who participated and died in the Great Patriotic and Soviet- Afghan War. Finally, the last sections display biographies and personal things of famous writers, singers or painters born in that village. This structural ideal is valid not only in the case of Udmurt museums discussed above, but all museums located in the district. It seems to be a general conception, compared to which each museum is created in accordance with their possibilities regarding space and the wealth of collections.

As for collections, the same pattern can be seen everywhere. Materials, especially ethnographical and military artifacts, are collected mainly by students and teachers from old people living in the villages. Photographs of students, soldiers and kolkhoz-workers are provided by schools, centers of rural settlements and kolkhozes. Essays of students written on certain subjects (e.g.: family-tree research) are also displayed in school-museums, which emphasize student-work and the educational role of these institutions. Inscriptions and texts explaining the historical background of exhibitions are written by teachers and leaders of museums.

These texts and inscriptions are written in Russian and sometimes they are completed with Bashkir translations as well. In the ethnically specified exhibitions, for instance in Udmurt interiors, artifacts have Udmurt title and we can see some original letters sent from the frontline written in Udmurt in the exhibitions of Military Glory. Although the language of education and contests is always Russian, Udmurts have their own expressions in their language for the most important keywords. They use them, if teachers have to explain the Russian versions for Udmurt children or if journalists of Oshmes publish articles on school-museums. Kraevedenie

is called ‘shaertodon’ (шаертодон) deriving from the words ‘shaer’ (шаер: land, country) and ‘todyny’ (тодыны: to know) and it means the knowledge of country. Shaer is the Udmurt equivalent of krai and it is used in phrases like ‘pichi shaer’ (пичи шаер) meaning little land and used instead of Little Motherland or ‘vordskem shaer’ (вордскем шаер), which means ‘rodnoi krai’, the land or country, where somebody was born. In this context ‘vordskem gurt’ (вордскем гурт) is also a frequent expression used for that village, where somebody was born. Besides them, Udmurts apply Russian words like ‘strana’ (страна: country) or Rodina (Родина: Motherland).

All of these expressions – including the original Russian phrases discussed above, too – tell us a very crucial aspect of these museums and kraevedenie as well. As Little Motherland is embedded in the larger Motherland, the local contents of kraevedenie cannot be acquired without the knowledge of broader contexts, because each and every section is embedded in a larger background. As one of the articles in *Oshmes* says: “it is difficult to understand the life without the skill of connecting the little and great Motherland.”<sup>74</sup>

The ethnographic part is contextualized in the combination of the legacy of the 19<sup>th</sup> century form of ethnic cultures and the framework of peasant lifestyle of prerevolutionary times. This combination constitutes the very essence of these exhibitions, because while they are supposed to display ethnic characteristics and features, they are all bound in the theme of peasantry. As I mentioned, Tatar museums also consist of the same parts as Udmurts do, but one can suppose easily that the ethnographic section of Udmurt and Tatar museums have elemental differences regarding their distinct ethnic cultures. Although ethnic labels are determined by ethnic groups being the majority in the given village, their collection is filled

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<sup>74</sup> Venera Timirshina, “Little Candle, But Its Warmth Is Strong” (Сюсьтыл пичи - пöсез кужмо; Syusytyl pichi, pösez kuzhmo) *Oshmes*, 16-02-2012

with similar objects and framed in the same way. Mainly traditional costumes and old agricultural tools are exhibited, which represent their ethnic characteristics as well, but these objects are put into a common denominator by using the notion of peasant lifestyle as a historical background. On the other hand, these parts have additional political contexts, too. During the Soviet era – because some of these museums were founded in socialist times – ethnic culture could be discussed in the framework of internationalist ideology propagating the friendship of peoples and supporting ethnic folklore. Nowadays contemporary politics emphasizing multiethnicity as a value provides opportunities to cherish ethnic culture and represent it in many fields, for instance in school-museums. Thus, the national symbol of the flower with seven petals symbolizing the seven ethnic groups living in Bashkortostan is realized in other ways as well: ethnographic collections of Udmurt school-museums are supposed to be the “Udmurt petal”, and we can find six other petals in museums of other ethnic groups.

In the next three exhibitions – history of school, memory of wars and history of kolkhoz – differences based on ethnic culture cannot be observable at all. Although there are a few references on the ethnic belonging of the population of the given village, they do not constitute basic distinctiveness in structure or content. All of them are framed in the historical background of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation and focuses on these larger and smaller (local) processes. This statement is applicable for all museums in the districts (including Tatars as well), therefore the following analysis is valid for all of them.

The history of the school is embedded in the history of zemstvo and the development of the Soviet school-system. The schools of Novye Tatyshly and Nizhniy Baltachevo were founded by the zemstvo (1903 and 1908); the school of Urazgildy came into being in the Soviet

period (1927).<sup>75</sup> The larger history embraces the story of local schools as visitors can read it on the exhibited boards:

Due to the development of capitalist economy in Russia zemskaya reform could be introduced in 1864. According to the regulations of zemskie institutions provincial (gubernskie), county (uezdnye) bodies and municipal councils (upravy) were created. These councils ratified the distribution of budget and zemskie commitments, elected provincial and district superiors and controlled the zemstvo itself as well. Zemstvo was engaged in infrastructure, guards, wealth, post-office, healthcare and education. Zemskie schools were the elementary schools in Russia in 1864-1918. They were opened in rural settlements and financed by zemstvo. The duration of education lasted mainly three or four years. Kaypanovskoe zemstvo was founded in Tatyshly district (volost'), Birsik County, Ufa Province. Novye Tatyshly belonged to this zemstvo, and in 1903 three summer schools were opened for Udmurt children with education based on Russian language.<sup>76</sup>

The quotation highlights not only the background of the foundation of school, but the whole historical framework as well as providing basic knowledge of zemstvo institutions. The focal point of periodization is clearly the zemskaya reform, because the institution was the first one in Russian history, which facilitated the foundation of schools throughout the empire for all children regardless of their social-hierarchical, ethnic or religious belonging.

The periodization follows the general, official periodization of Russian history, thus the next section of the history of school is always the Soviet times with the most important event, the Great Patriotic War. Hard years of schools are represented in biographies and photos of teachers and students who went to the frontline, fought and died or came back with victory. Most of the texts discuss the local aspects of the following decades until the dissolution of the Soviet Union and add some information about the 1990s. However, there is no outlook on Soviet and Russian larger processes; there is no mention of the Soviet collapse at all. The

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<sup>75</sup> Zemstvo schools were elementary schools in the Russian Empire which were opened by zemstvos, the district and provincial bodies of self-government.

<sup>76</sup> Novye Tatyshly

history of schools overarches the breakdown of the Soviet system and binds the two historical periods with its continuity.

The exhibition of school gives place to the symbolic attributes of pioneer organizations like ties, flags or drums, pioneer uniforms and merits of the foremost pioneers. The *ars poetica* and the message of this movement are emphasized by such famous Leninian quotations like “Be prepared!”, “Always prepared!” or “Our task is to study”. Lenin, as the father of the pioneer movement, is often depicted in paintings or life-size (or even bigger) busts. His philosophy and ideology presented in the exhibitions support the contemporary pioneer movements and emphasize the importance of the labor of love.

The third section of school-museums is also drenched in certain ideologies. First and foremost heroic soldiers stand in the focus of the memory of wars; nevertheless their deed and performed duties can be interpreted only in greater ideas. The main mission of the Great Patriotic War was the defense of the Motherland. The famous Soviet propaganda poster “Motherland is calling!” can be found in almost all school-museums and the mention of Her in inscriptions and various kinds of texts is also very frequent. The participation in the war is interpreted as patriotic duty; therefore soldiers and veterans fought in the Great Patriotic War are named patriots in texts and everyday-life as well. Their biographies always culminate in their heroic and patriotic deed: participation in the war and dying for their Motherland.

As I explained previously, the memory of the Great Patriotic War has an essential role in the Rossiyskiy nation-building. Its memory has to be passed on to younger generations continuously; therefore it is an integral part of the education and patriotic upbringing. It conveys not only its memory, but related ideas and values such as heroism, patriotism, loyalty and the devotion to the Motherland. The aim of these exhibitions is completed with *kraevedenie*-classes held by veterans and the annual march on the school-yard on the occasion

of Victory Day on 9<sup>th</sup> of May. Through these lessons students learn not only about the Soviet past, but also about how to be a good citizen and patriot in the Russian Federation as well.

The Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has a different ideological background. In this case soldiers are considered to be internationalists, who fought for the great idea of friendship of peoples in order to maintain the achievements of socialism and ensure the possibility to carry out its future goals in a fraternal socialist state. In neighboring districts there are some schools named after internationalists who were students of the schools and died in Afghanistan. These exhibitions especially emphasize the importance of internationalism, for which these students died. Nevertheless, the memory of this war has relevance for all school-museums that I have seen. The essence of internationalism – peaceful cohabitation and cooperation of a number of ethnic groups – can be converted easily into the contemporary idea of multiethnicity considered to be a main value in Bashkortostan and the Russian Federation as well. This thought strengthens the place of all ethnic groups in the republic and federation as well.

The wars affected the work of local kolkhozes, too. The two exhibitions are intertwined, because in the room of Military Glory visitors can read texts about the women's role in the war-time agriculture:

What an immense burden was lying on the women's shoulders! Medals for combat and medals for work are made of the same metal. It is impossible to overestimate the merits of the home front – it was a reliable support for the army. In war-time there was a motto: "There is no victorious front without a strong home front. The real fight was on the labor front with its own victories and losses."<sup>77</sup>

The periodization of history of the kolkhoz is adjusted to Soviet national history. Their story is a combination of the history of the local kolkhoz (lists of workers, presidents, buildings, etc.) and the discussion of broader contexts, which affected the development of the institution:

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<sup>77</sup> Novye Tatyshly

After the Great October Revolution the economic situation of the country was very difficult. There was not enough bread and other products. Small farms could not come out from the misery. Therefore the party decided to incorporate these small farms into kolkhozes and cooperatives [артель?]. (...)

The stable development of the kolkhoz had changed with the beginning of the Great Patriotic War. All working men went to the frontline and all work in the kolkhoz was lying on the shoulders of old people, women and youth. (...)

The social-economic development of the country began to decline due to the transition of market relations. But our kolkhoz endeavored to come out from this difficult situation and looked for ways of self-financing – it sells meat and grain to the state.

As can be seen, the national history of the Soviet Union constitutes the main framework for these texts, because without this background, the local events and changes cannot be explained.

The kolkhoz-exhibitions also have hidden moral messages. The economic indicators are supposed to present the constant growth of production and their curves are going up even if the production of the kolkhoz stagnated in consecutive years. The progressive development is indispensable, which is ensured by the hard-working people. Accordingly, the biographies of merited workers emphasize the importance of the labor of love and diligence, which is honored and rewarded by the society.

In this context previous and present-day presidents have got a special attention in the space of the museum, because they contributed to the development of the kolkhoz to a large extent. Many of them controlled not only the work in the kolkhoz, but also facilitated and supported the foundation of school-museums. The presence of the current presidents' memory in the museums has a special aspect regarding that everything included in the museums is related to the past. Thus, their work is already embedded in the glorious past and in the memory of those who worked for the society. Hereby, their power is much more stabilized presumably in the present-day circumstances and local social relations.

Galyamshin, the leader of the National-Cultural Center of Trans-Kama Udmurts has a unique status among these presidents. In Novye Tatyshly his life-story and photos taken of him

dominate in the collection, which are supposed to present him as the president of the kolkhoz, the head of the rural settlement and the main leader of Trans-Kama Udmurts as well. The most relevant part of his social network, his fruitful relationship with Murtaza Rakhimov as ex-president of Bashkortostan, is also represented by means of photos of the two of them. Literally the same version of his biography is also displayed in Nizhniy Baltachevo under the title “The pride of Udmurts of our district”. He is included not only of the history of kolkhoz, but he is also important as a person, who did so many things for Udmurts.

This thought leads us to the last part of the museums, the memory of famous artists. Among the examined three museums only Novye Tatyshly possesses such an exhibition. This is because none of the three villages have famous writers or singers, but because the museum in Novye Tatyshly is considered to be a museum of all Trans-Kama Udmurts, it had the chance to devote a small exhibition to Mensadik Garipov, the most famous Trans-Kama Udmurt artist. However, in other museums in the district there are a number of exhibitions of Tatar and Bashkir singers and writers, who were born in the given village. These people raise the fame of the village, the district and the ethnic groups as well. The local museums are named after them and the museum in the district-center represents all of them. The ethnic belonging has got significance especially in the case of writers and singers, who use their own native-language in their art, thus, they contribute to its cherishing. In the case of Garipov, his unique graphic technique is emphasized as an Udmurt peculiarity:

M. Garipov as our first graphic artist managed to find a specific Udmurt, intimate tone of graphic representation of stories. He knows how to accentuate astonishingly local and national features.<sup>78</sup>

As can be seen, there are standard fields of school-museums, but the contents of these fields adjust to local peculiarities. Who defines which fields can be involved in school-

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<sup>78</sup> Novye Tatyshly



museums? What affects its structure, compared to which an exhibition can be different? As T. N. Shaybakova, the leader of the school-museum in Novye Tatyshly, told me, “museums are similar to each other to a large extent, because they see and copy each other’s exhibition”.<sup>79</sup> In this case Urazgildy had a pioneer role as it was the very first museum in the district in 1976. But museums of other districts also can be ideal for the museums of Tatyshly. For instance, the shrine-like structure located in the third room in Novye Tatyshly and devoted to the heroes of the Great Patriotic War has an entirely identical pair in the museum in Bolshoy Kachak (Kaltasy district) founded in 1981.<sup>80</sup>



27-28.) The shrine-like structure of the school-museum in Bolshoy Kachak

The similarity is obvious (see photos 24-25). Both of them have the shape of a pentagon and the five red walls start from the red stars, in which the ceilings end. The ceilings are depicted by heroic scenes of war, while in the middles of the shrines obelisks with red stars at the tops can be seen with the names of the dead written on a board.

<sup>79</sup> Interview made with T. N. Shaybakova; 21-05-2012

<sup>80</sup> Venera Il'baeva, “Corner Giving Warmth” (Шуныт сётись сэрер; Shunit syotis’ sereg). *Oshmes*, 26-04-2012. I visited this museum in 2008.

The design and the structure of school-museums are shaped not only by each other, but other factors as well. As I mentioned, the National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion led by the Ministry of Education Republic of Bashkortostan is the official organizer of republican contests among school-museums. The winners receive valuable prizes;<sup>81</sup> moreover, they can win official certification for their museums as well. The center publishes methodological brochures in order to help the work and preparation of museums for contest and these brochures contain advice regarding design, structure and content of exhibitions as well. The possession of an official certification is very prestigious in local societies; therefore they do everything to receive it and follow the instructions of these brochures carefully. The methodology provides a thorough description the proper classification of artifacts, gives advice how to write well-stylized texts and inscriptions and how to perform a well-structured and meaningful guide in the museum, but it does not discuss the details of the content of exhibitions. The recommendations regarding the classification unify the basic structure of all school-museums, but it is filled in with content by local societies.

#### The Center of Civic and Patriotic Education

School-museums not only display local history, but they give home for kraevedenie-classes and pioneer-meetings as well. Museum-pedagogy is considered to be a cornerstone of patriotic upbringing, which has two crucial aspects: shaping the students' historical consciousness and their loyalty to the (little) Motherland.

The first aspect, the importance of history and the knowledge of the past often appear as the primary reason of the foundation in the teachers' narratives, both in their reports and

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<sup>81</sup> E.g.: camera

interviews made with them. In answer to the question why they founded the museum they emphasized the importance of the knowledge of the past:

Why? Look, nowadays there are televisions, computers, etc., everything! But in those times...! Our children have to know that how people lived without television, without anything. (...) And it is for the guarding of our culture in order to pass it on to our students.<sup>82</sup>

Why is the museum so important? Because people, who do not know their past, do not have future.<sup>83</sup>

The school-museum provides the opportunity for students to consider history not as an abstract concept, but as a concrete fact. Nowadays the museum has a diverse palette, which facilitates the shaping of students' historical consciousness and the development of creative work of research and arts. (...)

The proverb says that: "People, who do not know their past, do not have future." We can say with firm conviction that we know the past of our grandmothers and grandfathers. And we cherish the memory of them.<sup>84</sup>

Nevertheless, people have to learn not only new things, but they have to know old times as well and remember the past of their parents and grandparents. And the museum provides a great help in this. (...) The school-museums play a significant role in the shaping of respect of national history, culture and traditions.<sup>85</sup>

These quotations show that the knowledge of the past is deemed to be a basic human value, without which one cannot have a bright future. The citation of the well-known proverb – people who do not know their past, do not have future – is a recurring element; my informants mentioned it very often, when we were talking about museums. School-museums are the primary places of the study of past and according to the local teachers, they facilitate students' historical consciousness.

The other aspect, the patriotic loyalty and love of the Motherland can come into being only through the study of history:

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<sup>82</sup> Interview made with G. M. Samirzyanova, 03-07-2012, Nizhniy Baltachevo

<sup>83</sup> Interview made with T. N. Shaybakova, 21-05-2012

<sup>84</sup> Nizhniy Baltachevo, report written by G. M. Samirzyanova

<sup>85</sup> Novye Tatyshly, report written by T. N. Shaybakova

[The museum] plays a crucial role in the education and helps to nurture students for love of their own krai, elder generations and the little and great Motherland as well. (...) School museum is a center of civic and patriotic education of students in the school.<sup>86</sup>

Our work is based on the new federal education standards, according to which we have to teach about the village, people, Motherland and respect of family. Every child must be aware of that somebody can become a good person only if he appreciates his Motherland and knows the world around him.<sup>87</sup>

Little Motherland is the focal point of every people's life. From his first days, the child soaks up the charm of his own krai with lullabies. (...)

Rodnik (spring) and Rodina (Motherland) have common stem. The little spring flows into great rivers and the knowledge of the history of our own Little Motherland serves the fundament of every people's life.<sup>88</sup>

The last quotation – the motto of the thesis – reflects the embeddedness of local content and the little Motherland as I explicated previously. All little motherlands are parts of the greater Motherland as kraevedenies are little segments of the national (Rossiyskiy) history. School-museums and kraevedenie facilitate that historical consciousness turns into national consciousness; this is how the study of history and the love of Motherland become closely intertwined.

These thoughts can be found in the introductions of methodological brochures and handbooks as well, which probably affect the teachers' opinion about the importance of their own work to a large extent:

School-museums have prominent place in the system of education and additional trainings. They play crucial role in the formation of *national consciousness* of students, their *patriotism* and self-determination. The introduction to intangible and tangible culture of *krai*, its *national traditions and origin* constitutes the core of school-museums.<sup>89</sup> (Italics added)

<sup>86</sup> Nizhniy Baltachevo, report written by G. M. Samirzyanova

<sup>87</sup> Venera Timirshina, "Little Candle, but Its Flame Is Strong". (Сюсытыл пичи - пöсез кужмо; Syusytyl pichi, pösez kuzhmo) *Oshmes*, 16-02-2012

<sup>88</sup> Novye Tatyshly, report written by T. N. Shaybakova

<sup>89</sup> "Metodicheskie rekomendacii po provedeniyu ekskursiy v shkol'nykh muzeyakh" [Methodological Guideline of Guided Tours in School-Museums]; published by National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion.

School-museums reveal effectively their educational and creative potency not only within the school but in the village, town, district; and they become systemically important centers of educational work in these territories. This activity, which is carried out on the basis of school museums, allows the younger generation to understand important values in life, such as memory and duty, morality and spirituality, the desire to be useful for their community, and therefore – to be *worthy citizens of their Motherland*.<sup>90</sup> (Italics added)

The brochures often emphasize that patriotism and national consciousness are all-encompassing values, which include additional values – as the last quoted text says – “such as memory and duty, morality and spirituality, the desire to be useful for their community”. Thus, through the attainment of historical knowledge students acquire moral attitudes and behaviors as well, which are the fundament of the ideal and proper citizen. That is how school-museums become the centers of civic and patriotic education.

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<sup>90</sup> “Putevoditel’ po shkol’nym muzejam Respubliki Bashkortostan” [Guidebook of School-Museums of Republic of Bashkortostan] published by Ministry of Education Republic of Bashkortostan – National Children Recreational and Educational Center of Tourism, Kraevedenie and Excursion, Ufa 2010: 4.

## Conclusion

The field of kraevedenie has been an obvious interface of the dialectical relationship of state historical politics and local movements during the course of the 19-20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, the romantic desire of the movement to get familiar with the native land met the economic and industrial interests of the Russian Empire, but that time it was more spontaneous and self-shaping knowledge of the local societies than later. During the Soviet times, its institutionalized form was under state-control, which intended to drench all spheres of life with socialist ideologies. The main areas of kraevedenie became the local aspects of the elaboration of the Soviet school- and kolkhoz-system and later the glorious peak of the Soviet history, the memory of the Great Patriotic War. The constant local research resulted in school-museums, which as drop in the ocean have reflected the larger processes, in which their histories have been deeply embedded. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the new state has taken up these museums and kraevedenie and they became the primary place of patriotic education.

Contents of all exhibitions were affected by the ongoing Russian historical politics, the main aim of which was to create a historical continuity between the Soviet and Russian past and to elevate multiethnicity as a value of the society. In line with this, school-museums have not changed their exhibitions: the history of kolkhozes, schools and memory of wars as the important Soviet past constitute integral part of kraevedenie; ethnographical collections in turn fit perfectly the ideology of multiethnicity. These ideological backgrounds are relevant in narrower political context as well, since the political and separatist possibilities of Bashkortostan were determined by the issue of multiethnicity. School-museums in Bashkortostan became the place of local, ethnic and Rossiyskiy history, while Bashkir nationalizing processes have been manifested in other educational programs like the family-tree

project. Nevertheless, school-museums have served as representative surfaces of the renewed identity-policy of Trans-Kama Udmurts. In the examined school-museums Galyamshin appears not only as the president of the kolkhoz, but also as the most emblematic Udmurt person and the main leader of Trans-Kama Udmurts, who revived Udmurt culture after the Soviet dissolution, created a number of opportunities and ensured financial background. He supported the foundation of all Udmurt museums, thus he initiated not only a part of the Udmurt revival, but he strengthened his power and prestige among Trans-Kama Udmurts as well. Consequently, the contents of museums and kraevedenie are shaped by different historical politics, namely federal, republic and ethnic agency as well.

Local teachers have essential role in the patriotic upbringing. The knowledge of the past is considered to be one of the basic pillars of patriotism, which is transmitted through kraevedenie. Thus, teachers' work has a large prestige in the society, which keeps increasing as a result of the improvement of their teaching methods, participating and winning contests. They also augment the importance of their work in their reports; as one of them wrote: "Museum is a church, the place of mental work."<sup>91</sup>

In the present thesis I intended to highlight how wider political processes influence local phenomenon and what the localities and local actors add to these broader processes. The method of the long-term and intensive anthropological fieldwork and participant observation proved to be an excellent tool, which facilitated to illuminate the local aspects and agency of a larger topic. This analysis and methodology can be an excellent example of multilevel academic research that combines different fields of science such as history and anthropology.

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<sup>91</sup> Novye Tatyshly, report written by T. N. Shaybakova

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