LANGUAGE POLICY

Language Policy in the Soviet Union

Lenore A. Grenoble

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LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE SOVIET UNION

Language Policy

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The last half century has witnessed an explosive shift in language diversity not unlike the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel, but involving now a rapid spread of global languages and an associated threat to small languages. The diffusion of global languages, the stampede towards English, the counter-pressures in the form of ethnic efforts to reverse or slow the process, the continued determination of nation-states to assert national identity through language, and, in an opposite direction, the greater tolerance shown to multilingualism and the increasing concern for language rights, all these are working to make the study of the nature and possibilities of language policy and planning a field of swift growth.

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The series is intended for scholars in the field of language policy and others interested in the topic, including sociolinguists, educational and applied linguists, language planners, language educators, sociologists, political scientists, and comparative educationalists.

Language Policy in the Soviet Union

by

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PREFACE

Soviet language policy provides rich material for the study of the impact of policy on language use. Moreover, it offers a unique vantage point on the tie between language and culture. While linguists and ethnographers grapple with defining the relationship of language to culture, or of language and culture to identity, the Soviets knew that language is an integral and inalienable part of culture. The former Soviet Union provides an ideal case study for examining these relationships, in that it had one of the most deliberate language policies of any nation state. This is not to say that it was constant or well-conceived; in fact it was marked by contradictions, illogical decisions, and inconsistencies. Yet it represented a conscious effort on the part of the Communist leadership to shape both ethnic identity and national consciousness through language. As a totalitarian state, the USSR represents a country where language policy, however radical, could be implemented at the will of the government. Furthermore, measures (such as forced migrations) were undertaken that resulted in changing population demographics, having a direct impact on what is a central issue here: the very nature of the Soviet population. That said, it is important to keep in mind that in the Soviet Union there was a difference between stated policy and actual practice. There was no guarantee that any given policy would be implemented, even when it had been officially legislated. One of the vagaries of Soviet language policy was that it could be invoked—or not—at the bidding of whoever happened to be in charge at the moment. This makes evaluation of the policy all the more challenging. One cannot assume that any policy was actually implemented, any more than one could assume that the purported motivation behind a given piece of legislation was genuine.

It might be argued that the Bolsheviks had no choice but to take account of language in the early years of the Soviet Union. To a certain extent this is true. Faced with a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and largely illiterate population, the newly instated Bolshevik government had two pressing needs. One was to quiet unrest among its citizens: opposition to the new government was felt in a number of quarters, and support of the nationalities was critical. The other was to compensate for years of backwardness under tsarist rule and push the country into the industrial age. Rapid industrialization was a critical goal. The first need requires a sensitivity to the demands of the multitude of ethnic groups in the USSR, and the second requires an educated workforce. From this standpoint, language policy is crucial. That said, the attention given language policy goes beyond what was necessary to satisfy these demands. Literacy rates rose dramatically, and by World War II the population was largely literate. But the manipulation of the Soviet citizenry only intensified in the post-World War II period: under the guise of Communist "internationalism," the non-Russian population was being pushed toward Russian.

In creating the new Soviet state, the government tried to manipulate the cultures and identities of the many different ethnic groups living in its borders, in part by affecting language use. The extent to which language use can actually be legislated remains an open question. The data from the Soviet Union provide at least a partial answer: language use can be legislated, depending upon a number of other factors, some of which may be beyond the control of even the most totalitarian states. Thus, for example, the Soviets created a situation where the Russian language was required for all administrative exchanges; this was an effective method of instigating

language shift in some parts of the population. But for sectors of the population which were quite large, this was less effective. And the Soviet government never managed to control the Population growth in Central Asia was beyond the government's control. Thus the large Uzbek-speaking population was less affected by Soviet language policy than was the Itelmen-speaking population. Yet it would be an oversimplification to think that speaker population size is the only factor which determined the efficacy of Soviet language policy. Some quite small groups have managed a relatively high level of language retention, while some larger groups have shown a higher rate of language shift. An example is provided by the Beluchi, with a population of less than 30,000, versus the Belorusans, with a population of over 10 million. As of the 1989 census, 96.9 percent of Beluchi considered their heritage, ethnic language to be their first language, while only 70.9 percent of Belorusans did. In a similar vein, Germans—with a population of over 2 million—reported a retention rate of only 48.7 percent. Clearly more than population size is involved.

These issues lie at the heart of the present study. The text is designed to be useful to a variety of readers, whether read in its entirety or selectively. The first chapter provides an overview and introduction to the Soviet Union, its ethnolinguistic makeup, and general political structure. The second chapter presents a chronology of Soviet language policy which is aimed at painting the general development of language policy at a national level, independent of local variables. By its very nature, the highly centralized governmental system of the Soviet Union repeatedly attempted to implement the same policy throughout its vast territory, regardless of local particulars. Yet, as history has shown time and time again, local particulars do matter, and blanket policies which fail to take them into account often produce results as varied as the people affected by them. For this reason, the bulk of this book is divided into regional chapters, each of which contains information about several Union Republics or, in the case of Siberia, a single vast territory that is home to a wide range of languages and cultures. These chapters are intended to provide surveys of the all the geographic and ethnolinguistic regions of the Soviet Union. This organization is itself debatable, and no doubt a finer level of categorization could and would produce a more detailed analysis of each individual region. Alternatively, some might argue that the geographic groupings themselves are misleading. For example, the Moldavian SSR is presented together with the "Slavic" republics, in large part because they shared borders and, together with the Baltics, constituted the European part of the USSR.

The spelling of language names is complicated; most of the languages of the former USSR do not use the Latin alphabet. For the sake of accessibility, wherever possible I follow the spelling used by the fourteenth edition of the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 2000). This provides a consistent standard; spelling alternates are listed in Appendix II. See Chapter 1, section 4.2 for further discussion of the issues involved in naming languages and peoples of the former USSR. Cyrillic names (other than language names) are transliterated according to the Library of Congress system; this is particularly relevant to the references section, with the hopes that it will make the references there more readily accessible.

In translating the names of administrative territories, the following conventions are followed: *Sovetskaia Sotsialistecheskaia Respublika* 'Soviet Socialist Republic'

or simply SSR, and the *Avtonomnaia Sovetskaia Sotsialistecheskaia Respublika* 'Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic' or ASSR; and the smaller administrative regions are: *oblast'* 'region' (often also translated as 'province'), *krai* 'territory', *okrug* 'district' and *raion* 'area'. These translations are among the most standard and are commonly used.[i]

The year 1991 saw the end of the Soviet Union. Yet at the same time, the people living in that country at that time continued living in the same territories, which had new political boundaries, and new notions of statehood. In order to avoid cumbersome wording, I have often abbreviated references to former boundaries and political divisions, referring not to "the former Tajik SSR" but rather to "the Tajik SSR" or "the Russian SFSR." This is intended as a shorter way of referencing political entities which no longer exist.

As one final caveat, I should point out that not all the languages of the former USSR are discussed here, and those that are introduced are not all analyzed in equal levels of detail. Such discussion is beyond the scope of the present work. For a more complete overview of the linguistic structures of these languages, see Comrie (1981).

I would like to express my gratitude to a number of people who have helped me see this work to its completion, in particular to Bernard Spolsky and Lindsay Whaley for their comments on parts of the manuscript, as well as the anonymous referees, for their many helpful recommendations. Any errors are, of course, my own. It is hard to imagine working on a project of this size without the help of Patsy Carter, who tracked down every resource, no matter how obscure. I am especially grateful to my research assistants Lora Bolton and Laura Vacca for their help with earlier drafts, and to Sarah Finck for a meticulous reading of the text and to Sarah Kopper for her work compiling the index. Marianna Pascale provided invaluable assistance with technical difficulties in the preparation of the manuscripts.

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[i]There is variation in translation of these terms; *oblast,* for example, is often translated as 'province,' with reference to the provinces of Australia and Canada.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The former Soviet Union provides one of the most interesting examples of the deliberate use of language policy by a nation state to further its political goals. Throughout its history, the Soviet government implemented far-reaching language policies that fundamentally changed the nature of language use within its borders. Soviet leaders knew that language counts, that it is a crucial part of both a nation's and an individual's identity, and it could be manipulated to serve as a powerful tool for the State. It is clear that the Soviet government did not always achieve its goals with its language policies, which at times were contradictory and confusing. Yet at the same time Soviet language policy was strikingly deliberate. This tension stems from two opposing yet concurrent trends in Soviet thinking. On the one hand, the national languages were manipulated to create a sense of identity among individual groups of people, despite the potential that this created for emerging sense of nationalism. On the other hand, there was a strong tendency to promote a single language in the formation of a unified, industrialized nation state, with Russian serving all the functions of a state language in its official use in government, law, and education.

One of the unique aspects of studying language policy in the former USSR is the advantage of the relatively short-lived and self-contained history. The Soviet Union existed as a nation state for just under 75 years, providing the opportunity to view the development of Communist language policy from its very inception to its termination over the course of a brief and closed time period. The February Revolution of 1917 led to the overthrow of the tsarist regime and the establishment of a provisional government. Vladimir Ilych Lenin, exiled for some ten years, returned from abroad to lead the Bolshevik Revolution in October of that same year. Yet even prior to the Revolution, Lenin and his followers had met and discussed language policies for the region. This fact alone underscores the importance of language to the Communist leaders, and portends the significant role language policy would play in the shaping of the Soviet state. From a historical perspective, the country's life was relatively short, and in December 1991, the Commonwealth of Independent States was formed, officially signaling the end of the Soviet Union. The Union Republics became independent states and sought international recognition; in fact some (such as the Baltic Republics) had sought independent recognition even before the ultimate downfall of the USSR. Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev formally resigned on December 25, 1991, marking the end of an era.

That language policy was so central to the Communist Party leaders stems from the very nature of the territory over which they ruled. From its inception in 1917 to its ultimate break-up in 1991, the Soviet Union was a multi-lingual and multi-ethnic state. At its point of greatest expansion, it encompassed some 8,649,490 square miles with a total population of just under 286,000,000. The 1989 Soviet census cites approximately 130 ethnic groups, including indigenous and immigrant people, with a varying percentage of each group speaking its heritage language, and an

official language count of about 150 languages. Linguists, however, estimate that there were actually closer to 200 languages spoken in the former USSR. The discrepancy stems the fact that language/dialect boundaries were often defined according to social and political factors rather than linguistic ones, and official Soviet statistics should be taken as providing only partial information about the linguistic map. The census regularly asked questions about language use and all Soviet citizens were required to declare a "nationality" (Chapter 2, section 2). There is not, however, a one-to-one correspondence between the two. For example, although Russians comprise the largest ethnic group, in 1989 they constituted just over 50 percent of the total population (slightly more than 145,000,000 people). Yet at the same time a full 81 percent of the population considered itself to be fluent in Russian, either as a first or second language.

Language policy was central to the Soviet planning from the very moment of its foundation. Its significance comes, in large part, from the multi-lingual nature of the State, which no leader could ignore. Yet the role of language policy was also determined by the government's own aspirations for the nation. In the early years of its regime, Party leaders set ambitious goals to raise educational levels rapidly, so as to enable the country to industrialize at an unprecedented rate, in an effort to catch up with Western Europe. This entailed quickly raising the literacy rates of its citizenry, a feat which could be accomplished only through the deliberate development of language as a necessary tool for education. One of the great achievements of the Communist government was its literacy campaign, which transformed a largely illiterate population to a highly literate one in its first twenty years of existence (Chapter 2, section 4).

To date, the most comprehensive study of Soviet language policy in English is E. Glyn Lewis' (1972) book, *Multilingualism in the Soviet Union. Aspects of Language Policy and its Implementation.* Lewis introduces his work in terms of what he calls "four levels of investigation:" (1) the synchronic-descriptive level, i.e., description of the contemporary situation; (2) the historical context of language contact; (3) the synchronic-comparative level, defined as comparisons of the Soviet situation with other complex linguistic areas in other parts of the world; and (4) the relationship between changes in language, and changes in society and culture. Part of this last issue, and one that will be taken up in the present work as well, is the question of how two or more languages in contact affect one another and, more centrally to issues of language policy, how they affect the two or more cultures and societies which are in contact. Lewis proposes that the Soviet Union is an ideal place to test Joseph Greenberg's hypothesis that social and cultural change will correlate with languages of the same geographical region, rather than with languages which are genetically related but not spoken in the same region. In other words, the areal influence is more relevant than the genetic one.

Now, some thirty years after the publication of Lewis' book, we have the opportunity to frame questions of Soviet language policy differently. The first level, the contemporary-synchronic investigation, is no longer relevant, and instead the break-up of the Soviet Union enables us to consider its language policy from a strictly historical perspective, i.e., as a closed system. We can now examine the history and development of language policy and planning over the span of the

country's entire existence, a relatively brief period of less than 75 years. Perhaps more importantly, we can now assess the impact of those policies. In the present work, the question of the relationship of language to culture and society is central. That the Soviet government recognized the importance of language in nation-building is beyond question. It is less clear how successful their policies were, and furthermore, to what extent any successes or failures were the direct result of those policies themselves, and to what extent these outcomes are the result of other circumstances, or if they are in some way inevitable.

Lewis approaches this topic from the standpoint of a specialist in bilingual education, whose primary focus is how bilingualism plays itself out in the USSR. My view here is different, that of a linguist interested in testing the actual impact of language policies. This includes the primary question of just how effective language policy can be, and to what extent language use and linguistic relationships can be legislated. Related to this is an examination of the Soviet assumption that language policy can and does affect sociolinguistic change. One obvious way in which governments can exercise power over language use is in the granting of official language status. This process was in and of itself highly politicized in the Soviet Union, and the allocation of financial resources hinged more upon official status than numbers of speakers. Thus having official status in the USSR was of the utmost significance to language vitality, and to acquiring vital resources. Decisions regarding the publication of numbers of titles, or numbers of copies, were made more on the basis of political status than actual population size, educational or cultural needs and so on. An illustrative example is provided by the numbers of books published in three Turkic languages: Azerbaijani, Kazakh and Tatar. The first two are the titular languages of Union Republics, and for that reason enjoy relatively high political status. Tatar has lower status, as it is not the titular language of any Union Republic, but rather of an Autonomous SSR. The Tatars, for example, constituted the largest ethnic group of the three in 1970: there were approximately six million Tatars and an additional 400,00 Bashkirs who saw Tatar as their native tongue, as opposed to 4,380,000 Azerbaijani and 5,300,000 Kazakhs. Despite the large population size, fewer books were published in Tatar than the other two languages. In 1971 there were some 302 books and booklets published in Tatar, with a print run of 4,538,000 total copies, as opposed to 817 books and booklets in Azerbaijani (and 9,922,000 copies) or 657 in Kazakh (and 13,189,000 copies).

By the end of its era, the Soviet government had, in effect, created a four-tiered language hierarchy. The bottom, fourth tier was comprised of languages without official support, where "support" includes allocation of financial resources for creating written materials. This group includes languages with very small speaker populations which were not developed due to practical limitations, as well as some other languages whose status (as individual languages) was not recognized for a range of reasons, often political. The third tier was occupied by languages like Kazakh, with written forms and some governmental support but lacking official status. In the second tier were the titular languages which enjoyed official status within each Union Republic but in most cases lacked widespread influence or use outside of the Republic. And the first, uppermost tier was occupied by Russian alone. It was developed not only as the sole lingua franca of the USSR, but with the

ultimate goal of functioning as the “Soviet” language of a new, specifically Soviet nation. It was developed as the sole official language of all administrative, educational and legal practice.

1. ORGANIZATION OF THE SOVIET STATE

1.1 The Establishment of the Soviet Union

On July 10, 1918, the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets ratified what was to be the first of a number of constitutions of the Soviet Union. With this Constitution, they established the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (or the RSFSR). The Constitution of 1918 represents an attempt of the newly established government to create institutional structures along the lines of Western-style governments, and thereby legitimize itself. It established the All-Russian Congress of Soviets as the supreme legislative body and created an executive committee (the All-Russian Central Executive Committee) which would have special discretionary powers. This Central Executive Committee was made up of two hundred members which were elected by the Congress, and it was responsible for electing a Council of People’s Commissars, which was in turn entrusted with guiding public and governmental affairs. The proletariat, the working class, was deemed to be the primary support of the government, a fact which surfaces quite consistently in terms of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution, which declares “real freedoms” of the press and of assembly for workers and peasants. The Constitution of 1918 laid the groundwork for the central role which Russia would play in the growth and development of the Soviet Union.

At the end of 1922, the decision was made to create the Soviet Union, and the Central Executive Committee formed a special commission to draft the Constitution for the new governmental system, ratified in 1924. The Russian, Ukrainian, Belorussian and Transcaucasian Republics entered into the treaty.

1.2 The Soviet Union at the End of its Era

By the end of its era, the USSR was organized into fifteen Union Republics and encompassed one-sixth of the earth’s total land surface, to comprise the largest nation state in history. The fifteen Union Republics constitute the major politico-administrative divisions of Soviet territory; each is organized around one of the major nationalities. The Russian SFSR was the largest of these; its distinction is in part symbolized by its name, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (or RSFSR). (The remaining fourteen Republics are simply Soviet Socialist Republics, abbreviated as SSR.) The Republics can be grouped into six geographic regions, as follows: the Baltics (Estonian SSR, Latvian SSR and Lithuanian SSR); the Caucasus (Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR, and Georgian SSR); Central Asia (Kazakh SSR, Kyrgyz SSR, Tajik SSR, Turkmen SSR, Uzbek SSR); Slavic territory and Moldova (the Belorussian SSR, the Moldavian SSR, the Russian SFSR, the Ukrainian SSR);

and the Russian Far East (primarily Siberia, which was part of the RSFSR). These geographic divisions are not only useful devices for segmenting the vast Soviet territory, but also bear some reality as linguistic areas, in terms of both language contact and genetic affinity (in some cases), and in terms of what might be called areal responses to language policy. It is important to keep in mind that the Union Republics are delineated by political, not strict ethno-linguistic, boundaries; in fact, the creation of Union Republics was at times linked to the efforts of the Soviet government to create a new sense of national identity, or destroy an old one. Central Asia, for example, represents an area whose people in pre-Soviet times identified more with a pan-Turkic or pan-Islamic identity than with such subdivisions as "Uzbek" versus "Kyrgyz." In contrast, for many of the peoples of Siberia, identity was more associated with clan affiliation than with a greater sense of "nation." By the end of the Soviet era, these identities had been effectively disrupted, replaced by a sense of belonging to a larger "nationality."

The fifteen Union Republics were further divided into smaller, hierarchically-organized political and administrative regions, determined according to a number of criteria. One of the most significant of these units with regard to language policy is the Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR), a nationality-based subdivision of an SSR. Each ASSR had its own constitution and was charged to "ensure comprehensive economic and social development on its territory" (Article 83 of the 1977 Soviet Constitution). The Russian RSFSR, and the Azerbaijan, Georgian, Tajik and Uzbek SSR's all contained ASSR's created around relatively large nationalities which occupied a more or less contiguous and cohesive geographic area. A somewhat smaller unit is known as the *oblast',* or *Region* (sometimes called a Province). This is a relatively large administrative division, often formed around a regional center. There were nine Autonomous Regions in the USSR, created around numerically small nationalities, including the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region in the Azerbaijan SSR. The Armenian, Moldavian, and Baltic (i.e. Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian) SSRs were not divided into Regions. In addition, there were a total of six official Territories (or *krai*). These were large but sparsely populated administrative units designated as "frontier" areas and were located primarily in Siberia. The Autonomous District (*okrug*), is somewhat analogous to the Region but functions as a lower-level administrative unit, that is, as a subunit of either a Region or Territory. The Soviet Union was further divided into smaller units, or administrative areas (*raion*). These areas are the administrative units with the lowest status in a city, Territory, Region or Republic. By 1981, there were a total of almost 3200 administrative areas, each with a population of approximately 80,000. The plethora of administrative units meant, among other things, that language (and educational) policies could be implemented at a variety of levels in a number of ways.

Ethnic Russians lived in all Republics in varying numbers. Birth rates varied greatly across Republics, and over the course of the history of the USSR there was a shift in relative demographics among the various nationalities, although ethnic Russians continued to comprise the single largest group. Table 1 details the distribution of territory and people across the Union Republics by the end of the Soviet era. As is clear in Table 1, there is an uneven distribution of territory and

population among the fifteen republics. The Russian SFSR was by far the largest in terms of both territory and population, with over half the population of the USSR living in its borders. The Kazakh SSR stood second in terms of territory only, as both the Ukrainian SSR and the Uzbek SSR surpassed it in population size. The Armenian SSR occupied the smallest territory of all the republics, and the Estonian SSR had the smallest population. The differences between the largest and smallest populations (148,041,000 in the RSFSR and 1,583,000 in the Estonian SSR), or the differences between the largest and smallest territories (6,592,812 square miles in the RSFSR versus 11,506 square miles in the Armenian SSR), are striking, and are indicative of the tremendous variation from region to region in terms of ethnolinguistic conditions. Demographic shifts of the 90 years of Soviet existence brought about changes in the relative differences in population; as discussed in Chapter 8, section 2.

Table 1. Population of Union Republics, 1990

	Population	Area (sq. miles)	Area (sq. km.)
USSR	288,624,000		
Slavic & Moldova			
Russian SFSR (RSFSR)	148,041,000	6,592,812	17,075,400
Ukrainian SSR	51,839,000	233,089	603,700
Belorussian SSR	10,259,000	80,154	207,600
Moldavian SSR	4,362,000	13,012	33,700
Central Asia			
Uzbek SSR	20,322,000	173,591	449,600
Kazakh SSR	16,691,000	1,048,000	2,715,100
Tajik SSR	5,248,000	55,251	143,100
Kyrgyz SSR	4,367,000	76,641	198,500
Turkmen SSR	3,622,000	188,455	488,100
The Caucasus			
Azerbaijan SSSR	7,131,000	33,436	86,600
Georgian SSR	5,456,000	26,911	69,700
Armenian SSR	3,293,000	11,506	29,800
The Baltic States			
Lithuanian SSR	3,723,000	25,174	65,200
Latvian SSR	2,687,000	24,595	63,700
Estonian SSR	1,583,000	17,413	45,100

Source: *Glasnost', May 1991*

The multitude of ethnic groups which constituted the Soviet Union was also unevenly distributed, both in terms of geography and of population. This is demonstrated in Table 2, which presents information on only the top ten largest ethnic groups in the USSR as of the 1939 census. Although this represents less than 10 percent of all ethnic groups, regardless of whether one takes the more conservative official count, or the more generous linguistic count, these ten ethnicities account for over 90 percent of the entire population.

Each remaining group constituted less than one percent of the population at this time. The three largest ethnic groups were all Slavic, and were concentrated in the three titular Republics (the Russian SFSR, Belorussian SSR, and Ukrainian SSR; Chapter 3). Taken together, they make up 78 percent of the total population of the country. Uzbek, Tatar and Kazakh are all Turkic languages; they constitute the second largest segment of the population. Similarly, numbers eight through ten, although genetically unrelated languages, are all the titular languages of the Caucasus (Chapter 5).

Table 2. Ten Largest Ethnic Groups in the USSR, 1939 Census

Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Russian	99,591,520	58.39
Ukrainian	28,111,007	16.48
Belorusan	5,275,393	3.09
Uzbek	4,845,140	2.84
Tatar	4,313,488	2.53
Kazakh	3,100,949	1.82
Jew	3,028,538	1.78
Azerbaijani	2,275,678	1.33
Georgian	2,249,636	1.32
Armenian	2,152,860	1.26
total, USSR	170,557,093	

Source: Polikov et al. (1992)

In the years that followed 1939, the demographics of the Soviet population shifted significantly, due in part to low birth rates among the Slavic populations and high birth rates among the Turkic, in particular the Uzbeks. In addition, World War II and Stalinist policies had a significant impact on certain peoples, such as the Jewish population. The combined effect of massive changes in birth rates, Stalin's dekulakization campaign and war-time genocide was such that by the time of the 1989 census, certain groups had dwindled in numbers, and others had increased. Uzbeks had become the third largest ethnic group, surpassing the Belorusan population by over 6.6 million. The total number of Kazakhs outnumbered the total number of Tatars, Azerbaijanis outnumbered Armenians, who in turn outnumbered Tajiks and Georgians. Thus by 1989 the relative ranking of the top ten largest ethnic

groups was: Russian, Ukrainian, Uzbek, Belorusan, Kazakh, Tatar, Azerbaijani, Armenian, Tajik and Georgian.

2. THE LINGUISTIC MAP OF THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union was host to a large number of genetically and typologically diverse languages. The language families represented here are: Indo-European, Altaic, Uralic, Caucasian, and Paleosiberian, and a few isolates[1]. Altaic is divided into three main groups (Mongolian, Tungusic, and Turkic), and Uralic into two (Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic). The PaleoSiberian group contains language families and isolates which are placed together more on the basis of geographic location and lack of affinity to any of the larger language families than on genetic principles. (Chukotko-Kamchatkan, Eskimo-Aleut and such isolates as Ket, Nivkh and Yukaghir are usually included in PaleoSiberian.) With regard to overall political importance, the Slavic branch of Indo-European clearly takes the lead, and the impact of Russian on all other language groups is significant (see Chapter 8). The Turkic branch of the Altaic family follows Slavic in terms of population size and, by virtue of the numbers of speakers, political importance. Although the Turkic languages are heavily concentrated in Central Asia, they are also spoken in the Caucasus, the eastern and southern parts of European Russia, and in parts of Siberia.

Genetic classification of many of the languages of the former Soviet Union is not entirely resolved, at times due to insufficient descriptions, which may themselves stem from a lack of data, in particular for the smaller or lesser-known languages. Classification here follows the fourteenth edition of the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 2000), although it is supplemented and refined by data from Comrie (1981) and the standard five-volume Soviet resource, *Languages of the Peoples of the USSR* (*Iazyki narodov SSR*), as well as by additional, more focused descriptive grammars. Some of the classifications of this latter work have since been superseded. A more detailed discussion of the linguistic features of the languages discussed here, along with sample texts, can be found in Comrie (1981); see also the articles in Comrie (1987). Genetic trees which depict the classification given here can be found in the Appendix.

2.1 Indo-European

By the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union, over 80 percent of the Soviet population claimed an Indo-European language as first language. In fact, all branches of Indo-European except Celtic were spoken on Soviet territory.

The Balto-Slavic[2] branch is well-represented on Soviet territory (Appendix I/A). The two living Baltic languages, Latvian and Lithuanian, are native to those two Baltic republics. The Slavic branch of Indo-European is divided into three

[1] Classification here follows Comrie (1981). For other systems, see in particular *Iazyki narodov SSR*.

[2] Balto-Slavic affinity is disputed, but generally accepted by Slavic linguists today. For a brief overview of the arguments, see Comrie (1981:143–4).

subgroups: East, West and South. All of the East Slavic languages (Belorusan, Russian, Ukrainian) are indigenous to territories encompassed by the Soviet Union. The western regions of the Ukrainian SSR include areas that are Polish-speaking, and approximately 7 percent of the total population of the Lithuanian SSR was Polish. The 1989 census cited 1,126,334 Poles living in the USSR, although less than a third speak Polish (a West Slavic language). In addition, there are a number of Czech and Slovak speakers, in particular in the Ukrainian SSR, and some South Slavic speakers (Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian).

The modern Indo-Iranian languages are divided into four subgroups, and the USSR was the only nation state to host languages from all of these subgroups (Appendix I/B). These are, namely: North-West Iranian (with Kurdi, Talysh and Beludji); South-West Iranian (including Tajiki, Farsi and Tat); North-East Iranian (Osetin and Yagnobi); and South-East Iranian (Rushani, Bartongi, Oroshor, Shughni, Yazgulya, Ishkashimi, and Wakhi). Some of these, such as Yagnobi, are spoken almost exclusively within the borders of the former USSR, while others, such as Farsi, have large populations of speakers elsewhere. In terms of numbers, Tajiki is by far the largest, with 4,215,372 people according to the 1989 census. All other Iranian languages represent considerably smaller ethnic groups: Osetians: 597,998; Kurds: 152,717; Persians 40,176; Tats: 30,669; Talysh: 21,602.

2.2 Altaic

The existence and composition of the Altaic language family is perhaps one of the most controversial questions in linguistics today. Three major branches of Altaic are spoken in what was Soviet territory: Turkic, Mongolian, and Tungusic. Turkic in particular had a large speaker population in the USSR; of the top ten largest languages, four were Turkic (Uzbek, Azerbaijani, Kazakh and Tatar), and several others had speaker populations of over one millions. The internal classification of all three of these Altaic branches is exceptionally complex, due to a number of reasons. One such reason is the classic problem of the language–dialect continuum; in many cases there are no rigorous criteria for determining that dialect differences are great enough to warrant calling a given linguistic variety a distinct language. The second problem is that the situation is further complicated by major migrations of the Altaic people, for varying reasons, which resulted in extensive contact with other closely related languages (or dialects). This means, for example, that one Turkic language may share some features with one language and some with another. Third, speakers of many of these languages/dialects lacked ethnonyms (a situation common to the Caucasus as well), or used one and the same name to identify many different groups. Fourth, the mobility of the various peoples meant extensive contact not only with speakers of other closely related languages, but also with speakers of more distantly related languages. The net result is that it is often difficult to determine which linguistic features are genetic, which typological, and which areal. Nevertheless, the Altaic languages share a number of common features. They are all, to varying degrees, agglutinating, have vowel harmony, grammatical number and case. They do not have grammatical gender.

2.2.1 Turkic

With the most notable exception of Turkish, the majority of the Turkic languages are spoken in the territory of the USSR,[3] and five of the fifteen Union Republics were home to primarily Turkic-speaking populations. The total number of Turkic speakers in the Soviet Union was near 50 million in 1989,[4] such that native speakers of a Turkic language accounted for more than one of every ten Soviet citizens.

The Turkic languages are best depicted as a language–dialect continuum, and the decisions as to which varieties are to be called distinct languages and which are to be considered dialects were generally more political than linguistic, in particular in Central Asia. Geographically, the Turkic continuum spreads from the Azerbaijan SSR in the west with the Azerbaijan language, and extends across Central Asia to the southern regions of the Tajik SSR. (Although Tajiki is an Indo-European language, there are numerous speakers of Uzbek and Kirghiz in the Tajik SSR.) This continuum spreads from the southern border of the Tajik SSR northward to the Chuvash ASSR, which is spoken within the boundaries of the Russian SFSR, in the middle Volga region, to the east of Moscow. In the southwestern parts of the country the Turkic continuum extends as far west as the Tuvan ASSR, with Tuvin. This entire territory is inhabited by Turkic-speaking people. Three Turkic varieties stand outside this continuum: Chuvash, which is the most different of all Turkic varieties, and Yakut and Dolgan, which have been geographically separated from the remaining Turkic languages for an extensive period, and so they too have diverged. In addition, there are Gagauz speakers in the Moldavian SSR, and Urum speakers in the Georgian SSR.

The Turkic language–dialect continuum makes internal genetic classification of the languages problematic. Chuvash and Yakut are generally classified as significantly distinct,[5] while the remaining Turkic languages are quite similar, with a high degree of mutual intelligibility between not only geographically adjacent languages, but also between languages/dialects which may be some distance apart. Structurally, the Turkic languages are very close to one another, and share basic features such as SOV word order, vowel harmony, and agglutination. Putting Chuvash and Khalaj aside, the remaining Turkic languages fall into four basic

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[3] Other Turkic languages not spoken in the USSR include Balkan Turkic (spoken in the Balkans), Khalaj (Iran), Khoton (Mongolia) and Uyghur and Salar (both in China). Although Uyghur is spoken in Central Asia, the majority of its speakers (well over seven million) live in China.

[4] Estimate based on the 1989 census. The calculation includes the number of speakers of each of the following ethnic groups speaking their own heritage language: Altai, Azerbaijan, Chuvash, Dolgan, Gagauz, Karachay, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Khakas, Kirghiz, Kumyk, Nogay Shor, Tajik, Tatar (and Crimean Tatar), Turkish, Turkmen, Tuvin, Uyghur, Uzbek, and Yakut, for a total of 49,695,127. This figure does not include all of the Turkic languages in the USSR, and does not include speakers of other, non-ethnic backgrounds who speak a Turkic language as a first language. For example, some 11,000 Evenki (a Tungus people) speak Yakut as their first language; Chapter 7, section 4.2.

[5] Comrie (1981:42) cites Chuvash as the "most divergent" of the Turkic languages, but adds that Yakut is also distinct, due to long-standing geographic separation from the other Turkic speakers. For a brief overview of the phonological and morphological characteristics which distinguish Chuvash and Yakut from other Turkic languages, and from one another, see Clark (1998) and Stachowski and Menz (1998), respectively. Yakut is further distinguished by a large number of loanwords due to contact with speakers of Mongolic, Russian, and Tungus languages.

groups: Southwestern, Southeastern, Northeastern and Northwestern (Kipchak).[6] Turkish, perhaps the most prominent of Turkic languages, is a Southwestern (Oghuz) Turkic language; the Southwestern branch is subdivided into three subgroups: a West Oghuz group which includes Turkish, Gagauz and Azerbaijani; an East Oghuz group with Turkmen and Khorasani Turkic (the latter spoken in Iran), and a South Oghuz group with the languages of Iran and Afghanistan. Southeastern Turkic branches into two groups, a western group which includes Uzbek and its dialects, and an eastern group with Uyghur and a number of Turkic languages such as Salar spoken in China, Iran and Afghanistan. The Northeastern group includes a North Siberian group (with Yakut and Dolgan) and South Siberian group which is further divided into smaller groups, including Tuvan and Tofalar; Khakas, Shor, and related dialects; Chulym; and Altai Turkic and related dialects. The Northwestern (Kipchak) branch has three major divisions: West Kipchak with Kumyk, Karachay, Balkar, Crimean Tatar and Karaim; North Kipchak (or Volga-Ural) includes Tatar (Kazan Tatar, Mishar and West Siberian) and Bashkir; and South Kipchak (Aralo-Caspian) with Kazakh, Karakalpak, Kipchak, Uzbek and Nogai.[7] Appendix I/C provides the classification of Turkic languages spoken on Soviet territory.

One of the most striking and best studied features of Turkic is its vowel harmony. In languages with vowel harmony, all of the vowels in a given word must have certain features in common. This applies not only to word roots, but also to all morphemes, so that the suffixes have a number of different forms, according to the phonemic inventory and the particular rules of vowel harmony in an individual language. All of the Altaic languages have vowel harmony, but the nature of the features which are relevant varies between Turkic, Tungus and Mongolian. In Turkic, the vowels must correspond according to both front–back and round–unrounded. The height dimension is not affected by vowel harmony in Turkic, so that combinations of high and non-high vowels can be found within a single word.

As is the case for all Altaic languages, the Turkic languages are agglutinating with Subject–Object–Verb word order. The preverbal slot in Turkic is reserved for focus. Adjectives and genitive nouns precede the head noun, and noun phrase arguments precede the verb. Morpheme order is rigidly fixed. All Turkic languages use possessive suffixes which precede case suffixes; when number is marked, the morpheme order is thus: number–possessive–case. This is one feature which distinguishes Turkic on the one hand from Mongolian and Tungus on the other. In the other two Altaic families, the case suffix precedes the possessive. In Turkic the subject suffixes are regularly used in conjunction with non-verbal predicates, such as

[6] Classification here follows Johanson (1998), which differs somewhat from Grimes (2000); for example, Grimes places Khalaj within the Southern branch of Turkic, not in a distinct group. A very different classification is presented in Baskakov (1966) and Baskakov and Baskakov (1993). They recognize only two main branches in Turkic, an Eastern and Western branch; each of these branches is further divided into a number of subgroups. Johanson (1998) argues for a similar split historically, with a separation of Oghur (or Bulghar) from Common Turkic. He divides the modern Turkic languages into six branches, with Chuvash and Khalaj (Arghu Turkic) representing separate branches. Comrie (1981) corresponds in general terms to Grimes (2000), but several individual languages are classified differently. The discrepancies in classification underscore the difficulties in determining language/dialect boundaries and the relations between them.

[7] See Johanson (1998) for further details and further discussion.

predicate nouns and adjectives. (This is typical for Mongolian as well, while some Tungus languages use an overt copula here instead.)

2.2.2 Mongolian

Classification of the Mongolian languages may be considered even more complicated than classification of the Turkic languages. Only two Mongolian languages were spoken in the regions of the former Soviet Union: Buriat (Chapter 7, section 5.1) and Kalmyk (Chapter 4, section 6), or what is referred to Kalmyk-Oirat in the *Ethnologue*. They are in separate subgroups of the Oirat-Khalka group of the Eastern Mongolian branch. This classification places Buriat closest to Mongolian proper, and Kalmyk closest to Darkhat. Both Darkhat and Mongolian proper are spoken in Mongolia.

Classical Mongolian maintained an ongoing influence on many of the Mongolian languages for centuries, as it was the literary standard used by a wide variety of people. It was, in fact, the only written Mongolian language from the thirteenth to the twentieth century. This meant that although the daughter languages had diverged significantly by the twentieth century, all literate Mongolian people shared a common written language.

Mongolian languages in general adhere to a kind of vowel harmony similar to that of the Turkic languages (Chapter 1, section 2.2); this is especially true of Buriat and Kalmyk, although there are some key differences. (See Comrie 1981:68–9 for an overview of these.) Mongolian languages also have phonemic vowel length. They distinguish human and non-human noun classes, which is relevant in plural formation. One feature that unites Mongolian with Turkic is the use of possessive suffixes on the noun; this also holds for many of the Tungus languages. Morpheme order, however, is number—case—possessive in Mongolian and Tungus; the order of the case and possessive morphemes is reversed in Turkic.

2.2.3 Tungus

The Tungus languages (or Manchu-Tungusic, as Soviet and Russian scholars call them, referring to the uppermost division in the linguistic tree) are spoken in Siberia and China (Appendix I/D). Tungus languages are spoken in Siberia (in the former RSFSR and modern-day Russia). The largest of these in terms of numbers of speakers is Evenki, followed by Even; closely related to these two is Negidal. The five Tungus languages of Orok, Oroch, Nanai, Udihe, and Ulch lie on a separate branch of the Tungus tree. A few Tungus languages are spoken only in China; the best known of these is Manchu which, despite the historical prominence of its people, is currently spoken by only a very small group of people, all elderly.

One demographic feature which distinguishes the Tungus people from the Turkic and Mongolian peoples is that no single Tungus group is particularly large. The total population of ethnic Evenki was only 30,163 in 1989, while the Oroks—on the opposite end of the scale—had a population count of only 190 that same year. As is the case for Turkic, the Tungus speakers were historically mobile, with many of the populations being nomadic until settlement was forced in the 1940’s. Traditionally,

the Tungus people are hunters, fishers, and reindeer herders. One result of their lifestyle is that populations were scattered in relatively small groups across Siberia, resulting in widespread dialect variation. The extent to which some of the dialects of a given Tungus language, such as Evenki, are actually mutually intelligible is questionable. At any rate, some of the dialects exhibit not only phonetic and lexical differences, but also morphosyntactic distinctions. Extensive dialect variation and widespread language contact make classification of the Tungus languages especially problematic.

The Tungus languages, as is typical of Altaic, show strong agglutination, vowel harmony, and lack of grammatical gender. Most Tungus speakers historically had extensive contact with speakers of other Tungus languages, and with speakers of more distinct languages. These include, in particular, Yakut, a Turkic language, or Buriat, a Mongolian language, in addition to Russian contact. Depending upon the duration and nature of the contact, different Tungus languages—or quite frequently different dialects of a single Tungus language—show the impact of this contact, especially in terms of the lexicon. In pre-Soviet times the lexicon showed borrowings mostly from languages other than Russian; with the advent of the heavy Russian bilingualism of the Soviet era, borrowings from Russian increased dramatically. More synchronic and diachronic work is needed on the Tungus languages to better understand internal classification as well as the nature of the Altaic family.

2.3 Uralic

Uralic divides into two major branches: Finno-Ugric and Samoyedic. The majority of the Uralic languages are spoken in the territory of the former USSR, although the two Uralic languages which are perhaps best-known—Finnish and Hungarian—are spoken primarily outside its boundaries. In addition to Finland and Hungary, Uralic languages are also spoken in Norway and Sweden, with different varieties of Finnish and Saami spoken in Finland, Norway, Sweden and the former USSR.

The Uralic languages are agglutinating and have vowel harmony, although very few of them follow canonical agglutination, in distinction to the Turkic languages, for example. There is variation among the different Uralic languages as to basic word order, the ordering of case and possessive suffixes, and in the presence/absence of vowel harmony. In general the Uralic languages are characterized by a lack of grammatical gender and a large number of grammatical cases, with an average of 7 to 10 (as found in Saami, Ob-Ugric), but ranging much higher, to 16 cases (Udmurt) or 17 (Komi), with a high of 23 in some dialects of Hungarian. Yet some languages/dialects have only a few cases, such as Northern Khanty with only three, and Northern Mansi with five. Only Hungarian has a definite article, and in some Uralic languages (Ob-Ugric, Permic, Cheremisic, and Samoyedic) the 2nd or 3rd person possessive morphemes (suffixes) take on the function of signaling definiteness, even in those cases where they are not used to signal possession. In some (e.g. Estonian, Liv and Vod) the use of possessive suffixes has virtually disappeared. signal possession.

2.3.1 Finno-Ugric

Of the 32 varieties of Finno-Ugric cited by the *Ethnologue,* all are spoken in the former USSR, although not all are indigenous to it and some (such as Hungarian and Finnish) have larger speaker populations outside of Soviet territory. Finno-Ugric is represented by the Finno-Permic and Ugric languages; this latter group is comprised of Hungarian and the two Ob-Ugric languages, Khanty and Mansi (also called Ostyak and Vogul, respectively). They are both spoken in Siberia. There are considerably more speakers of Khanty, with a total (ethnic) population of 22,283 and a fluency rate of 38.8 percent (1989), as opposed to Mansi with a total of 8,474 and a fluency rate of 37.1 percent. Speakers of both languages have historically enjoyed close and intensive contact, and have influenced one another linguistically. This is particularly true in terms of the lexicon; other languages which have had an impact here are Komi (in the Permic subgroup of Uralic), Siberian Tatar dialects and, of course, Russian. In addition to these, the effect of extensive contact with Nenets and Selkup (both Samoyedic) speakers can be seen in Khanty. The Ob-Ugric languages, like all other Uralic, are agglutinating, and have vowel harmony. They mark a grammatical dual (as do Samoyedic and Lappic) and adhere to Subject–Object–Verb word order. In Ugric, the case suffixes follow the possessive suffixes. Mansi has six cases; dialect differences in Khanty are significant, and some dialects distinguish as few as three cases, while others as many as eight.

Finno-Permic divides into two branches, Finno-Cheremisic and Permic. There are three Permic languages: Komi-Permyak, Komi-Zyrian, and Udmurt. Udmurt has the largest speaker base, with approximately 550,000 mother-tongue speakers out of a population of 750,000. The Udmurt live primarily in Udmurtia, approximately 100 kilometers northeast of Moscow, with a smaller portion of the population living in Kazakhstan. Komi-Permyak speakers (116,000 out of a population of 151,000; 1979 census) live to the south of Komi-Zyrian, in the Komi-Permyak National Region. Komi-Zyrian is primarily spoken in the former Komi ASSR; in addition, small numbers of Komi-Zyrian are found in Ukrainian territory (approximately 4000) and in Kazakhstan (1500). The total ethnic population is 344,500 (1989 census), with 70.4% mother-tongue speakers. The Komi-Zyrian language is used in the Institute for Language and Literature of the Komi branch of the Academy of Sciences. The three Permic languages are syntactically very similar and have 80 percent lexical similarity. The standardized varieties of each of the Permic languages differ in the total number of cases: Komi-Permyak has 17; Komi-Zyrian has 16; and Udmurt has 15, with 14 of the cases common to all three languages.

A written form for Old Permic was developed in the late fourteenth century by Stephen of Perm, before the region was actually incorporated into the Muscovite state. Stephen of Perm carried out missionary work with the people, learned their language, and recorded it using an alphabet of his own invention. This written form was not widely known or used and died out rather quickly. Structurally, Old Permic is somewhat closer to the Komi varieties than it is to Udmurt, yet it cannot be considered the ancestor of either one of these languages in particular.

Finno-Cheremisic (or Finno-Volgic), the sister to Permic, further divides to two branches, Cheremisic, and Finno-Mordvinic, which itself is represented by three

subgroups: Baltic-Finnic, Balto-Finnic and Lappic. The Cheremisic branch has two languages, High Mari and Low Mari. Finno-Mordvinic includes 24 languages, the two Mordvinic (Erzya and Moksha) and 22 Finno-Lappic languages, which are further subdivided into three basic groups for classification purposes. Of these, the Balto-Finnic group includes two varieties of Finnish spoken in Scandinavia. The largest subgroup, the Baltic-Finnic branch, is made up of nine languages, all of which were spoken in the territory of the former Soviet Union. One of these is Finnish; in 1970 there were 84,750 Finns living in the USSR with a language retention rate of only about 50 percent. The largest Baltic-Finnic language in numbers of speakers is Estonian, and it is the sole member of the Uralic family to have the official status in the USSR of titular language of a Union Republic, the Estonian SSR (Chapter 4, section 2). The remaining Baltic-Finnic languages are Ingrian, Karelian, Liv, Livvi, Ludian, Veps and Vod. Karelian is noteworthy in having a relatively large speaker base and was the titular language of the Karelian ASSR; it is very closely related to Finnish. Veps is also closely related to both Finnish and Karelian. Baltic-Finnic, unlike some of the other Uralic languages, has Subject–Verb–Object word order. The Northern Baltic-Finnic languages, as well as Hungarian (Ugric), have front–back vowel harmony, and *i* and *e* are neutral vowels. In Veps, vowel harmony occurs only in the initial two to three syllables; subsequent syllables use back vowels.

In the Lappic subgroup of the Finno-Mordvinic branch, a number of varieties of Saami are spoken in former Soviet regions, while others are found in Scandinavia. The exact relationship of the languages of the Lappic subgroup to the other major divisions of this family are somewhat ambiguous, although all the Lappic languages are clearly more distinct from the Baltic-Finnic languages than any of these languages are from one another. Distinguishing features of the Lappic languages include (1) the absence of vowel harmony; (2) the morphological marking of the dual found in pronouns and verbs only; and (3) a correlation of voice in obstruents. Lappic and Baltic-Finnic languages (except Veps and Liv) share what is called consonant gradation, an alternation between geminate and single consonants: a geminate voiceless plosive occurs at the onset of an open syllable in one form of the word and is found as a single voiceless plosive when that syllable is closed in other forms of the word. This can be illustrated with Karelian examples which show the alternation of consonants between the nominative singular and genitive singular forms of the same word (Comrie 1981:114). The nominative singular forms, with open syllables, show the geminate consonants: *kukka* 'flower'; *äppi* 'pinch; and *ajtta* 'storeroom'. In constrast, the genitive forms show a single consonant in the closed syllables: *kukan, äpin* and *ajtan.* While such consonant alternations are often viewed as a characteristic of Uralic languages as a whole, they are in fact not found in all Uralic languages (Hajdú 1993:11).

2.3.2 Samoyedic

Samoyedic is divided into two groups, Northern and Southern. Northern Samoyedic includes Enets, Nenets and Nganasan. In the Southern Samoyedic group, only

Selkup can be said to have survived.[8] All are indigenous to Siberia. Those which have not yet been assimilated to any of the larger languages have relatively small speaker bases, the largest being Nenets with a total population of 34,665 (1989) and a fluency rate of 77.1 percent. In contrast, Enets has the smallest speaker base of the Samoyedic languages, with a total ethnic population of only 209, and a fluency rate of 46 percent (1989). Selkup has an equally low fluency rate (47.6 percent) but a slightly larger population (3621 in 1989). (For more discussion of language loss and retention of the Samoyedic languages, see Chapter 7, section 4.1 and Chapter 8, section 3.)

The Samoyedic languages have front-back vowel harmony, are agglutinating and have relatively firmly fixed word order of the Subject–Object–Verb type. They mark three grammatical numbers (singular, dual, and plural); the Northern Samoyedic languages have seven morphological cases, and Selkup has nine. One of the features distinguishing different Uralic branches is the order of case and possessive suffixes; in Samoyedic (as in the Balto-Finnic and Lapp languages) the possessive suffixes tend to follow the cases suffixes. One exotic feature which distinguishes Nenets and Enets from all other Uralic languages is the existence of nasalized and non-nasalized glottal stops in both.

2.4 Caucasian

The Caucasian languages are spoken in the territory of the former Caucasian Republics, primarily in the Georgian SSR, but also in the Azerbaijan SSR, as well as in parts of the Russian SFSR, such as the Chechen-Ingush ASSR and the Daghestan ASSR. The Caucasian languages are divided into two groups: South Caucasian (or Kartvelian) and North Caucasion. As Comrie (1989:198) points out, despite the possible genetic links between the North Caucasian languages (sometimes classifed as North Central, Northwest and Northeast), there are no apparent reasons to posit genetic affinity between the South and North Caucasian languages. Nonetheless, this position is maintained by some Soviet and Georgian linguists. An overview is provided by Bokarev and Klimov (1967); a more recent but very brief summary of ongoing issues is found in Klimov (2001). South Caucasian includes Georgian,[9] Svan, and the Zan subgroup with two languages, Laz and Mingrelian. Laz and Mingrelian are treated by some Soviet and Georgian linguists as two dialects of one language (i.e. Zan), although in their more recent work, they are treated as separate languages (see the articles in Alekseev et al. 2001).

North Caucasian is divided into two main branches: Northwest Caucasian (or Abhkaz-Adyghe) and Nakh-Daghestanian (or Northeast Caucasian). The exact relationship of Northwest Caucasian to Nakh-Daghestanian is controversial. The classification presented here differs from Grimes (2000), which subdivides North Caucasian into three subgroups: North Central, Northwest and Northeast (see also Hewitt 1995:3 and Klimov 2001:10). It is currently more widely held that North

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[8]The last known speaker of Kamas (Southern Samoyedic) was recorded in 1970.

[9]Judeo-Georgian is cited by Grimes (2000) as a distinct language which may possibly be better classified as a dialect of Georgian with Hebrew loan words.

Central and Northeast Caucasian form one larger family, Nakh-Daghestanian. The relationship of Nakh-Daghestanian to Northwest Caucasian is more controversial; they are treated as separate branches here. Northwest Caucasian encompasses a total of five languages: two Circassian languages (Adyghe and Kabardian), two Abkhaz-Abazin (Abaza and Abkhaz), and Ubykh. Nakh-Daghestanian contains in the neighborhood of thirty languages, depending on which are counted as languages and which as dialects. The Nakh branch includes Chechen, Ingush and Bats. The Daghestanian branch can be further divided into three basic groups. The Avar-Andi-Tsez subgroup includes fourteen languages: Avar; eight Andi languages (Akhvakh, Andi, Bagvalal, Botlikh, Chamalal, Ghodoberi, Karata and Tindi) and five Tsez[10] languages (Tsez, Bezhta, Hinukh, Hunzib and Khvarshi). Grimes (2000) identifies a Lak-Dargwa branch, with those two languages, Lak and Dargwa. In contrast, Alekseev (2001:156) distinguishes Lak and Dargwa as separate at this level, and points to the fact that some varieties of Dargwa (including, specifically, Akhuhsa, Kaitak, Kubachi and Urakha) are considered to be distinct languages, not dialects of Dargwa. Last, the Lezgian branch of Daghestanian has ten languages: Aghul, Archi, Budukh, Khinalugh, Kryts, Lezgi, Rutul, Tabassaran, Tsakhur and Udi. Of these, Alekseev (2001) distinguishes Khinalugh as separate at this level; the present classification is outlined in Appendix I/F. Although many of these languages are spoken primarily in the North Caucasus, in the territory of the Russian SFSR, they are discussed in Chapter 5 together with other Caucasian languages and the non-Caucasian languages indigenous to the Caucasus.

Only one of these languages, Ubykh, is spoken outside this general region, in Turkey. Ubykh speakers migrated to Turkey when the Russian tsarist government occupied the Northwest Caucasus in 1864. Comrie (1981:196) suggests that it was already near extinction at the time of his 1974 visit to Turkey. Other Caucasians have migrated to Turkey as well, including some speakers of Avar, Chechen, Dargwa, Lak, and Lezgi. The traditional homeland of the Laz is in Turkey as well, on the southern shore of the Black Sea; there are currently some 30,000 speakers of Laz there (out of a total ethnic population of 92,000 in Turkey). This is the majority of the population: there were only 2000 speakers of Laz in the Georgian SSR (1982 estimate).

The Caucasian languages are recognized for their linguistic complexity on all levels. In terms of phonology, Georgian has a relatively simple phonemic system of 28 consonants, but some of the longest consonant clusters known. Ubykh has 80 consonant phonemes, making it what was long considered to be the largest phonemic inventory. Furthermore, the Caucasus is the only region in Europe where large numbers of ergative languages are found. (The Indo-European languages are of the nominative–accusative type.) The particulars of ergativity vary among the individual languages and can involve extremely complex systems of switch ergativity, as is the case with Georgian, where distinctions such as aorist, present or perfect are relevant in case marking. In contrast, it is verbs of perception and emotion which take different case marking in the North Central and Northeast Caucasian languages. Throughout the Caucasian group, the languages are almost

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[10]Tsez is referred to as Dido in Grimes (2000).

entirely postpositional. Subject–Object–Verb order predominates, although Subject–Verb–Object order is also found, especially among the South Caucasian languages.

2.5 Paleosiberian

Paleosiberian represents a group of languages which are *not* genetically related, in distinction to the other classifications discussed here. These languages are often placed together on the basis of negative criteria: they do not share certain key traits, do not share a common territory, culture or heritage, and so on. What binds them is that they are each spoken in relatively isolated regions of Siberia and do not appear to be related to anything else. The Paleosiberian group usually includes the Eskimo-Aleut languages, the Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages, and several languages which are currently isolates: Ket, Gilyak and Yukaghir. The group is more commonly called *Paleoasiatic* by Soviet scholars; the use of this term with reference to these languages and peoples dates to Leopold Shrenk's work (1893–1903) and his theory that the Paleoasians were the ancestors of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the Far East. While the languages are grouped together more on geographic terms than genetic or typological grounds, they do tend to share key characteristics. Most have ergative syntax; the exceptions are Itelmen, Ket, and Yugh, which have nominative/accusative syntax. The Paleosiberian languages are agglutinating, and some grammatical information (such as agent and tense) can be expressed by prefixes. Most Paleosiberian languages do not have grammatical gender, although Ket does; a few other languages (e.g. Chukchi, Koryak and Itelmen) distinguish person/non-person, with subcategories of animacy.

The Eskimo-Aleut language family is relatively large by Paleosiberian standards, with eleven languages spoken in northern parts of the world (Canada, Greenland, Siberia, and Alaska in the United States). Of the five languages in the Yupik subgroup (see Appendix I/G), three are found in Siberia: Central Siberian Yupik, Naukan Yupik and Sirenik Yupik.

There are five Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages: one on the Southern branch (Itelmen) and four Northern: Chukchi, and three which are related in the Koryak-Alyutor subgroup: Alutor, Kerek and Koryak. (See Appendix I/H for specific details.) All five are spoken in Siberia, and all are endangered, with Itelmen quite possibly on the brink of extinction, and Kerek almost certainly gone. (The Kerek people inhabit a region together with the Chukchi, and have been rapidly assimilating to them. As of 1991, there were only three living speakers of Kerek, and all were trilingual, Kerek–Chukchi–Russian, and spoke Chukchi more fluently than Russian.) Chukchi is on somewhat stronger ground due to a larger size population (15,000 as of 1989), and it is taught in the elementary schools through the fourth grade (Chapter 7, section 4.3). The Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages derive their name from the geographic location of their speakers, who make their homes on the Chukotka and Kamchatkan peninsulas.

Southern Chukotko-Kamchatkan, as has been represented by Itelmen, can be distinguished from the Northern languages in that it lacks vowel harmony and has a more complicated phonemic system that includes plain and ejective plosives, voiced

and voiceless fricatives, and three laterals. Chukchi, in contrast, has only fourteen consonant phonemes; strikingly, its one lateral is (phonetically) a voiceless lateral fricative. Another unusual feature of Chukchi is systematic differences in the pronunciation of some consonants depending upon the gender of the speaker: women's pronunciation was considered low prestige and was discouraged. Case marking in Northern Chukotko-Kamchatkan is consistently ergative–absolutive; this is another feature in which Itelmen differs, as in Itelmen both transitive subject and direct object are morphologically unmarked, i.e., are in citation form. Word order in Chukchi is relatively free, although the subject shows a strong tendency to precede the verb. The relative order of verb and object varies, however, although the existence of postpositions and not prepositions suggests typological consistency with Subject—Object—Verb order. Older Chukchi texts show examples of incorporation, which is lost in more modern writings and in translations from Russian. Itelmen, again in contrast, shows no evidence of incorporation.

The Yukaghir people are divided into two small groups, the Tundra Yukaghirs and the Kolyma Yukaghirs. These groups reflect not only linguistic differences, but differences in lifestyle and culture as well. The Tundra Yukaghirs were historically nomadic and were settled only in the early 1940's, while the Kolyma Yukaghirs were traditionally hunters and fishers, and more sedentary. The geographic distance that separates the two groups means little contact between them; this distance only further compounds their lack of a sense of shared identity. Although Yukaghir is classified as a language isolate, there have been attempts to classify it as either Altaic or Uralic, as it shares at least some typological features with these two families. Both Tundra and Kolyma Yukaghir are agglutinating but show some fusional characteristics, such as the use of prefixes, although suffixes predominate. The two varieties of Yukaghir do use postpositions but no prepositions. One striking feature is the morphological marking of focus on either the focused noun or the verb; this is unique to Yukaghir in this area (Comrie 1981:260–1).

Ket is classified as a Enisei language, and is currently the only living language in that family. Historically there were several related languages (Arin, Assan and Kott) spoken in the eighteenth century in Siberia, and there were probably at least two other Enisei languages prior to this. Arin and Assan disappeared in the eighteenth century, and Kott also became extinct in the mid-nineteenth century. By the middle of the twentieth century, only two Enisei languages were still vital: Ket and Yugh. Yugh is reported as having two to three semi-speakers as of 1991 (Verner in Kibrik 1991) and is on the verge of extinction or already extinct (Verner 1996). By the time of the 1989 Soviet census, there were virtually no native speakers of Yugh, with at most two speakers.

The name *Ket* derives from the Ket word ‘person’; the people were formerly called *Enisei Ostyak,* to distinguish them from the Ob Ostyak, or modern-day Selkup and Khanty. Ket is the only language in the region known to have phonemic tone oppositions and, again in distinction to all other Siberian languages, shows a consistent gender/class system. Ket also has discontinuous roots and internal flection, which is a quite different pattern from the rest of the Siberian languages which all tend toward agglutination.

Gilyak (often called Nivkh) is an isolate found in Siberia, although there have been some attempts to link it with Japanese, as well as other Siberian languages including Tungus, Chukchi, and Mongolic and Turkic languages. It is seriously endangered, with only 23.3 percent of its ethnic population (of 4,673) who still consider it their native language. A written form of the language, based on the Amur dialect, was created in 1935 using the Latin alphabet. A number of primers, textbooks and brochures were published in Gilyak; a handful of issues of the newspaper *Nivkh pravda* were published. The alphabet was converted to the Cyrillic script in 1953 (a relatively late date for this change. Chapter 2 section 4.2), with the literary language still based on the Amur dialect. Then in 1979, a written form was created in the basis on the Eastern Sakhalin dialect, also using the Cyrillic alphabet. Despite these efforts, use of a written Gilyak form never really took hold, and no standardized form ever gained widespread acceptance. Instead, Russian was the language for education and written communication.

Like many of the other Siberian languages, Gilyak uses a number of spatial cases, but is unusual in that it does not overtly mark the differences between nominative, accusative, dative (for indirect object) or genitive: nouns in these positions all stand in citation form. Gilyak has a complicated system of consonant alterations which, historically, were conditioned phonetically and in some cases syntactically. Although the original phonetic environments have changed in many instances, the alterations remain. Spatial deixis includes five degrees of nearness/remoteness, as seen in the Gilyak demonstratives. Gilyak is also interesting in that it uses a system of numeral classifiers; in this respect it is distinct from other Siberian languages. (See especially Gruzdeva 1996 for an overview of Gilyak.)

3. ETHNIC COMPOSITION OF THE USSR

As this brief overview of the language families of the Soviet Union suggests, it was a remarkably diverse, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual state. Population density and language density varied from region to region, but no Republic was monolingual. Rather, each Republic was home to a number of genetically and typologically diverse languages. While in some respects Armenian SSR may be considered one of the less diverse regions, with only nine languages spoken, it shared a border with Georgian SSR, a Union Republic with exceptionally high language density and diversity.

Determining the exact number of languages in the former USSR is difficult, as the boundaries between language and dialect are determined by a number of linguistic and non-linguistic (i.e. socio-political) factors. Language was seen by the Soviet state as a key trait in identifying ethnicity; official recognition of the existence of a language was, in effect, analogous to providing official recognition of a distinct ethnic group. Historically, a long-standing example of this is the tsarist identification of Ukrainian as a dialect of Russian; this ensures that Ukrainians are not a separate ethnic group, but rather a kind of Russian. Such manipulations are frequent throughout Soviet history, as the authorities attempted to align some groups, and distance others. Certain minority ethnic groups were not recognized by

the State, as was the case of the Mingrelians in the Georgian Republic, who were required to declare their ethnicity as Georgian, although Mingrelian and Georgian are, linguistically, two distinct languages. The reverse is also true: Evenki, Even and Negidal were long considered to be dialects of one language, but have since been recognized to be three separate languages. This reclassification in part stems from greater knowledge about the linguistic nature of these language varieties, and is in part the result of changes in the political climate. In addition, at certain times groups that were deemed underprivileged by the State were offered a variety of advantages (such as university positions, and so on). Thus people might identify themselves with one ethnic group in one census, and a different ethnic group in a different census, depending upon which they saw as more advantageous at a given time. Accordingly, official Soviet statistics vary from year to year, with sudden jumps or gains in a given population group, and often diverge from estimates by linguists.

With respect to the ethnic map of the Soviet Union, it is useful to consider the differing nationalities in terms of their population size, geographic distribution, and language use. The Soviet census provides information on all of these categories, but needs to be used cautiously; see section 4.1 for further discussion. The total number of nationalities is itself one of the most problematic and contentious issues. The 1989 census cites some 130 different nationalities, with 15,168 listed as "other nationalities" and 17,279 people who did not declare a nationality. This list includes immigrants and indigenous people. It is far from comprehensive and omits over 60 languages. Eskimo here can be understood to be Yupik (all varieties; see Chapter 7, section 4.3); these omissions range from languages which are relatively well-known to Western linguists to others which are lesser known. For example, Tsez, Chamalal and Tindi are all excluded. Over thirty of the languages listed in the *Red Book of Languages of the Peoples of Russia* (Neroznak 1994) are not included; some of this may be encompassed by the category of "other languages" or where nationality is not declared. In some instances this can be explained by the very small speaker population; for example, Yugh, a Enisei (Paleosiberian) language, has an estimated two speakers out of a population of twelve to fifteen. Even so, languages with speakers numbering in the hundreds (e.g. Hunzib) were still omitted from the census count.

Table 3 provides data about the number of people of each ethnicity and their declared primary language use, defined as the language of their nationality, Russian, or some other language. Throughout the course of Soviet history, the majority of non-Russians declared their heritage language to be their native language; this figure is still as high as 84 percent in 1989. Only 15 percent of non-Russians declared Russian to be their first language.[11] These figures can be compared to the group of people who reported using Russian as a second language, 47.5 percent in 1989 (Chapter 8, Table 28). Russians constituted just over half of the total population in 1989. Adding that to the fact that over half of the non-Russian population has some fluency of Russian, this means that at least 75 percent of the USSR population used Russian in 1989.

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[11] These calculations come from (Anderson and Silver 1990:96), derived by a method described in Anderson (1975).

Table 3. Distribution of People of the USSR by Nationality and Language 1989 census

People	Total	Percentage considering "native" language		
		heritage tongue	Russian	other
USSR	282,742,511			
Russian	145,155,489	99.8	——	0.2
Ukrainian	44,186,006	81.1	18.8	0.1
Uzbek	16,697,825	98.3	0.7	0.9
Belorusan	10,036,251	70.9	28.5	0.6
Kazakh	8,135,818	97.0	2.2	0.7
Azerbaijani	6,770,403	97.7	1.7	0.7
Tatar	6,648,760	83.2	16.1	0.7
Armenian	4,623,232	91.7	7.6	0.7
Tajiki	4,215,372	97.7	0.8	1.5
Georgian	3,981,045	98.2	1.7	0.2
Moldovan	3,352,352	91.6	7.4	0.9
Lithuanian	3,067,390	97.7	1.8	0.5
Turkmen	2,728,965	98.5	1.0	0.5
Kirghiz	2,528,946	97.8	0.6	1.6
German	2,038,603	48.7	50.8	0.5
Chuvash	1,842,346	76.4	23.3	0.3
Latvian	1,458,986	94.8	5.0	0.3
Bashkir	1,449,157	72.3	11.2	16.5
Mordvinian	1,153,987	67.1	32.7	0.3
Jew	1,378,344	11.1	86.6	2.3
Pole	1,126,334	30.5	28.6	40.8
Estonian	1,026,649	95.5	4.4	0.1
Chechen	956,879	98.1	1.7	0.2
Udmurt	746,793	69.6	30.0	0.3
Mari	670,868	80.8	18.8	0.4
Avar	600,989	97.2	1.9	0.9
Osetian	597,998	87.0	7.0	6.1
Lezgi	466,006	91.6	4.8	3.6
Korean	438,650	49.4	50.1	0.5
Karakalpak	423,520	94.1	1.0	5.0
Buriat	421,380	86.3	13.6	0.1
Kabardian	390,814	97.2	2.6	0.2
Yakut	381,922	93.8	6.1	——
Bulgarian	372,941	68.1	28.8	3.1
Dargin	365,038	97.5	1.9	0.7
Komi	344,519	70.4	29.5	0.2
Greek	358,068	44.5	51.4	4.1
Kumyk	281,933	97.4	2.1	0.5

People	Total	Percentage considering "native" language		
		heritage tongue	Russian	other
Ingush	273,438	96.9	2.8	0.3
Crimean Tatar	271,715	92.6	5.3	2.1
Uyghur	262,643	86.6	3.9	9.5
(Gypsies)	262,015	77.4	10.8	11.8
Turk	207,512	91.0	1.9	7.1
Tuvin	206,629	98.5	1.4	——
Gagauz	197,768	87.5	10.6	2.4
Kalmyk	173,821	90.0	7.3	2.7
Hungarian	171,420	93.9	3.3	2.9
Karachay	155,936	96.8	2.7	0.5
Kurd	152,717	80.5	4.5	15.0
Komi-Permyak	152,060	70.1	29.7	0.3
Romanian	146,071	60.9	5.6	33.5
Karelian	130,929	47.3	49.6	1.1
Adyghe	124,826	94.7	5.1	0.2
Lak	118,074	93.6	5.1	1.4
Abkhaz	105,308	93.5	4.9	1.7
Tabasaran	97,531	95.9	3.0	1.1
Balkar	85,126	93.6	5.4	1.0
Khakas	80,328	76.1	23.6	0.3
Nogai	75,181	89.9	3.4	6.7
Altai	70,777	84.3	15.5	0.2
Dungan	69,323	94.8	2.5	2.8
Finn	67,359	34.6	54.6	10.9
Circassian	52,363	90.4	6.3	3.3
Persian	40,176	33.2	10.2	56.6
Central Asian Jew	36,152	65.1	33.6	1.2
Nenets	34,665	77.1	18.1	4.8
Abazin	33,613	93.4	4.7	1.9
Tat	30,669	71.9	21.0	7.2
Evenki	30,163	30.4	28.5	41.1
Beluchi	28,796	96.9	1.2	1.8
Khanty	22,521	60.5	38.8	0.8
Talysh	21,602	90.4	0.5	9.1
Rutul	20,388	94.8	3.6	1.6
Tsakhur	19,972	95.2	1.5	3.3
Aghul	18,740	94.9	3.8	1.3
Highland Jew	18,513	75.8	19.4	4.8
Even	17,199	43.9	27.5	28.6
Czech	16,102	35.3	44.5	20.3
Georgian Jew	16,054	90.9	8.2	0.8
Shor	16,652	56.7	41.6	1.7

People	Total	Percentage considering "native" language		
		heritage tongue	Russian	other
Chukchi	15,184	70.3	28.3	1.4
Veps	12,501	50.8	48.5	0.7
Nanai	12,023	44.1	55.3	0.7
Chinese	11,355	32.9	64.3	2.7
Koryak	9,242	52.4	46.4	1.1
Slovak	9,060	37.9	10.2	51.8
Mansi	8,474	37.1	62.0	1.0
Udi	7,971	85.7	9.4	4.9
Arab	7,747	61.5	10.0	28.4
Afghan	6,695	63.1	6.5	30.5
Gilyak	4,673	23.3	76.0	0.7
Albanian	3,988	52.1	44.1	3.8
Vietnamese	3,396	96.4	3.2	0.3
Spaniard	3,172	46.1	51.5	2.5
Selkup	3,612	47.6	50.6	1.8
Ul'ch	3,233	30.8	66.2	3.0
Mongolian	2,950	87.8	9.9	2.2
Cuban	2,811	71.9	16.3	11.9
Serb	2,685	40.8	33.9	25.3
Kariate	2,602	19.3	75.4	5.3
Itelmen	2,481	19.6	79.2	1.2
Udihe	2,011	26.3	65.7	8.0
Saami	1,890	42.2	56.5	1.4
of India & Pakistan	1,728	71.5	16.4	12.1
Eskimo	1,719	51.6	45.8	2.5
Chuvan	1,511	21.4	68.8	9.8
Crimeans	1,448	34.9	62.2	2.9
Italian	1,337	39.7	53.2	7.1
Nganasan	1,278	83.2	15.5	1.4
Yukaghir	1,142	32.8	45.6	21.6
Ket	1,113	48.3	49.6	2.1
Oroch	915	18.8	79.5	1.7
Izhor	820	36.8	51.8	11.4
Dutch	794	31.5	60.6	8.0
Tofalar	731	43.0	55.3	1.8
Aleut	702	26.6	69.4	3.9
French	701	46.6	41.7	11.7
Japanese	683	46.0	48.9	5.1
Negidal	622	28.3	67.7	4.0
Austrian	504	29.6	57.9	12.5
English	348	57.8	34.2	8.1
American	277	63.2	26.7	10.1

People	Total	Percentage considering "native" language		
		heritage tongue	Russian	other
Liv	226	43.8	14.6	41.6
Enets	209	45.5	38.3	16.3
Orok	190	44.7	54.2	1.1
Others	15,168	66.3	15.2	18.4
Natonality not indicated	17,279			

In other cases the decision to not mention a specific group is clearly political. A case in point is Zan, which the Soviets considered to be a single language with two dialects, Laz and Mingrelian, while linguists see these as two distinct languages. The populations of both of these are not trivial: Laz has an estimated population of 2000 in Georgia,[12] and Mingrelian of 500,000. Yet none of these is cited in the 1989 census. Instead, Mingrelians were required to declare themselves to be Georgians.

The statistics which are provided must be taken with caution. In some instances what is classified as one ethnicity (with one single language) includes more than one distinct language. The Saami are classified as one homogenous group in the census, for example, but four different Saami languages are recognized as being spoken, by varying numbers of people, in the Russian SFSR. Gypsies (Russian *tsygani*) are classified as one group speaking one language, while Gunnemarck and Kenrick (1985) estimate that the approximate 300,000 Gypsies from the former USSR speak some variety of one of three languages (Romani, Lomavren, or Domari) as a first or second language. These estimates do not correspond to the 1989 census. Finally, there have been some occurrences of explicit manipulation of census results. Veps is a case in point. Veps is a Baltic-Finnic language spoken in regions where there is heavy contact with Russian speakers, in the area between Leningrad and the Vologda region and in the former Karelian ASSR. The population appears to have suffered rather sudden drops, when considered from the years 1939 to 1989:

Table 4. Veps Population, 1939–1989

year	Veps population
1939	32,000
1959	16,374
1970	8281
1979	8094
1989	12,501

In point of fact, in the 1960's and 1970's there was an exerted effort by the local authorities to record ethnic Veps as Russians in the local registers and to issue them Russian passports. Thus the sudden "drop" in the Veps population does not reflect

[12] There are another 30,000 first-language speakers in Turkey, from an ethnic population of about 92,000 (as of 1980; Grimes 2000).

an actual decline in bodies, but a reaffiliation as Russians. A slightly different example is provided by the Enets, Northern Samoyedic speakers of Siberia. The 1926 census cites 250 Enets, and the 1989 census shows 209. There are no figures for the intervening years, as the Enets were classified as either Nenets or Nganasan. This not only obliterated their official existence for some sixty years, but had an impact, albeit slight, on the number of Nenets and Nganasan reported during that time period.

4. ANALYZING THE SOVIET UNION

The Soviet Union provides a complicated case study. On the one hand, its language policy was careful and deliberate, and large numbers of vastly different languages and cultures were involved. On the other hand, the goals of the language planners and policy makers were far from transparent. As they developed over the course of time, they often appeared contradictory or at odds with earlier goals. Furthermore, the Soviet government was rarely candid about the bona fide intent of any legislation. This makes overall evaluation of Soviet language policy complicated, since in order to ascertain how effective a given policy was, it is necessary to know what it was intended to accomplish. In the USSR, language was viewed by officials as a tool that could be used to achieve their greater purpose, that of building a Soviet-Communist State. Historically, there has been much debate as to precisely what any secondary goals were. That a deliberate policy of promoting Russian existed is beyond question, and the active promotion of Russian accelerated over time. It is less clear what the motivation was. The official explanation is often the need to establish Russian as the lingua franca for inter-ethnic and all-Union communication, suggesting that the intent was to create a bilingual country (or a number of bi- or multi-lingual regions). Yet the deliberate suppression of other languages suggests that the ultimate goal was more the formation of a monolingual superpower than the creation of a lingua franca for the country. Moreover, various pro-Russian legislation, or more specifically the anti-non-Russian legislation, could be interpreted as instances of what has been called Russian "chauvinism," motivated by suspicion or prejudice against the non-Russian population. This is difficult to judge from a historical perspective, especially because it was rarely explicitly stated. Yet at a local level—where ethnic Russian officials interacted with native non-Russians—this was most certainly a factor, and there is ample historical documentation that ethnic Russians held a disproportionate number of high-ranking positions in the government. In addition, the early promotion of the national languages was fraught with political difficulties (Chapter 2). While these early policies may have been created in response to the need to educate a largely illiterate population rapidly, and to distance the Soviet government from tsarist Russia, they had the potential to incite nationalist sentiments. The deliberate Russification policies were at least in part an attempt to squelch any nascent nationalist movements by firmly establishing the authority of the Russian language.

Alternatively, a more benign explanation of pro-Russian policies is the need for the Soviet government to establish its legitimacy to the world at large. The official

language of a modern nation state has great symbolic power, often likened to a flag-waving symbol. Despite the number of multilingual modern states, very few of them have more than a handful of official state languages. Thus Canada and Switzerland are more representative modern nation states with regard to the numbers of official languages supported, than would be a model with dozens of official state languages. While the need to establish the legitimacy of hte USSR may have been a factor in the early year's of Soviet rule, it cannot explain the marked pro-Russian shift seen in the second half of the Soviet era. Finally, there were real constraints in terms of the resources (both financial and human) needed to support the development of the Soviet languages. Almost certainly all of these issues came into play, to varying degrees at different points in Soviet history. And while it is difficult to ascertain the precise motive of any particular piece of language legislation, its impact can be evaluated in terms of actual language use and state-supported language activities (e.g. publications, media, and education).

4.1 The Data

The primary source of data on numbers of speakers and languages in the former USSR during the Soviet period is Soviet census data. Grimes (2000) provides current data—since the break up of the Soviet Union—on speaker numbers, literacy, and geographic distribution, unless otherwise noted. The Soviet laws and legislation provide the most direct information about language policies, but how these policies were implemented, and the effect that they had, can be derived from other sources. Official Soviet statistics provide supplementary information, often the only information, about language use and distribution, including enrollment patterns in the schools, and kinds and numbers of publications, including the language of publication, radio and television broadcasts, and so on.

Although the censuses are considered to be largely representative of the ethno-linguistic reality of the Soviet Union for any given time period, they need to be approached with caution.[13] In particular the 1939 census must be interpreted carefully, as it was conducted in a highly politicized manner. The first Soviet census was conducted in 1926, with the next census scheduled for 1937. This 1937 census was itself very politicized. Prior to its actual implementation, official pronouncements of rapid population growth (up to 180 million by 1937 and 183 million by 1939) were publicized in the press, putting intense pressure on the census takers to corroborate the predicted growth. The anticipated population increase was part of the official Soviet ideology that linked gains in the standard of living to a rise in the population. Nonetheless, results of the actual census, conducted in January 1937, failed to support the Party's optimistic prediction, showing the population at only 162 million. Two years later, in 1939, another census was conducted; its goal was to "correct" the mistakes of the 1937 census. Although at this point the census takers were not expected to meet the earlier predictions of the Party in terms of the total

[13] See Vakhtin (2001:31–87) for a more thorough discussion of the Soviet censuses as specifically related to the distribution of languages and speakers.

population, the population was expected to grow by several million. Officially, then, the 1939 census reports a total population of 170.5 million, a figure which is widely held to be suspect.[14]

The problems with the 1939 census are indicative of a wide scale problem with the Soviet censuses, the deliberate and calculated manipulation of the quantitative side of the census. Under constant pressure to fulfill and over-fulfill five-year plans and unrealistic goals set by a centralized governmental apparatus located far away in Moscow, local officials often reported the kinds of gains they were expected to have achieved, in particular in terms of literacy and educational accomplishments. It is, therefore, necessary to assume that many of these figures are inflated. This is particularly true in the early years of the Soviet Union, when there was great pressure to achieve rapid results to advance the nativization campaign. This is the underlying strategy which so seriously flawed the 1939 census.

The Central government tightly controlled the collection and dissemination of facts and statistics in the Soviet Union, and the manipulation of information was a powerful political tool. One result of this tight control is absence of information for certain time periods. Data for the late Stalin period is virtually non-existent, and there are major gaps in the information available for most of the Brezhnev era. Equally important is the official manipulation of data, which occurred on several levels. One level is in terms of the categories of information provided by any given census: the 1926 census cited 194 different nationalities, while the 1979 census recognized only 101. Because the identification of nationalities was so highly politicized, this is in some ways hardly surprising. Thus the census may not provide the most accurate or direct information about which ethnic groups actually existed at a given time, and/or the actual size of their populations, or numbers of speakers. At the same time, the changes in terms of officially recognized categories are in and of themselves telling, as they speak to a larger political agenda, and provide indirect information about that agenda.

4.1.1 Language Data and the Soviet Census

The Soviet censuses for the years 1959, 1970, 1979 and 1989 all asked respondents to identify their native language (*rodnoi iazyk*). The intent of this question, presumably, was to ascertain which language was the respondent's first language, i.e., the language which the respondent knows most fluently. Even if the term itself were defined more precisely, determining which language is a "first" language is very problematic in multilingual communities, where a speaker may use one language at home and another at school or at work; even the question of which language is used for most daily communications can be too vague. In many such cases there may be a distinction between a speaker's first language (i.e. language of fluency) and his or her heritage language (i.e. language(s) of one's ancestors). In other words, native language need not be identical with ethnicity (which was also self-identified). Yet the term 'native language' was interpreted by respondents as the

[14] Zhiromskaia (1999) provides further details in the introduction to recently published additions to the 1939 census.

language of childhood, that language which they grew up speaking in the home. It is not uncommon for the language of childhood to differ from the language in which a speaker is most fluent. This is especially true in places where the language of education differs from the language of the home, and even more so in those communities where rapid language shift is taking place. Examples are the indigenous communities of the Soviet Far North (Chapter 7) or minority language communities even in the European part of the Russian SFSR (Chapter 3, section 1.3). Thus it is misleading to think that the "mother" tongue, if defined as the language of childhood, is a language which the speaker actually commands. Furthermore, the ability to communicate in a language does not necessarily mean that that language is actually used. For children of interethnic relationships, the question is even more problematic, as the father and mother may speak different languages fluently, and may use different languages with the children. Although census takers were often instructed to consider the mother's language to be the children's "native" language, in some strongly patriarchal communities the fathers intervened and reported that it was their language that should be considered "native" for the children (see the discussion in Hirsch 1997).

In sum, then, one key problem with the census question about *native language* lies in the ambiguity of the term: it could be interpreted as the language of childhood, regardless of fluency; alternatively, it could refer to the language that the respondent knows most fluently; or the language that is used most often in daily communication; or it could refer to the ethnic or heritage language. The failure of census takers to clarify what respondents meant in identifying a "native" language only further exacerbated the problem (see Belikov 1999). In addition, the issues of self-reporting cannot be ignored, since there were no independent tests of a respondent's linguistic ability. Some of these problems are inherent in any survey which attempts to ask these questions; the unreliability of census data in assessing language proficiency is repeatedly raised in the articles in Dorian (1989) and elsewhere.

This leads to the rather absurd result of respondents identifying as "native" a language in which they are not fluent. Recent studies have provided us with a more accurate assessment of fluency levels for many minority languages; when contrasted with levels of "native" language knowledge, the discrepancies are striking. Consider the differences between self-reporting in the 1989 census (Table 3) and more realistic field assessments: Koryaks, for example, (self-)report that 52.4 percent consider their native language to be their first language, but only an estimated 5.4 percent of the population speaks Koryak fluently (Sidorov 1994:32); 43 percent of Tofalars claim knowledge of Tofalar as a native language, but only 1.9 percent fluently speak it (Rassadin 1994:54), and so on. Furthermore, the interpretation of "native language" (*rodnoi iazyk*) varied from individual census to census, judging from the instructions given to census takers in the years 1897, 1920, 1926 and 1959 (Vakhtin 2001:80, citing Vorob'ev 1957:28). These instructions range from identifying the native language as the one spoken at home, and in the case of multilingual families, specifically the maternal language (1920), to the language which the respondent considers native (1897, 1959), to the language which the respondent fluently commands (1926).

In addition to questions about native, or first-language knowledge, it became standard to ask questions about second-language knowledge: except for the 1959 census, the subsequent three (1970, 1979 and 1989) asked respondents to identify whether they could "freely command" another language of the USSR. There are two important considerations here. First, the respondents were left to decide on their own whether they had "free command" of a language; no proficiency tests or linguistic questionnaires were administered. Not only is level of proficiency suspect when self-determined, but the amount a language is used is also questionable. Studies of bilingual communities outside of the USSR have repeatedly shown that speakers are often unconscious of when they code-switch or when they use one language over another. Moreover, issues that are not strictly linguistic come into play in answering such questions, and it can be difficult—if not impossible—to tease these out in a survey format. A striking example is provided by the identification of Moldovan versus Romanian in the post-USSR era, from a survey of language use in Moldova (reported in Belikov 1999:566). Of those respondents who identified themselves as ethnic Moldovans or Romanians (the ratio here is 3:1), the majority, or 73.74 percent, consider Romanian to be their "native" language, as opposed to Moldovan: 16.16 percent; Romanian and Moldovan: 5.05 percent; Russian and Moldovan: 2.02 percent; and Russian: 1.01 percent. But when asked which language is used in State institutions, a full 82.82 percent responded that they used Moldovan and Russian, or mostly Moldovan, or only Moldovan. A mere 5.05 percent responded that they spoke Romanian, or mostly Romanian, or only Romanian. Thus, while the majority of this group identified themselves as ethnic *Moldovans,* they claimed *Romanian* as a native language, and apparently see *Moldovan* as an official, state language.

Second, respondents could choose only one of the indigenous (or autochthonous) languages of the USSR; other languages (such as English, French or German) were not included. Soviet language planners identify the *autochthonous* languages as having special privileges and status over the non-autochthonous. In the Soviet framework, non-autochthonous languages are, typically, immigrant languages; as Table 3 shows, there were significant immigrant populations living inside the USSR. Among these are particularly large groups of Germans and Poles; even as late as 1989 Germans were the fifteenth largest ethnic group in the Soviet Union. Such immigrants brought with them their languages, and some of these constitute sizable speaker populations, despite Soviet policies which actively discriminated against them, and discouraged against their use (as is the case, again, of the Germans, Chapter 3, section 1.3). But in identifying second language fluency for the purposes of the Soviet censuses, only the autochthonous languages "counted."

This touches on a fundamental principle underlying the identification of all ethnic groups and languages in the Soviet census. As outlined by Vakhtin (2001:31), there were essentially two, diametrically opposed, approaches to this matter. One would be to provide census takers with an ethno-linguistic map of the population, and ask them (through questions of self-identification in this case) to determine how respondents fit into that map. Here the issue is one of presenting a pre-determined list of possible ethnic groups, and respondents are deprived of true freedom in self-identification. Rather, it is the government officials who create the census who determine which nationalities exist, and how minorities are to be classified with

regard to the mosaic of larger ethnic groups. An alternative approach is to provide respondents with considerably more freedom in their choice of ethnic affiliation and language. The comprehensive list of languages and ethnicities would then be compiled after the results are tabulated. This latter approach would have been more in keeping with the Bolsheviks' declared goal of fostering self-determination. It was not, however, the method that the census takers were permitted to follow. Instead, from the time of the first All-Union Census, ethnic identity was constructed by the Soviets, not by the people (see Chapter 2, section 2 for further discussion).

In addition to the political problems of the Soviet censuses, there are issues which are common to any census. In addition to the difficulities involved in the identification of a native language (*rodnoi iazyk*) is the evaluation of Russian language proficiency. The lack of language proficiency exams and linguistic questionnaires meant that it was left to the respondent to determine his or her own level of proficiency. Thus as with other censuses, information about Russian-language knowledge, for example, may not accurately report the total number of "fluent" speakers of Russian as a second-language, but rather the number of respondents who wish to identify themselves as fluent in Russian. No proficiency tests were administered for Russian or for any other language; there were few independent, outside measures. That said, a few surveys were conducted to assess the language shift and the impact of bilingualism in language usage. The results of two such surveys for Karelia, for example, were published in the early 1970's; see Chapter 3, section 1.3 for an analysis. Similarly, non-Russian respondents may choose, for whatever reasons, to identify their heritage language as their first tongue, or may choose not to. The same is true for nationality, which is determined by the respondent. In particular in the case of mixed marriages, one may opt to identify oneself as belonging to one or another nationality; "mixed" was not a choice.[15] In sum, the census may not always report information on actual language use or on ethnicity, but rather reflect political and/or social trends. Yet with this note of caution, the censuses are considered to be broadly representative of the ethno-linguistic reality of the Soviet Union for any given time period. This discussion of the interpretation of census data is expanded in Chapter 2, section 2 with an analysis of the role of the census not only in determining the numbers of nationalities, but in defining the categories themselves.

4.2 Names, Ethnonyms, and Spelling

The naming of languages and ethnic groups in the Soviet Union was highly politicized. In a work like the present one, the spelling of language names is further complicated because most of the languages of the former USSR did not use the Latin alphabet, and so the local spelling cannot be simply adopted wholesale into

[15] In my own field experiences in Siberia I have come across families where the males identify themselves in their passports as belonging to one ethnic group (e.g. Yakut) and the females as belonging to another (e.g. Evenki). In the most ludicrous example, a pair of male-female twins identified themselves as belonging to different ethnic groups, explaining this as simply following the tradition of their family.

English. Furthermore, these names are often best-known to Soviet specialists by their Russified, not their native, forms. For language names, wherever possible I follow the spelling (and the names) used by the fourteenth edition of the *Ethnologue* (Grimes 2000). One exception to this is *Chukchi* (instead of *Chukot*). The general aim here is to provide a consistent standard which will make the language names accessible to the larger scholarly community; spelling alternates are listed in the language name index.

There are a number of key issues in language names that extend beyond orthography. First, before the formation of the Soviet state, many of the minority languages did not have names per se. Some peoples had only loosely identified themselves with an ethnic group, and instead had clan or tribe names, or took names associated with some geographic feature of their homeland. An integral part of Soviet nationality policy was the creation of ethnic groups (Chapter 2, sections 2–3); in the course of this process, the State supplied these groups with a name. Second, most of these names have a Russified form (as opposed to the native term), and it is this Russified form which is used in official Soviet publications. Where languages are known in the West primarily through Soviet linguistics, the more Russified version of the name may be more familiar, but is not the name which a given group uses for itself. In some cases, entirely different names are used by different groups of people, to refer to one and the same group, at different periods in time. An example is provided by the *Gilyak* or *Nivkh,* an indigenous group in Siberia. In current Russian and some Western publications, they are referred to as the Nivkh. although the *Ethnologue* uses the term Gilyak, which was more common in tsarist Russia and the early Soviet period. Third, in some cases the spelling of a language name changed over time, usually in conjunction with political events. That is to say that the spelling of a language name is in and of itself a political statement, as in the case of Moldovan versus Moldavian (Chapter 3, section 4). By 1991, four of the (former) Union Republics had changed their names: Belorussia was changed to Belorus (and subsequently to Belarus), Kirghizia to Kyrgyzia (and then to Kyrgyzstan), Turkmenia to Turkmenistan, and Moldavia to Moldova. In referring to these geo-political regions, the Soviet name is used to underscore the historical reality of these entities. On one level, this results in an inconsistency in names in the present work, due to a tension at times between the names of languages/ethnicities and the political territories they inhabited. For example, the Belarusans are said to speak the Belarusan language, but lived in what was the Belorussian SSR. Furthermore, the spelling of these names became a political issue in the USSR.16 On another level, this accurately reflects the often schizoid nature of the naming system in place during the Soviet era, and the use of the Soviet name for any Union Republic emphasizes that it was a political entity of the Soviet era. The tension between how ethnic groups viewed themselves, and how they were viewed by the State, is central to the study of language policy in the USSR.

While the naming problem for minority groups is one common to ethnographic fieldwork as a whole, it causes particular problems in understanding the languages

[16] In fact, the spelling of borrowings from Russian has been a political issue at least since the 1940's; see Chapter 2, section 4.3.

and peoples of the former Soviet Union. Prior to the Revolution, in many cases members of a group used one term to refer to themselves, and outsiders to the group used another. The *Khanty,* for example, were generally referred to by outsiders as *Ostyak,* although their native ethnonym is some phonetic variant of *Khanty,*with slightly different variants in Northern, Southern, and Eastern Khanty. The ethnonym *Enets* was introduced in the 1930's on analogy with *Nenets*; in tsarist Russia they were known as the Yenisei Samoyeds (Tereshchenko 1993:343). The Enets are divided into two groups, the forest Enets are called *bai* and the tundra Enets are called *madu* (*maddu*) or *somatu.* The term *madu* (*maddu*) is etymologically related to Nenets *mandu,* which is what the Nenets call the Enets. (*Nenets* is a native ethnonym, but they were previously called *Yurak.*) There are a number of theories as to the etymology of *somatu,* including one version which relates it to the Nganasan *s mu* 'hat'. The Enets term *somatu* has in turn been invoked as the source of the family name *Samoyedic.* Another example is provided by the Saami, who were known in Russian as *lopar* and as Lapp or Lappi outside of the USSR. More recently, Lapp has taken on pejorative connotation and is widely replaced with Saami (Sami, Saame). The native ethnoym is ***samlincỳ*** or ***sapmelasỳ*** (Kert 1993:134). The picture becomes more confusing with names which are even more similar, especially when translated into a non-native language. *Orok* and *Oroch* are two distinct Tungus languages, but each have alternate spellings (*Oroc* and *Orochi,* respectively), and the Orok were historically called *Ulta* (Ujlta, Ul'ta).

Yet still this is only part of the picture. Prior to the Revolution, many members of what would be defined as nationalities in Soviet times did not see themselves as belonging to a larger ethnic group. Rather, individuals saw themselves as clan members, or members of a group which inhabited a certain region. This is seen in part in the division of the Enets into the forest and tundra groups. Very commonly, a group would derive its ethnonym from the river on which they were settled, or some other place name. For example, judging by historical documents, the Oroch, as well as the Nanai and the Ul'ch, at one time all called themselves *nan'i* 'local people'. Alternate names for the Udihe include not only the term *orochoni, orochi* (from the Tungus word *oron* 'reindeer') but also *namokan* or *lamka* (from *namu* ~ *lamu* 'sea'), or *kjakala, kjakara* (derived from an ancient Udihe clan name), as well as *taz* (from Chinese *tadzy* 'foreigner', 'barbarian') (Sunik 1997:236–237).

4.3 Conclusion

The complicated nature of the Soviet political situation, which shifted over the course of time, and the kind of information available to us about it, results in an often contradictory view of what Soviet language policy was and how it was implemented. An overview of this language policy as it developed over the course of the Soviet era is presented in Chapter 2. The highly centralized nature of the Soviet state meant that language policy was at least officially intended to be executed evenly throughout the country. Nonetheless, the intricacies of regional and more local-level politics, coupled with the complexity of the ethno-linguistic map of the USSR, meant that there were, in fact, a significant number of differences for

different ethnic groups, and in different Republics. These are analyzed in separate regional chapters, with the result that there is some overlap among the chapters. The chapters differ in providing details of each geographic and ethnolinguistic region; the differences in these had a direct effect on how Soviet policy was implemented in each region, and on the end results as well. For example, all but a few languages in the Soviet Union were required to use the Cyrillic alphabet by the end of the 1930's. The impact that this had varies, depending upon the literary history of a language, the number of speakers, the amount and kinds of language contact, knowledge of Russian or other Slavic languages, and so on. These variables are discussed with relation to each Union Republic and the languages spoken there. The ultimate test of any language policy is the effect that it has. This is discussed in Chapter 8 in depth.

CHAPTER 2

AN OVERVIEW OF SOVIET LANGUAGE POLICY

1. THE EARLY SOVIET YEARS

At the beginning of the Soviet period in 1917, only 28.4 percent of the total population aged 9-49 was literate; illiteracy rates were nearly 100 percent in some regions. Given the overall goals of the new government to modernize the country and its industry, one of the first crucial steps in that process was raising the literacy of its citizenry. This could be accomplished only through a concerted education effort, yet the newly formed Bolshevik government faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles. The vast numbers of different languages and peoples within its borders, and their very different cultures and lifestyles, meant that the government could not simply send out cadres of teachers to instruct the masses. First, a number of measures had to be undertaken. Decisions needed to be made as to which languages were to be languages of instruction, which languages were to be developed, how to train teachers, and so on.

The early language initiatives were based on Lenin's own policy with regard to the many ethnic groups (or "nationalities"), a policy which had been formulated several years prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. Lenin believed, or at least claimed to believe, that the nationalities should be treated with absolute equality. In a private letter dated 1914, he outlined a plan for the equality of nations and the rights of national minorities; these were to include "freedom and equality of language." This freedom encompassed language choice in the schools and other public institutions. Lenin emphasized the legal right of all citizens to seek restitution for any violation of their equality of rights (cited in Wolfe 1964: 585). He is quite explicit on this point in his "Critical Remarks on the National Question" (Lenin 1948/1913) where, although he asserts that nationalism cannot be reconciled with Marxism, Lenin does advocate the right of the Soviet Union's nationalities to self-determinism. The issue of the nationalities is repeatedly raised in Lenin's writing as one which the Communist government need to address with utmost care.

At the same time Lenin's ultimate goal was the unification of all peoples in a single Communist state, a unification based on the assimilation, not the diversity, of the ethnic groups. This general principle lay at the heart of much of the development of the nationalities. Stalin's 1913 essay, *Marxism and the National Question,* written in support of Lenin's position, is quite clear on this point. Stalin argues for the "merging of the backward nations and nationalities" of the Caucasus "within the general stream of superior" culture (Stalin 1951/2:351). Lenin's nationalities policy would seem to directly contradict that goal. But it seems that Lenin saw this as only an intermediary stage that was a necessary prerequisite to reaching the higher, Communist stage of development. (This kind of thinking is echoed in Stalin's essay on the nationalities; Chapter 2, section 3.1.) For Lenin, nationalism was useful when it could be used to advance the proletarian cause. The active promotion of the

nationalities was also, in theory at least, a safeguard against what Lenin dubbed "Russian chauvinism." This principle of parity was guaranteed by law, as formulated in Article 23 of the 1936 Constitution, which proclaimed "equality of rights of citizens of the USSR, irrespective of their nationality or race." This constitution was in effect for just over forty years, until it was surpassed by the 1977 Constitution.

Whether Lenin was voicing his actual political beliefs or manipulating popular opinion has been questioned by political analysts, and the real intent of his nationality policy has been the subject of much debate. In certain regions, such as Ukraine and Transcaucasia, support for the Bolshevik Revolution almost certainly depended on the Bolsheviks' promise of self-determination. As of 1921, some 46 percent of the population was non-Russian; the non-Russian intellectuals tended to be nationalists politically and were strong supporters of self-determination.[17] Regardless of the underlying political motivation, *The Declaration of Rights of the People of Russia* (November 2, 1917) proclaimed a policy of equality of all people of Russia and proclaimed the right of the people to self-determination. This policy was based on four principles which are clearly stated in the *Declaration*:

1. The equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.
2. The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination, even to the point of separation and the formation of an independent state.
3. The abolition of any and all national and national-religious privileges and disabilities.
4. The free development of national minorities and ethnic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.[18]

Regardless of whether Leninist language policies were the result of an adherence to Communist principles or were based solely on pragmatic considerations, the basic tenets of Lenin's language policies are unequivocally stated: Lenin believed that no single language should be given the status of a *state* language; rather, he promoted national equality and self-determinism. All Soviet citizens were guaranteed education in their native tongue. This principle of equality, that each ethnic group had the right to use its own heritage language, became a founding principle of the early Soviet years. Article 121 of the Constitution of 1936 guaranteed Soviet citizens the right to instruction in their own mother tongue.

The complex ethnolinguistic issues which faced the young Bolshevik government provided the impetus for many of their central policies. Communicating the newly established government's political agenda was necessarily a priority, yet this communication was at best flawed, and frequently simply impossible. These communication problems stemmed from a number of factors. The political leaders had been accustomed to communicating with a relatively small and educated group of like-minded Bolsheviks and Bolshevik sympathizers; they were primarily an

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[17] See Liber (1992:26) and Hirsch (1997:254) for further discussion.

[18] The full English translation of this document can be found in Wade (1991:24-6). Note that the *Declaration* makes reference to the peoples of "Russia" as it was written before the formation of the USSR.

urban elite, and a relatively high percentage of the Jewish population was involved in the early years of the Bolshevik party. (This is of particular relevance here because the Jewish population was almost exclusively urban and had the highest literacy rate of any single population in the USSR at the time of the Revolution, placing them in a unique position among the various ethnic groups.) The inability of the Bolsheviks to communicate the political ideals and goals of the Communist Party played a key role in determining the emphasis placed on establishing widespread literacy, a policy decision which at first may seem odd for a country which has just come out of a period of civil war.

At the same time, the linguistic rift between educated urban Russian and uneducated rural Russian was great. Standard literary Russian, the only linguistic variant respected by the educated population, which included the former aristocratic and middle classes, was minimally comprehensible to uneducated speakers of some Russian dialects. The distinctions between the educated few and the non-educated many extended beyond fundamental linguistic differences: the gaps in the lexicon of the average Russian, mirrored by gaps in political and philosophical worldviews, were such that even fundamental terms like *communism* and *bourgeois* were not just foreign words, but were completely foreign—and incomprehensible—concepts. The very proletariat which the Bolsheviks were trying to reach could not understand their political platform.

In addition, the newly formed country was populated by vast numbers of speakers of languages other than Russian, who—except in a few cases—had even lower educational levels than the Russians. Where they were concerned, the gulf between the language of the Russian Communists and their own speech was wider still. The Party leadership saw the necessity of providing its people with an education at the most basic level, in order to be able to further educate them as full-fledged Soviet citizens. Basic literacy was seen as a necessary prerequisite to political literacy. Faced with a multitude of languages and ethnicities, many Bolsheviks favored policies which would promote the singularizing use of the Russian language and nation to create a unified proletarian state. Despite the 1917 *Declaration of Rights of the People of Russia,* there was a general reluctance to surrender any control of government, education, or economics to the nationalities. Moreover, the Soviets used the guise of overtly inclusive language policies (which stood in direct contrast to the exclusive tsarist policies) to Russify native languages. Although the government officially supported the use of native languages in education, publications, and the media, it did much to influence them to acquire a vast number of Russian lexical items, and collocational and grammatical patterns, as well as to directly impose Russian orthography and spelling. Thus while the development of the native languages was encouraged, it was encouraged only in a certain, Soviet way.

As soon as the Bolsheviks came to power, they established a new set of administrative bodies to implement their policies. These organizations, called *People's Commissariats,* were established on October 27, 1917 at the Second Congress of Soviets (and much later reformulated as Ministries, on March 15, 1946). Two are of particular relevance with regard to Lenin's nationality policies. Moreover, because they were charged with implementing those policies, the make-

up and views of these committees were arguably more important, in the final analysis, than Lenin's official policies. The People's Commissariat for Enlightenment, more commonly called *Narkompros* (from Russian *Narodnyi komissariat po prosveshcheniiu RSFSR*), was charged with oversight of education and the arts. The People's Comissariat of the Nationalities, or *Narkomnats* (from Russian *Narodnyi komissariat po delam natsional'nostei*) was charged with the oversight of nationality and minority issues. The membership of Narkomnats included some left-wing nationalists who had allied themselves with the Bolsheviks in the hopes of establishing some sort of autonomy for their regions. Narkomnats was organized into separate subcommittees for each nationality, and each of these had a special section charged with overhauling the native school system, and specifically with creating programs for native-language instruction in the schools. There is obvious overlap between the responsibilities of these two committees, in particular where the education of minorities is concerned. Beginning in early 1919, Narkompros had ousted Narkomnats and been placed in charge of creating a new education system for the non-Russian peoples. The failure of Narkomnats to secure this position in part resulted from the committee's own lack of organization, and in part from political tensions created by the more ardent nationalists in the group. In particular the Muslim members from Tatarstan had promoted a nationalist self-autonomy in Central Asia. The ascendancy of Narkompros was a critical event in the development of Soviet language policy. It did not, however, represent an ideal outcome for the ethnic minorities; it was staffed by reactionary Russian chauvinists who promoted domination through the Russian language. Their education programs were designed to "artificially fuse children of different nationalities" by means of the Russian language (Smith 1998:44–5). The Council of National Minorities was created as subgroup within Narkompros in 1919, specifically intended to promote the interests of the nationalities and to prevent Russian chauvinism. It was not granted any real authority and received little funding, and so proved to be virtually ineffective.

2. CONSTRUCTING NATIONALITIES

A fundamental principle underlying the creation of the newly formed Soviet State was the practice of classifying its citizens according to their nationality. Prior to the Soviet period, many of the different peoples saw themselves more in terms of language and religious identities than of ethnic groups, and so this sense of nationality first needed to be constructed, both at an official level and in terms of the population's consciousness. Suny (1993) argues that viewing not only Soviet nationalism, but also Soviet nationalities, as constructs is useful in providing the advantage of comparison with other constructed social categories, especially class. Such constructs rest on cultural and political assumptions and goals which, in the case of the emerging Soviet nation, played critical roles in its development. Party leaders recognized the pressing importance of a new (post-tsarist) definition of nationalities. Accordingly, they began to work on constructing these specifically Soviet nationalities began on the same day as the legal formation of the USSR.

Before the first All-Union Census of 1926, censuses conducted by the tsarist regime had classified people according to religion and language. The change in classification, to one based on nationality, was a deliberate attempt to reinvent the Russian empire as a multinational state. By 1923 serious efforts had been made to recruit the needed ethnographers, linguists and statisticians to work on this effort; then in 1924, when the existence of the Union itself was officially ratified, the task of defining and identifying nationalities began in earnest. It required the combined efforts of teams of specialists first to define *nationality,* and then to determine which groups would fit where. In the 1920's, this work involved deciding which "nationalities" would be included in the census, and which would be consolidated with similar groups, and not provided a separate entry and, thereby, no separate identity. The task was not trivial. Prior to this time, ethnographers had relied on a multi-faceted set of characteristics to distinguish different groups of people, and they had included such variables as race, religion, language, culture, daily life, and occupation in their classification. In part, the relevance of these traits varied from region to region, and among differing groups of peoples. Ethnographers working in European Russian argued, not surprisingly, that language was the key identifying characteristic, whereas ethnographers working in Central Asia, where linguistic lines are not always clearly drawn, had placed more importance on physical characteristics. In contrast, the Central Asian people themselves saw religion as the key identifying characteristic.

By 1927, a total of 172 different official nationalities were recorded; the Soviet of Nationalities[19] then asked officials and specialists to recalculate the inventory according to what were to be considered "major" nationalities. This is not a trivial matter, as it represents a fundamental policy difference between the ethnographers and the State. The former had attempted to identify as many nationalities as possible, and so compiled inventories which maximally differentiated the groups. In direct contrast, government officials wanted a reduced number of total nationalities, and so their strategy was to incorporate numerically smaller groups into larger groups. Notes to the census provide an original total of 184 nationalities, suggesting that an additional twelve smaller nationalities had been removed from the 1927 inventory. This policy was repeatedly invoked throughout the history of the Soviet Union and, in the years following World War II, was justified by official Stalinist ideology, which maintained that the natural development of nationalities in the Soviet state meant that they would become unified in one larger, Soviet nationality.

Beyond the difficulties of defining the concept of nationality with regard to the emerging Soviet state, there were questions about what term should be used in the census itself, with fundamental disagreement whether it should be called (in Russian) *natsional'nost'* or *narodnost'*. The word *natsional'nost'* had been used in both the city census of 1920 and the partial census of 1923; it was defined as "a population united in a nationally self-conscious community" (Hirsch 1997:260). The debate over terminology centered, in part, around differing understandings of these

[19] The Soviet of Nationalities (*Sovet natsional'nostei*) was one of the two houses of the Supreme Soviet as established by the 1924 Soviet Constitution, and was charged with overseeing the affairs of the nationalities.

two words. For some ethnographers, they were more or less synonymous. For others, as part of an emerging Soviet ideology, they suggested differences in class evolution, with *natsional'nost'* implying some conscious understanding of one's cultural and historical development, whereas the term *narodnost'* did not. Thus for some, *natsional'nost'* implied a more highly evolved group of people. This had serious political ramifications, such that representatives from Ukraine emphasized that Ukrainians were a *natsional'nost'* and should officially be registered accordingly. Similarly, Georgians lobbied to be considered a *natsional'nost',* arguing that they were already a "developed nation." The 1926 Census used the word *narodnost',* with special instructions for Ukrainians, to specify *natsional'nost'* (*narodnost'*) to underline that the two terms were used synonymously. Census takers in Transcaucasia were told to state "*narodnost'*—that is, *plemia* (tribe), *narodnost', natsional'nost'*" and to record responses under the heading *narodnost'* (Hirsch 1997:261). The resulting confusion only helped fuel the debate over the so-called nationalities question and further obfuscated governmental policies.

3. THE NATIONALITIES QUESTION

Language policy in the USSR was intimately tied to Soviet theories of nationalities and nation-building and cannot be understood independently of them. Soviet nationality policy rests on the notion of the initial development of national-territorial units which are then subsequently combined into a greater nation. There are three Russian terms used in describing this process: *natsional'nost', natsiia* and *narodnost'*. All are often translated as 'nationality' in English. The differences between them are important in understanding the nationalities policy but are far from easy to describe, in part because they way they are used by Soviet officials changed over the first few decades of the USSR, and in part because they were not always consistently used at any given time. In the 1930's, the Soviet government developed its theory of nationalities to include a class component with an explicit hierarchical organization. These concepts are discussed in the "Question and Answer" section of the 1934 issue of the journal of the Soviet of Nationalities, *Revoliutsiia i natsional'nosti* (*Revolution and Nationalities*). Each term is carefully reviewed within the format of answers to questions from purported readers. The terminological confusion is directly addressed by the anonymous author ("A. B.") of the article, who states that "Marxist terminology in the sphere of the nationalities question is, unfortunately, the least scientifically developed. This sometimes leads to various authors using similar terms differently, or to an idiosyncratic use of these terms" (p. 91). The mere publication of such an article is testimony to the confusion invoked by the Soviet nationalities policy and the plethora of terminology associated with it. The article explains that the term *natsiia,* which refers to the concept of a group of people linked to a governmental nation, with a designated territory and other "state attributes... each *natsiia* has its own particulars, such as language, economy, culture and other specific characteristics" (p. 92), an interpretation based directly on Stalin's definition of a *nation* (section 3.2). Although etymologically related to *natsiia* (*nation*), the word *natsional'nost'* (*nationality*) differs in that while

every *nation* is also a *nationality,* not every *nationality* is a *nation.* In addition, while every *nation* and every *nationality* could also be considered a *narodnost'* (*ethnic group*), not every *ethnic group* is a *nationality* or *nation,* in particular due to small population size, or to what is called "underdevelopment." The article further explains that the term *narodnost'* derives etymologically from the Russian word *narod* 'folk, ethnic group'; *narod* is used to describe the level of clan and tribal groups or, in Soviet theories of human development, a more primitive level of social organization. The term *narodnost'* is used by the Soviets to refer to an ethnic group, typically with a population of less than 300,000, that is *not an economic community.* A progressive "advancement" is integral to the theory: a group develops from a *narodnost'* to a *natsiia* to a *natsional'nost'*. Thus in official discourse, a nationality (*natsional'nost'*) was a developed group of people, while an ethnic group (*narodnost'*) was still developing.

Soviet officials claimed to delineate these groups on strict scientific principles, but the criteria (beyond simple census counts) were more subjective than scientific. The simple fact that the number of ethnic groups (or *natsional'nosti*) varied from census to census (Chapter 1, section 3) suggests in and of itself that the criteria were far from unambiguous. Indeed, official usage of the terminology was itself in a state of flux. By the time of the 1937 census, the term *natsional'nost'* was used for nationality, not *narodnost',* as had been the case in the 1926 census. In 1936 Stalin stated that the USSR was made up of "approximately 60 nations, nationalities, and ethnic groups" (cited in Zhiromskaia 1990:88), but the 1937 census included a significantly longer list of nationalities. By the 1939 census, the official definition of the term nationality (*natsional'nost'*) was explicit on the point that the official nationalities were groups which had already gone through more primitive, backward stages of development; an official nationality had its own territory, language, culture and economy (Starovskii, cited in Hirsch 1997:276).

3.1 National in Form, Socialist in Content

With this Soviet view of the development of nations as background, Lenin's formulation of policy toward the nationalities can be considered in a new light. Given that Lenin viewed the nationalities as being on the path toward the development of a Soviet state, for Lenin the language used to deliver the message of the Communist party was inconsequential, compared to the message itself. The national language was the form used to convey the message, but the content derived from the State. Lenin's attitude toward the national languages can be interpreted as his recognition of the fact that for the people he was attempting to convert, form was far from trivial. Rather, form—in the shape of language—was a powerful political tool which could make the content more acceptable. The promotion of national languages and ethnic groups could serve as reassurance that the Bolshevik party represented a new order, and not just a repackaging of domination by a single group. This thinking was articulated in the slogan "Nationalist in form, socialist in content," which comes first in the *Communist Manifesto*: "Though not in substance, yet in form, the struggle of the proletariat with the bourgeoisie is at first a national

struggle." This was subsequently formulated by Stalin in 1925 in his remarks *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*:

> Proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and methods of expression among the various peoples that have been drawn into the work of socialist construction, depending on differences of language, customs, and so forth. Proletarian in content and national in form—such is the universal human culture toward which socialism is marching. Proletarian culture does not cancel national culture, but lends it content. National culture, on the other hand, does not cancel proletarian culture, but lends it form. Stalin (1936:209)

Explicit in this statement is the message that national culture will be augmented and enriched by "proletarian" culture, and that national cultures would not advance without this "content." This continued to be a fundamental principle in the Soviet Union for the duration of its existence. Leonid Brezhnev championed its success in a speech to a combined session of the Central Committee and the Supreme Soviet in 1972, asserting that Soviet "culture is socialist in content and in the main tendency of its development, diverse in its national forms and internationalist in its spirit and character." He argues that "the farther we advance along the path of the construction of communism, the more diversified and stronger the economic, cultural and other ties linking all the peoples of the USSR will become, and the stronger and deeper the noble feeling of a preat commuity, a feeling that we call the national pride of Soviet man, will be" (1972:19).

This development of nationalities was to be accomplished by means of what was termed the "convergence and fusion of peoples" (*sblizhenie i sliianie narodov*). Lenin maintained that his policy of equality would diffuse the hostile feelings and mistrust between ethnic groups who would then naturally coalesce or converge. From this view, the nationalities policy was a pragmatic move, an explicit attempt to appease the many minority groups that were striving for separation from, not incorporation into, the Soviet state. Theoretically, this convergence would proceed until it reached a point of complete "fusion," at which time a single (i.e. Soviet) identity would be created. For political, and perhaps also theoretical, reasons, this fusion was distinguished from assimilation, as the latter would be understood as the absorption of the nationalities by some larger dominant group or, in this case, Russians. The basic tenet of this idea is that a completely new identity will be created by the fusion process, forging a new group, the *Sovetskii narod* ('Soviet people'), a supergroup which would represent the unification of the many different nationalities. This concept was further developed and promoted under Brezhnev (Chapter 2, section 7).

3.2 Stalin and the Nation State

Shifts in the upper echelons of the government were already to be seen in the early 1920's. In 1922 Stalin was appointed general secretary, a new position which was

created to oversee and coordinate Party affairs. When Lenin passed away in January 1924, Stalin was well-positioned to succeed him. He managed to gain complete control of the Party, the military, and the secret police by the end of 1927, and ruled the country until his own death on March 5, 1953. In order to understand Stalin's overall policy with regard to the development (or eradication) of the national languages, it is important to understand his view of the "nation," which he outlines in his now famous essay, *The National Question and Leninism,* written March 18, 1929 (Stalin 1950). This essay is formulated as a reply to "Comrades Meshkov, Kovalchuk, and others," purportedly in response to letters he received on this question. Stalin begins with the Marxist definition of a nation:

> A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of people, based upon the common possession of four principal attributes, namely: a common language, a common territory, a common economic life, and a common psychological make-up manifesting itself in common specific features of national culture. (Stalin 1950:8)

He continues to state explicitly (again arguing with the purported letter writers) that a nation need not have its own, separate national state, that such a concept is profoundly mistaken. It is, of course, the issue of the relationship between language, nation, and nation state which is of interest here.

Stalin expands his discussion to posit three stages in the development of a nation state. In the first stage, formerly oppressed nations and national languages will flourish with the abolition of that oppression. In the second stage, when the proletariat rules the world, a common language will begin to take shape, a common language which Stalin envisions as an international lingua franca for economic, political and cultural cooperation. This common international language will exist together with the individual languages. Initially, in this second stage, there will be a number of zonal economic centers for separate groups of nations, which each have their own separate common language. It is only later, in the third stage, that these individual common languages will be united into a single language. This third stage marks the victory of the world dictatorship of the proletariat, when "national differences will die away and make room for a world language, common to all nations" (1950:28-29). The essay concludes with a challenge to create an extensive network of schools with native tongue instruction, staffed by teachers fluent in the native languages, to develop the press, theater, and other cultural institutions in the native languages.

Stalin's definition of a nation—that of a specifically stable community of people with a common territory, language, economic life and "psychological make-up"—became the definitive notion of a nation for decades in the USSR and was a fundamental principle underlying a vast range of policy decisions. This definition functioned as the critical set of diagnostics in assessing which people could constitute a "nation" and which could not. This in turn was fundamental in determining the allocation of certain State resources, as well as determining which languages—by virtue of being "nation" languages—were candidates for legal rights and privileges, including the use in education and administrative affairs.

3.3 *Nativization*

The declared equality of all languages was part of a larger policy of *korenizaciia* 'nativization' (or, literally, 'rooting') which was intended to educate the indigenous peoples and move them into the workforce, especially into the Soviet administrative workforce. It called for full recognition of the national languages on a par with Russian, and must certainly be seen as an attempt to reconcile many of these same nationalities with Soviet rule. But it was more than just a political strategy. The nativization policy was a clear attempt to create, with the utmost speed, a larger and better educated labor force so as to rapidly industrialize the country. The policy officially began in June 1923 when Stalin presented it to the Fourth Conference of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party:

> A Communist in the border regions must remember that he is a Communist and therefore, acting in conformity with the local conditions, must make concessions to those local national elements who are willing and able to work loyally within the framework of the Soviet system. This does not preclude, but, on the contrary, presupposes a systematic ideological struggle for the principles of Marxism and for genuine internationalism, and against the deviation toward nationalism. Only in this way will it be possible to eliminate local nationalism and win the broad strata of the local population to the side of the Soviet regime. (Stalin 1953, 5:300)

This program met with many obstacles, not the least of which were the widespread illiteracy and low educational levels. The rate of *korenizaciia* varied from region to region, with the incorporation of native Georgians and Armenians progressing relatively smoothly, due most certainly to their high levels of education. Both Central Asia and Siberia provide prime examples of some of the difficulties. In the 1920's, the indigenous population was largely illiterate and uneducated, and without education, the native peoples could not be brought into the workforce. Only the former bourgeoisie in Central Asia were educated, and they were suspect because of their class background. Education itself was very difficult: in many cases, there was a dearth of both pedagogical materials and teachers trained in the native language, and in many instances there were no literary forms in the native language to begin with. The lack of trained native teachers and materials meant that many classes were conducted in Russian, which was incomprehensible to the majority of these students. Despite even serious efforts to educate native Uzbeks (in 1930–31 half of the places in Central Asia State University were reserved for native students), students were under-prepared and ill-equipped for higher-level education. Similarly, an education program for indigenous Siberian groups targeted promising individuals and sent them to Leningrad to receive higher education. For the majority this was their first encounter with a Western-style city. The attrition rate in such programs was very high.

In the late 1920's, Soviet nationality policies were changed, and Russian language and culture were officially promoted as the best means to a Soviet society. The nativization policy was no longer valued as an absolute goal in and of itself, and

it was greatly diminished, to be eventually phased out entirely. When Stalin was consolidating his power in the early 1930's, policy underwent a significant shift away from a focus on national autonomy toward a highly centralized government and economy. Although the nativization policy was not officially revoked, the change in policy was unequivocally signaled in Stalin's 1934 address to the XVII Party Congress, in which he declared that the greatest danger comes not from Russian chauvinism, which Lenin had claimed to be a larger threat than small-nation nationalism. Rather, he asserted that the greater danger comes from nationalism which one has forgotten to fight (Stalin 1946–1951, 13:361–2.)

Despite the shifts and changes in policy over the course of history of the Soviet Union, certain consistent themes can be identified. First is the link, in the Soviet view, of language and ethnicity. The Soviets viewed language to be the main criterion for "nationality;" linguistic identification was equated with ethnic identification. To have an officially recognized language meant recognition as a distinct ethnic group, which entailed the right to ethnic institutions of one's own. The policy is further complicated by the dogma that each official language must, by definition, have a codified written form. This led to the creation of, literally, dozens of literary languages where there had been none, but in many cases these remained artificial constructs, artificial in the sense that they never became a living part of the "literate" culture. Instead, they were used as conduits for translation of Soviet/Russian political information, and literary translations from Russian and other languages.

4. THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN

The literacy campaign itself was a fundamental step in the larger nativization process, and was the driving force behind early educational and language policy. It became widely known as *Likbez,* from *Likvidatsiia bezgramatnosti* 'liquidation of illiteracy.' In order for it to succeed, the majority of languages first needed linguistic description and codification, and the creation of a written form. Some regions in the new Soviet state had long-standing literary traditions, as did the Georgian and Armenian languages in the Caucasus and the Turkic languages in Central Asia. At the same time, the majority of the languages of the newly formed empire lacked written forms. It is estimated that at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution only thirteen languages on Russian territory had a literary norm, and only nineteen had any kind of written form at all. The creation of literary languages was a first priority; this entailed basic linguistic fieldwork and description, and the creation of writing systems and literary forms for many of the indigenous languages, in particular the Siberian languages. Widespread dialect variation contributed to the difficulties of establishing a literary norm. Furthermore, there was a lack of clear linguistic boundaries, and the native peoples often did not identify themselves with one or another ethno-linguistic group. Instead, identities were formed more along religious or geographic lines.

By the mid-1920's, the Party formulated a system for ranking the various nationalities, referred to as the ABCD hierarchy:

ABCD Hierarchy[20]

A. Small nationalities without scripts, which are generally bilingual, live in compact groups surrounded by larger nationalities, and are territorially 'scattered', will conduct all education and create all literature in the 'language of the federation'.

B. Small and medium-sized monolingual nationalities without scripts, which live as compact masses, are agricultural and not united territorially, will create primary schools, educational literature and mass political propaganda in the native language. Secondary schools, middle professional education and higher education will be conducted in the 'language of the federation'.

C. Medium or large-sized monolingual nationalities, using a traditional script and having a proletariat, intelligentsia and bourgeoisie, which live in compact groups or are territorially united, will create primary, secondary and middle professional education, together with political-educational literature and other scholarly and educational literature, in the native language. The 'language of the federation' will be introduced no later than the third grade and is to continue into higher education.

D. Economically and culturally developed nationalities that have traditional scripts and are territorially united, will create all education from primary schools to universities, and all literature (including technical texts), in the native language. The 'language of the federation' will be introduced no later than the third grade.

As outlined here, the ABCD Hierarchy explicitly recognized the differing socio-linguistic circumstances of the various national languages, and provided a very ambitious plan for creating literacy in each of them. It distinguished between the languages according to three basic criteria: speaker population size (small, medium or large); existence or lack of an established orthography; and the degree to which the speakers were or were not united territorially. The focus on the existence of a traditional script (as opposed to some level of literacy), is itself interesting, in that the overwhelming majority of "traditional" scripts were abandoned early in the literacy campaign, to be replaced by Latin-based orthographic systems. Crucially, the ABCD Hierarchy provided a detailed plan for implementing instruction based in the native language, with specific attention to grade levels and school types. As the discussion of individual languages and geographic regions shows, this idealized scheme was often not realized.

Putting aside the issue of the development of the native languages, the rapid increase in literacy is one of the primary achievements of the early Soviet years. Literacy jumped from an overall average of only 24 percent for Tsarist Russian (1897) to a remarkable 81.2 percent for the USSR in 1939, a gain achieved in just over forty years. The gains in the countryside were even more impressive, with a dramatic leap from 19.6 percent in 1897 to 76.7 percent in 1939. Although female literacy lagged behind male, in urban centers it surpassed the national average. These figures are summarized in Table 5.

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[20] I. Davydov's "project resolution," TsGA RSFSR f.296 o. 1 d.169; paraphrased and cited in Smith (1998: 51).

Even before the end of the Soviet era, literacy rates were nearly 100 percent, placing the country on a par with other industrialized European nations. Thus despite the turmoil and contradictions, literacy results were rapidly achieved. By 1979, the official literacy rate was 99.7 percent. Publication rates also soared: by 1924 textbooks were printed in 25 languages, and by 1934 they were printed in 104 different languages. By 1938, there were 22 languages of instruction in Uzbekistan, 17 in Ukraine, and 20 in Daghestan, to name just a few. Yet as time went on, these gains were diminished. In the 1940's, the trend toward ever-increasing governmental centralization entailed an increasing importance in the use of Russian in all spheres of life. Work on the development of the so-called *young* Soviet languages continued, but at a much slower pace. Furthermore, the heavy economic and social burdens of World War II and post-war reconstruction meant very limited resources for the development of minority languages.

Table 5. Literacy Rates: 1897, 1926, 1939
Percentage for ages 9 and above

	male	*female*	*total*
Total population			
February 1, 1897	35.8	12.4	24.0
December 17, 1926	66.5	37.1	51.1
January 17, 1939	90.8	72.5	81.2
Urban population			
February 1, 1897	63.3	39.3	52.3
December 17, 1926	85.3	67.6	76.3
January 17, 1939	95.7	83.9	89.5
Rural population			
February 1, 1897	31.1	8.6	19.6
December 17, 1926	61.9	30.0	42.5
January 17, 1939	88.1	66.5	76.7

Source: Poliakov (1992:39)

4.1 Standardization

Soviet language planners aimed to develop a single, codified and standardized norm for each developing literary language. This may appear to be a simple matter, but in reality the complexities of this strategy are enormous. First, this codified norm was to be based on one dialect, or on a composite of features from a number of dialects. But many languages in the USSR had such strong dialect differences that they were not mutually intelligible. It was often difficult to find a single dialect that could be understood by all speakers. In extreme cases, this meant that some speakers were required to learn what was essentially a foreign language for them.

Soviet officials claimed rapid successes in creating written languages and implementing their literacy plans. In 1932, chair of the Technographic commission of the All-Union Central Committee of the New Alphabet[21] N. F. Iakovlev wrote that of the 127 Eastern nationalities in the USSR, more than 80 had acquired written languages and native schools, with approximately half of these having been instituted in the Soviet period. In 1936 the Central Committee of the New Alphabet published a list of 102 Soviet nationalities, citing that only twelve of them did not have their own written languages at that time (see *Revoliutsiia i natsional'nosti* 1936, 4:75–85).

4.2 Alphabets and Orthography

The push for literacy in native languages had direct repercussions on the use and development of those languages themselves. While a few languages had well-established literary traditions dating back to prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, many languages did not. We can divide the languages into several basic categories according to their written traditions: (1) those languages with no written form at all; (2) those languages using Cyrillic script; (3) those languages which historically used Roman script (such as German or Moldavian); (4) languages using Arabic script; these are the languages of Islamic peoples and include Turkic languages (such as Azerbaijani, Chagatai, Uzbek), Tajiki (Indo-European), and some Nakh-Daghestanian languages (e.g. Avar, Lak) that had established literary traditions using an Arabic-based script, as well as some other North Caucasian languages (such as Adyghe, Chechen) and Turkic (e.g. Kumyk) for which a written form using the Arabic script was created only after the Bolshevik Revolution; (5) Mongolian languages (Buriat and Kalmyk) which used Mongolian script; and (6) a handful of languages which had already developed their own unique orthography (Armenian, Georgian). In the case of both Armenian and Georgian, their orthographies were several centuries old by the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. In addition, of course, there were pockets of immigrants using yet another script (e.g. Chinese).

The existing orthographies posed a variety of problems for Soviet language planners. The particular details of each of these are discussed in the relevant regional chapters, but certain trends appear that cut across geographic regions. In the Armenian and Georgian cases, for example, alphabet use was essentially unchallenged until the late 1970's. While this might initially be explained by the fact that both languages could boast literary traditions considerably older than that of Russian, it should also be noted that the use of Armenian and Georgian scripts posed no issues of unification with other language groups since each language used a unique alphabet shared by no other language. In fact, the Georgian alphabet was introduced for writing Abkhaz in 1938 (Chapter 5, section 2.2); this was a political attempt to unite Abkhaz with Georgian. Yet the situation in the Caucasus stands in stark contrast to the many Turkic speaking people who used Arabic script. At least

[21] All-Union Central Committee of the New Alphabet or *Vsesoiuznyi tsentral'nyi komitet novogo alfavita*; abbreviated from here on as the Central Committee of the New Alphabet.

symbolically, the Arabic alphabet unified the many different Turkic groups, both with one another and with other Turkic speakers outside of the USSR. Similarly, the use of Classical Mongolian as a literary language unified the geographically disparate Buriats and Kalmyks, and unified them with Mongolians. Even more importantly, these were alphabets of religion: Arabic was the alphabet of Islam, and Mongolian script that of Buddhists. At the other end of the sociolinguistic spectrum were the many languages which had no written form at all.

The exact development of each of these literary languages varied, but some overall trends are clear, and they follow an unambiguous chronology. First, the alphabet question was initially settled by changing some non-Cyrillic alphabets to Cyrillic. This change, which lasted only briefly, took place in the 1920's, and a number of languages were affected. Only a few languages with long-standing literary traditions (e.g. Armenian and Georgian) or those already using Cyrillic for many centuries (Russian and Ukrainian) escaped this trend. In the same way, languages that acquired a written standard in the 1920's acquired it with a Cyrillic-based orthography.

Yet this initial movement to Cyrillic did not continue for long, and policy was not uniformly applied at this point. In this same decade, discussions were underway about converting some languages to Latin-based scripts; this is the case for all of the users of Arabic script, a group which includes the many Turkic speakers of Central Asia and Azerbaijan (for such languages as Azerbaijan, Kazakh, Turkmen, Uzbek, and so on). In fact, Latinization first and foremost affected the Islamic population of the Soviet Union. The Azerbaijan speakers led the charge, and began officially requiring the use of Latin script in 1924 (Chapter 5, section 4), and the First All-Union Turcological conference in Baku officially proclaimed the use of the Roman alphabet for all Turkic languages in 1926. By 1928–1929. the Romanization of the Islamic peoples was complete, and use of Arabic script was seen as "reactionary:" any of its proponents were seen as class enemies (Alpatov 1997:66).

This trend spread, and the early 1930's saw a concerted move toward Latin-based scripts. Almost all languages were involved in this change, ranging from such languages as Azerbaijani or Kalmyk, which had been written in other scripts, to languages for which a written standard was being created. This latter group includes all of the so-called "small" languages of Siberia. These orthographies were introduced for those languages which were part of the literacy campaign. Many of those languages which had been swept up in the change to Cyrillic in the 1920's were now shifted to the Roman alphabet. The reign of Latin-based scripts was also quite brief, and by the late 1930's the language planners had already begun shifting to Cyrillic based scripts again. Kalmyk can serve as an illustrative example. At the time of the Revolution, it was written in the Zaja-pandit orthography of Classical Mongolian. In 1924, it was shifted to Cyrillic, and then in 193 I, it was shifted to the Roman alphabet, and then back to Cyrillic again in 1938. Newly developed literary languages had roughly the same fate. An Adyghe written form was established in 1918, using an Arabic-based script. In 1927 it was shifted to a Latin-based orthography, and then in 1938 to Cyrillic.

While the motivation for changing from Arabic or Mongolian-based orthographies may be transparent, the impetus for Latin-based scripts (as opposed to

Cyrillic) is less so. Party rhetoric justifies the change as fulfilling the will of the people. The arguments are provided, for example, in the discussion of the change from Mongolian script for Kalmyk in 1924: "In conjunction with the intensified spread of enlightenment among the Kalmyks, the old writing system did not satisfy the growing demands of the people" (Bertagaev 1969:375). It was "inaccessible" and inflexible and could not be adapted to the phonological changes in Kalmyk. The change to the Latin alphabet was justified as "giving way to a general striving among Eastern peoples to Latinize their orthographies." The ultimate change (just a few years later) to a Cyrillic-based writing system was explained as a product of necessity, because the children were confusing Cyrillic and Latin letters and their levels of grammatical competence were "significantly lower."

Party rhetoric aside, a number of factors may have contributed to the choice of the Latin alphabet over Cyrillic. First, Russian was seen as the language of the tsarist oppressors, and there was a conscious effort to move away from that sense of oppression. The Soviet press published statements about the general "resistance" of the public to Russian and Russians as part of the tsarist legacy. In the case of the many languages using Arabic script, a shift to Cyrillic would have been interpreted as blatant Russification. Romanization provided a politically more neutral middle ground. Second, the Latin alphabet was seen as having practical and pedagogical advantages over Cyrillic. From a strictly pragmatic standpoint, the Latin alphabet provided the possibility of using European and American printing machines and publishing houses. Official reports claimed the efficacy of Latin in teaching literacy (see, for example. Artemov 1933, 1936. cited in Smith 1998:13–40). Third, the influence of Marrist doctrine (Chapter 2, section 5.1) should not be underestimated. Basing his linguistic theories on the belief that language change and social change are inexorably linked, Marr argued that the development of socialism was tied to the adoption of the Latin alphabet. Fourth, an explicit ideological argument was made for the virtues of the Latin alphabet in terms of the future international arena:

> Latin characters are not only the signs of science and technology; they are those of the common written culture of all civilized nationalities. By adopting the Latin alphabet, we shall be able to make use of the fruits of international culture as we approach a proletarian-peasant international.
> (Navshrimanov 1924, cited in Weinreich 1953:47)

In this way, the use of the Latin alphabet can be seen as a manifestation of Stalin's creed of "nationalist in form, socialist in content." It answered the needs of the individual languages, while providing the hope that a unified alphabet which would unite the world's proletariat would ultimately be created.

A combination of all of these factors certainly entered into the decision to convert to the Latin script. The notion that the Latinized alphabets would provide the basis for international communication among the proletariat was made explicit in Party rhetoric, with alphabet unification required to meet this goal. The Central Executive Committee authorized the formation of a new, special commission (The All-Union Central Committee for the New Turkic Alphabet) to create a standardized Latin alphabet for all Turkic languages, dubbed the *New Turkic Alphabet.* In August

1929, use of this alphabet was made compulsory by decree of the Central Executive Committee, and all publishing houses were ordered to cease printing in Arabic. By 1933, even the Azerbaijan SSR was compelled to comply with the New Turkic Alphabet, and thereby to abandon the version of the Latin alphabet which it had adopted in the 1920's. By 1936 there were officials claimed that of 71 alphabets, only 8 were not unified. "The new unified alphabet represents the first attempt at creating a truly international unified alphabet" (Iakovlev 1936:31–2, cited in Alpatov 1997:70). This was seen as an integral measure toward developing the international language of the proletariat supported by Marr and his followers, who include Iakovlev (Chapter 2, section 5.1). In the fervor of the moment, a proposal was advanced to convert Russian from Cyrillic to Latin, but the peak of the movement had passed, and the proposal gained little support from high-level officials.

A movement to use Cyrillic script began in the Russian SFSR, and the Kabardin (Latin-based) alphabet was Cyrillicized in the years 1935–36. Several other languages immediately followed suit, including Oirot and Shor, as well as some of the languages of the North. Within a few years, all languages in the Russian SFSR had been converted to the Cyrillic script, and in September 1939, the Azerbaijan SSR—once the leader in the conversion to the Roman alphabet—became the first Union Republic to officially convert to Cyrillic. By 1940, Soviet policy had changed the script of all Soviet languages to Cyrillic. Clearly, this was at least in part an attempt to "unify" the various nationalities in the USSR. There were only a handful of exceptions to this blanket Cyrillicization: both Armenian and Georgian retained their alphabets; Karelian continued to use the Latin script, and Yiddish continued to use a modified Hebrew script (Chapter 3, section 1.3). The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), which were not annexed to the Soviet Union until 1940, maintained their use of the Latin script as well.

Despite the widespread nature of Cyrillicization, the alphabet itself was often poorly adapted to the phonemic structure of the individual languages. This can be illustrated by considering the use of Cyrillic for Evenki, a Tungus language of Siberia. In some cases, Evenki has phonemes which Russian lacks, and rather than create new characters for these, Cyrillic letters were taken wholesale. Examples are the Evenki bilabial fricative [ ], which is written with Cyrillic в. In Russian Cyrillic в represents a labio-dental fricative [v], not a bilabial fricative. Similarly, the use of Cyrillic *x* is used to write Evenki [h], a sound that is often described as a pharyngeal, approximating English [h] in articulation. In contrast, in Russian Cyrillic *x* is used for a voiceless velar fricative [x]. A different kind of example is provided by Evenki velar nasal, which is written in a variety of ways in Cyrillic, using one of either of two special characters, or two letters combined **(нг)**. Symbolically, this suggests that the Evenki phonemes do not warrant their own representation. On a more practical level, it has led to confusion among the children learning to read and write Evenki, in particular due to the accelerated attrition rate among Evenki children. This is currently a widespread problem among the languages of the North (Chapter 7).

4.3 The Soviet Lexicon

One area of great importance for the Soviet government was the development of a new, Soviet lexicon which would reflect the changes in political structure brought about by the Revolution, and provide the basis, ultimately, for an international political language. Beyond a socio-political vocabulary, the Party goals for mass education and rapid industrialization required many new words to talk about these areas, and the artifacts that come with them. As a result, all languages of the USSR saw a major influx of new lexical items. There was a variety of means available for creating new vocabulary for each individual language. These include the use of native sources, in particular in calques and or in using existing (and often archaic) lexical items with shifted meanings. In the early years, language planners relied heavily on native sources to create new vocabulary, but borrowings became increasingly important. Combinations of native and non-native forms were also created in word and phraseological caiques from a native root but with prefixes (or some other element) from Russian. Russian was not only the primary source of borrowings in the Soviet period but also served as the sole conduit for Western terminology. Of course many of the nationalities lived in regions with heavy language contact and so were multilingual, and had borrowed many lexical items from other languages of the USSR throughout the course of history. But these languages only rarely, if ever, served as the sources for the new Soviet vocabulary. A recurrent theme through Soviet history is that of Russian as the country's international language, i.e., international in the sense of serving for communication with people outside the USSR. (This is a theme which is later used to justify the expansion of Russian.)

The early years of the USSR were a period of extremely active lexical development. In this initial period, there was a tendency to avoid borrowings from Russian, due to its direct associations with tsarist Russia. Instead, new terminology was coined from the language itself, either through caiques or by "reclaiming" older words no longer in use and redefining them with more current meanings. A large number of terminological dictionaries were published in these early years to help the population grapple with the sudden influx of new and unknown terms.

This situation quickly changed, and Russian became the preferred source for this new vocabulary. Lewis (1972:157) estimates that in the 1930's and 1940's some 70–80 percent of all new vocabulary of the languages of the USSR consisted of Russian borrowings. The exception here is the use of what Soviet language planners called "international" terminology, which was largely socio-political, and often drawn from the works of Marx and Engels. This included such words as *kommunizm* 'Communism', *sotsializm* 'Socialism,' Marxism, and so on. But there was also a large number of new political terms were coined from Russian roots, such as *sovet* 'Soviet,' *vsesoiuznyi* 'All-Union', *bolshevik,* and so on. In addition, a number of Russian words were used with a new meaning, such as *tovarishch* 'comrade', which was used in pre-Revolutionary times more narrowly, in the meaning of 'co-worker' or 'friend', and took on a decidedly Soviet connotation in the meaning 'comrade'. New terminology for the new industrial, ideological and cultural norms was also developed, including such words as *kolkhoz, komsomol, profsoiuz* 'professional

union' or *kollektivizatsiia* 'collectivization'. These terms were, by and large, adopted wholesale into the languages of the USSR. In addition, the Soviet government was notorious for its extensive use of acronyms, some of which have been introduced in this chapter (e.g. *Likbez, Narkomnats, Narkompros*). These were also adopted into the target language directly from Russian.

The spelling of the many borrowings from Russian at this time was a key political issue. Spelling was dicatated by the "Common Rule" [*obshchee pravilo*], a decree issued in the 1940's under the influence of Marrist linguistics (Chapter 2, section 5.1). The Common Rule mandated that all Russian loanwords and "international" borrowings must be written and spelled as in Russian (Mordvinov 1950:82; Mordvinov and Sanzheev 1951:42). One logistical problem was that the decree required identification of all loanwords as such, a process which was relatively simple with regard to the new Soviet lexicon, but difficult for older borrowings. The Russian spelling often violated the phonological system of the indigenous language and in many instances resulted in rather large differences between the written form of a word and its actual pronunciation. This is seen in the differences for Yakut *ostool* 'table', which was written as (Russian) *stol,* or Yakut *oskoula* as *shkola* 'school'; Kyrgyz *zhashyk* as *iashchik* 'box' and Bashkir *sisla* 'number, date' was changed to *chislo,* or *kirbis* to *kirpich* 'brick', again reflecting the Russian.[22] In essence, two different spellling systems were in operation for each language, both the Russian and the native spelling systems. This resulted in a confusing lack of systematicity of spelling, which only hindered children in their acquisition of basic reading skills and meant that they needed to have a functional knowledge of Russian in order to spell their own language. In addition, application of the rule sometimes resulted in grammatical confusion. An example is the native Yakut accusative form of 'communist', *kommnuuhu.* When spelled according to the Russian norms, the resulting written form was *kommunistu,* which is the Russian dative singular.

Use of the Common Rule was relatively brief and was revoked in 1950. Despite official renunciations of the policy (vehemently expressed in Mordvinov 1950; Mordvinov and Sanzheev 1951), it was only partially revoked in practice. The newer policy stated that borrowings from other languages should be spelled as they are pronounced in the receiving language. But an exception was made for "all new international borrowings," which were required to be written as in Russian, the language through which they were directly borrowed. Thus the policy dictates that "in Osetin, Mordvinian and Evenki, socio-political terms such as *socialism, communism, Bolshevik, Soviet* and others are written as in Russian" (Desheriev and Protchenko 1968:79–80).

There was increasing pressure to develop the lexicon through the creation of special committees. In 1959, a special commission of the Institute of Linguistics at the Academy of Sciences formulated a list of terminology to be used by all Turkic

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[22] Spelling of the Bashkir, Kyrgyz and Yakut is transliterated from the Cyrillic forms provided in Mordvinov and Sanzheev (1951).

speakers of the USSR, focusing on terminology for the translation of texts from Russian.[23]

5. LANGUAGE POLICY UNDER STALIN, *1930-1950*

After Lenin's death in 1924, language planners in the Stalin era (1924-1953) initially carried on as before. However, the 1930's saw a shift in policy and in Stalin's way of thinking. In 1934, in an address to the XVII Party Congress, Stalin effectively ended the nativization campaign. On March 13, 1938 an official decree made the study of Russian compulsory (Chapter 2, section 8). This same time period was marked by a growing campaign to switch from Latin-based writing systems to Cyrillic. Taken together, these three events appeared to signal a shift toward a deliberate policy of Russification. Unlike the Latinization campaign, there was no widespread public discussion of the change to Cyrillic, or how it was (or was not) related to compulsory Russian education. The official explanation for the alphabet change was the direct request of the Soviet people, but it was almost certainly motivated more by economic and socio-political factors than by any kind of popular demand. Publication in at least two different scripts was costly and time-consuming. The switch to Cyrillic also facilitated the acquisition and use of Russian. By the mid-1940's, the conversion to Cyrillic was complete. Those languages that had newly created literary standards using Latin script were converted to Cyrillic, as were languages with longer literary traditions, such as the Turkic languages of Central Asia, which had now undergone shifts from Arabic to Latin to Cyrillic in just over a decade.

Alphabet creation was just one step in the literacy campaign. Equally important was the creation of a standardized literary form for each of the targeted languages. Originally emphasis was placed on phonetic spelling, which created problems due to vast dialect differences for some languages, and due to the large influx of Russian borrowings as a result of the socio-political and economic upheavals. The creation of a new lexical inventory was an equally vital component of this larger campaign. Initially it was argued that each of the national languages should have a complete inventory of all technical terms, created using language-internal resources wherever possible. Ultimately this did not occur, as the spheres of usage of many of the national languages were quite limited, making this native technical terminology superfluous. Where loans were concerned, the early policy was to maintain the pronunciation of the lending language. This policy was changed by the 1950's, when all loanwords were written in the original Russian form. The majority of new technical, social and political terms did in fact come from Russian. In the Baltic Republics alone, where the regions were relatively highly Westernized and technological, it has been estimated that 70-80 percent of all new terms were coined from Russian, not Baltic or Estonian, models. Russian influence was also

[23] *Materialy regional'nogo seveshchaniia po perevodu literatury s russkogo na izayki narodov Srednei Azii, Kazakhstana i Azerbaidzhana.* (1967). Alma Ata.

particularly heavy in the Belorussian and Ukrainian Republics, where people often spoke a mixed form of the two languages.

5.1 Marrist doctrine

The linguistic theories of Nikolai Marr (1865–1934) played a key role in the development of Soviet language policy. Marr was the single most influential linguist in the Soviet Union until long after his own death. He is the founder of the *New Theory of Language,* a theory which had gained full endorsement by the Soviet government in the late 1920's and had a tremendous impact on language policy and linguistic theory. Marr's New Theory of Language was inspired by Marxist theories of class struggle and development and dialectical materialism. The fundamental concept of these theories is that social progress is made through struggle and opposition; conflict is a key element in social change. Societies evolve from one stage to the next; crucially, such change is not gradual, but occurs in sudden leaps. Marr applied these principles to the development of language and hypothesized that language progresses in a similar fashion.

A cornerstone of Marr's *Theory of Language* had to do with linguistic genetic relationships postulated by Marr. These relationships were largely unsupported by linguistic science, a fact which created a rift between Marr's supporters and bona fide linguists with solid training in the field. Marr, himself born on the Black Sea to a Scottish father and Georgian mother, became interested in the origin of Georgian and the Caucasian languages at an early age. He received his education from the Faculty of Eastern Languages at St. Petersburg University and simultaneously studied four subfields, with the result that when he graduated in 1888, he had studied all the near Eastern and Caucasian languages taught at the University. Marr's early research focused on descriptive work of the languages of the Caucasus: Marr was in the relatively unique position in Petersburg of having first-hand knowledge of these languages and the university training. He had not, however, had any formal training in linguistics: this was virtually precluded by the academic program at the Faculty of Eastern Languages at the time. What Marr lacked in training he more than made up for in self-confidence. His descriptive work on the languages of the Caucasus led him to ask larger questions about their genetic relationships. This interest developed at a time when the linguistic methodology relied heavily on historical reconstruction, stemming from the discovery of Indo-European. Believing that the Caucasian languages had been overlooked or, even worse, misaligned, Marr reacted to current doctrine by advocating the genetic relationships of Caucasian. In modern linguistic theory, the historical position of the Caucasian languages is far from clear, since classification of these languages is extremely complicated. Even today, the relationship of the Northwest Caucasian to the Nakh-Daghestanian languages is controversial. The lack of genetic relationship between North Caucasian and South Caucasian (Kartvelian) is not disputed in the West but has been contested by many Georgian (and Soviet) linguists. Marr posited a common ancestor for the Caucasian and Semitic languages. "Japhetic" is the term that Marr himself introduced, using it first to refer to his theory of the genetic ties between Caucasian and Semitic, and

subsequently extending its use to include a number of extinct languages of the Mediterranean basin and Asia, in addition to several living languages in the Pyrenees and Pamir mountain range. Lacking knowledge of linguistic methodology, Marr's reconstructions were based more on free association and his own creative imagination than on linguistic science. As a result, he made such technical errors that his theories were quickly refuted by Western linguists (including such giants as Antoine Meillet).

In a brief address to the Academy of Sciences on November 21,1923, it became clear that Marr's thinking had shifted toward a new view of linguistics. This marked a turning point in his thinking about linguistics; his followers dubbed it a "new era" in the field. This new era became known as Marr's *New Theory of Language.* A comprehensive discussion of the theory is complicated, in part because it was never published as a completed treatise, but was constantly being modified.24 Marr believed that languages were correlated with social class, and that language change—like class revolutions—proceeded by sudden jumps, rather than occurring gradually. In Marr's view, language was intimately linked to class structure, and so it necessarily reflected that structure. One piece of this was Marr's belief in the future establishment of a single, unified global language, representing the logical development of his theory of language progression.

Marr participated in numerous expeditions to the field and was subsequently claimed to have played a fundamental role in the work on the Soviet languages that had no written form (Alpatov 1991:50). But in fact his time in the field was spent gathering "data" to support his Japhetic theory; the only practical work that Marr himself engaged in was the development of the so-called analytic alphabet for Abkhaz, which he had in fact created before the Revolution. It was adopted in June 1924; Marr saw this as an important move toward the development of a unified global alphabet: the first step toward a unified global language.

Despite the obvious flaws in his theories and methodologies, Marrism came to dominate Soviet linguistics in the 1920's, the time when linguistics was playing a critical role in language development and planning. The theory resonated with some of the basic principles of the Soviet government and was, in that sense, very timely. Marr and his followers shaped the formation of Soviet language policy until 1950 when Stalin himself renounced Marr's basic principles in an article published in the newspaper *Pravda.* Stalin further expounded on his views in a series of papers, which were eventually published as a collection entitled *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics.* As Weinreich (1953:56) points out, some of the absurd linguistic measures undertaken during Marr's peak period of influence did not directly stem from the problems of Marrist doctrine (which by no means is intended to imply that the theory was without serious flaws). But in addition to the theoretical problems themselves, Marr's followers were neither well-trained linguists nor clear thinkers.

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[24] Marr's *New Theory of Language* has been analyzed in a number of publications. Alpalov (1991) presents a succinct overview of the theory and the political climate surrounding it. Marr's address to the Academy of Sciences is published in volume 1, pp. 185–186 of his selected works (Marr 1933–1937).

The problem was exacerbated by the fact that they dominated the field as an impenetrable and hostile clique.

Stalin's renouncement of Marr contained a number of potentially contradictory points that could be applied to the situation of minority languages in the USSR. Stalin stressed that language change is governed by unique internal laws, which could be interpreted as supporting the need for defending minority languages from the influences of Russian. At the same time, he deemed the influence of Russian on other languages to be a natural process, which speaks to supporting Russification across the board. Certainly, Russification processes only intensified after 1950, although a number of minor measures enacted under Marr, such as the "Common Rule" for spelling (Chapter 2, section 4.3), were revoked.

6. LANGUAGE POLICY AFTER WORLD WAR II

A major change in language policy began in the mid-1950's. Prior to this period, the national languages were the focus of Soviet language planning, although plans of how to acc. From the mid-1950's there is a major shift in policy whereby the goal is to establish Russian as *the* language of the Soviet Union. The Khrushchev era (1953–1964) introduced the vision of a new Soviet people, united not only politically, but also through the use of one language. Khrushchev emphatically declared Russian to be "the second national language." On the one hand an open policy of bilingualism was promoted, but on the other the very need for national languages, i.e. any language other than Russian, was questioned. Whereas under Lenin all languages were guaranteed equal rights, under Khrushchev the issue of the "relative" importance of languages was introduced into Soviet polemics. It became officially acceptable to view some languages as less viable than others; languages with few speakers were declared on the brink of extinction and unsuitable for development. At the same time, Lenin's policies of language equality were not officially repudiated, and could be invoked by the Communist Party to justify its own policies, even when practice contradicted policy.

This practice was concomitant to a major change in education policy. Clause 19 of the Education Reforms of 1958–59 stated that education in the mother tongue was no longer compulsory. The overall impact of the 1958-59 legislation was that the instruction of Russian increased at the expense of the native languages. By this time, instruction in the native language was offered for most languages with a written form at an elementary level, and at a secondary level for some. One result of the Education Reforms was pressure to begin instruction in Russian from the earliest grades, and the native language was replaced by Russian in many schools. In some cases this was an immediate change (in all Karelian schools, for example), whereas in others this took place more gradually (e.g. Chuvash schools). In all schools where education continued to be conducted in the indigenous language, Russian became a compulsory subject.

The results of the Education Reforms varied throughout the country. Despite the shift in emphasis on Russian, languages spoken by larger populations may have actually gained some ground, in part due to the lessening of cultural restrictions

under Khrushchev. This was the case in Central Asia, for example. That said, the reforms introduced a new type of school: non-Russian schools with Russian as the language of instruction, where the native language and literature were relegated to study as a secondary subject. Minority languages became seriously threatened as they were no longer used in schools and publications in these languages were seriously cut back. The key change—regardless of the immediate local-level particulars—was that Russian became the official language of the USSR and occupied a central position in education and government. These reforms represented an open move toward Russification of the country.

7. BREZHNEV AND THE 1970'S

This process was only increased under Brezhnev (1964–1982), in a greater move toward total Russification, with increasing pressure to make Russian the "second mother tongue." Statistics for this time period are particularly unreliable and difficult to obtain. Officially at least, Russians continued to be largely monolingual (97 percent), while over 40 percent of the non-Russian population claimed itself to be bilingual, and by 1979 a total of 82 percent of the population claimed some knowledge of Russian. Translation work was primarily unidirectional as well, from Russian into the native language, with relatively few native literary works translated into Russian. The Brezhnev period is characterized by a continuous increase in both the sheer volume of instruction in Russian, which was steadily replacing the national languages in non-Russian schools, and a continuous increase in the number of institutions where Russian was the sole operative language. Article 36 of the 1977 Constitution states that Soviet citizens would be provided with the "*opportunity* to use the mother tongue and languages of the other peoples of the USSR." Similarly, Article 45 guarantees them the "*opportunity* for school instruction in their native language;" this is a marked shift from the 1936 Constitution that guaranteed the *right* to mother-tongue instruction (such that one could theoretically demand such instruction); the 1977 Constitution guarantees only the possibility of access. The Constitutional mandate was furthered by Decree no. 835, adopted by the Soviet of Ministers in October 1978, "On Measures for Further Improving the Study and Teaching of the Russian Language in the Union Republics." The decree mandated concrete, extensive measures for improving Russian-language instruction. These included the implementation of a new syllabus for Russian language instruction and the creation of new pedagogical materials for all schools where Russian was not the primary language of instruction; a recommendation that all Russian language teachers be retrained and better qualified; an increase of the amount of Russian-based instruction in a variety of subjects; and equipping all schools with Russian language centers. In addition, Russian instruction was also to be instituted at the pre-school levels, thereby furthering its spread (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001:56–7).

Party rhetoric proclaiming the importance of Russian was also on the rise. The official view of a single Soviet ethnic group, the result of "the convergence and fusion of peoples" (*sblizhenie i sliianie narodov*), was becoming a reality. The

sphere of Russian usage spread beyond education to many administrative levels, including local-level administration. It had become the lingua franca of the USSR. This extended beyond the spread of language to the development of a new kind of ethnicity. One of the explicit goals formulated in the Brezhnev era was the establishment of a Soviet people (*sovetskii narod*) as emblematic of the development and fusion of the various nationalities into a supra-nationality. At the 1971 Party Congress, Brezhnev formulated his view of the "new human community sharing a common territory, state, economic system, culture, the goal of building communism and a common language" (G. Smith 1990:9, from the *Materials of the 14th Party Congress*[25]).

Yet even in the 1970's, the so-called "nationalities question" continued to plague the USSR. From a historical standpoint, this seems to be almost inevitable in that the initial conflicts had never been resolved, but rather exacerbated, by policies. Sovietologist Richard Pipes argues that that such tension is an inherent part of multiethnic states of the acute need for different groups to compete for resources and services. The conflict over the allocation of resources was all the more intense in the Soviet Union, where the government held control over all national finances and guaranteed its own wealth by providing only the bare minimum of resources and services to the people, including national governments and institutions. Regardless of the unresolved national conflicts, the Soviet government aggressively promoted its plans for Russification. At the 1981 Party Congress—the last that he would attend—Brezhnev proclaimed the triumph of the creation of a united Soviet people.

8. LANGUAGE AND EDUCATION

One of the cornerstones of Soviet language policy is the education system. In the early years, every citizen was guaranteed the right to mother-tongue instruction. This right was legislated in the 1936 Constitution, Article 121 (Chapter 2, section 1). This guarantee was not upheld for every ethnic group, however, and by the time of the 1936 census, far from all Soviet languages had a written form or literary standard, and many had yet to be introduced into the schools. While there were very practical constraints to the implementation of mother-tongue literacy (Chapter 2, section 4), these difficulties alone cannot explain the unevenness of language use and development. This can be measured both in terms of which languages were "developed" to be used in the schools, and in terms of the amount of mother-tongue instruction offered, with regard to the type of instruction and with regard to the grade level(s) of instruction. As for the former, there is wide variation between total immersion programs, where students are taught all subjects in the heritage language, to programs where the bulk of the education is conducted in Russian, with some subjects taught in the heritage language. On the extreme end of the scale, there are programs where the heritage language is taught as a secondary subject, much as a foreign language. (In the later Soviet years, such programs became frequent, due to a combination of budget cuts and, perhaps more importantly, language attrition. As

[25] *Materialy XXIV s"ezda KPSS.* Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1976:76.

the figures in Table 3 (Chapter 1, section 3) show, by the end of the era there were significant portions of some minority ethnic groups who no longer used their heritage language.) The amount of schooling offered in an autochthonous language varied widely too, ranging from pre-school use only to full use in institutions of higher education.

From the beginning, numerous practical factors played a role in the use and development of the indigenous languages. The task of developing written forms of the languages, creating pedagogical materials, and training teachers was overwhelming. Only limited resources—both financial and human—were available, and the sheer volume of work that needed to be done was onerous. One of the factors in selecting a language was the size of the speaker population; roughly speaking, the more speakers, the more practical the development of the language. (This is certainly a principle which was applied in the development of the languages of the North; see Chapter 7.)

The period prior to World War II was arguably the best time for the national languages. Non-Russian schools prospered. Although exact data on curriculum and specific details of the schools have not been published, certain aspects can be deduced from what information is available. Thus, for example, while there are no reports of the number of hours of native-language instruction or of the subjects taught in the native language for the country as a whole, publishing records are available. Judging by the numbers of textbooks published in the native languages. 64 different nationalities had schools where math and science instruction was conducted in the native languages in the period 1934-1940, and language/literature instruction involved 65 different languages. By 1981–1985, math and science instruction was conducted in only 32 different languages, a decrease of 50 percent. The number of nationalities with school instruction in the native language and literature dropped as well, although less markedly, to 52. This is not surprising, as this is the one area where minimal language instruction is most readily maintained, and follows the general pedagogical pattern for second-language instruction.

Beginning in 1938, Russian-language instruction became compulsory for all school-age children; this undercuts the actual development of the ethnic languages in a very real way. The impetus behind the move was stated in the decree itself. First, it specified the need for a common, inter-ethnic language for future economic and cultural development. Second, it stressed the importance of knowledge of Russian for the advanced training and education. And third, it emphasized the need for a common language for defense. The primary emphasis thus seems to have stemmed from the need to create an educated work force that would be equipped to move the USSR to industrialization. Stalin failed to strike a balance between the long-standing policy of native-language instruction and the new Russian language policy. Russian language instruction for non-native speakers had been far from satisfactory. Prior to the 1938 decree, schools generally started instruction in the native language from the first grade and introduced the second language from the third. In the majority of native schools, Russian served as the second language, although not in all cases. In the Ukrainian and Belorussian Union Republics, for example, a number of the native schools (Polish, German, or Yiddish) taught Ukrainian or Belarusan as the second language, introducing Russian in the fifth grade. Ironically, the Russian-language

program suffered the very same problems as did the native-language programs: a lack of textbooks and pedagogical materials, and untrained teachers. The lack of qualified teacher was reported at the All-Union Russian Conference on Non-Russian Textbooks in April 1933, where it was stated that graduates of the seven-year program did not know Russian. It was these same graduates who went on to become teachers in the primary schools (Blitstein 2001:254). A further shortcoming of the Russian-language program—from the Soviet point of view—was the lack of centralized control over the Russian textbooks for non-native speakers of Russian. A very centralized process was followed for creating textbooks in the native languages: a single text for a given grade-level and subject was written in Russian in Moscow, and then translated into the various native languages. The differences in grammatical structures of the native languages made this approach difficult for Russian-language textbooks.

This resulted in a highly charged political situation over the teaching of Russian. When the 1938 decree was released, it in fact reflected a less radical approach than some Party hard-liners had been advocating (such as proposing that Russian be immediately introduced in all native-language schools and be taught on par with the native languages). The decree specified details of the required levels of Russian for pupils who have completed certain grades, and mandated specific schedules for teaching Russian. Oddly enough, although the total number of hours of Russian instruction increased in the native-language schools outside of the Russian SFSR, within that Republic the hours of instruction actually decreased. This was unfortunate, given that those children living in the Russian SFSR actually had the most immediate need for Russian. The situation did not immediately improve. The nationwide alphabet change from Latin to Cyrillic exacerbated the problem. In the academic year 1939–1940, a total of 37 new Cyrillic-based alphabets were created within the Russian SFSR alone (Blitstein 2001:260). The implementation of these new alphabets made the existing textbooks, printed in Roman-based scripts, obsolete. The year 1940 is marked by numerous official complaints from a variety of agencies about the inadequacy of Russian-language instruction; in July 1940 the Central Committee issued a complaint about the insufficient command of Russian among army recruits. The situation with textbooks and qualified teachers, already in short supply in the late 1930's, only worsened throughout World War II.

Russian language instruction was clearly an important priority for the Soviets as a necessary component for building the Soviet State. Their commitment to native-language instruction is more difficult to assess. As Soviet thinking and priorities shifted over the course of the century, so too did the nature of school programs. The trend away from native-language instruction for math and science is indicative of an overall shift away from schools where the primary means of instruction is the indigenous language. Instead, emphasis had moved toward Russian-language schools that teach the indigenous tongue as a secondary subject only. This can also be shown by examining the highest grade level of instruction. As mentioned earlier, this varied considerably throughout the USSR. In some schools, the indigenous language was the primary language of instruction at the elementary level only, while in others it was used at the secondary level as well. These figures correlate with the topic of instruction in showing a downward trend over the course of Soviet history.

In the years 1934-1940, the nationwide average highest grade level with the indigenous (non-Russian) language as the primary means of instruction was 4.5. This dropped abruptly during World War II, rising again to 4.1 in the period 1951-1955. In 1958, the Education Reforms of 1958 marked an unequivocal step toward Russification (Chapter 2, section 6). Since that time, it has been progressing steadily downward, to a low of 2.6 in 1981-1985 (Anderson and Silver 1990:105).

8.1 The Press

While schools are the cornerstone of education, there are a variety of other means of instructing the general public; the press is one such tool. By the Brezhnev era, the press was well-established in the USSR and had become an important mechanism for spreading the Party's message. The government controlled the number of newspapers published in terms of number of titles, circulation, and the number of times a particular newspaper was published (i.e. daily versus weekly). It censored content and controlled the languages used in publication. In 1967, there were a total of 26 nationwide (or all-Union) newspapers out of a sum total of 8,524 newspapers published in the country. Only one of these, *Pravda*, was published seven times a week, but a number of others were published six times weekly, and so can be considered dailies. Of these, *Pravda* ('truth') and *Izvestiia* ('news') were by far the most important, with circulations of 8.5 million and 8.0 million in 1967, respectively. They were surpassed in circulation only by *Pionerskaia pravda* ('Pioneer truth') at 9.3 million; this paper, however was published only twice a week. All three of these were published in Russian.

Each Union Republic had its own newspaper, and most typically had at least two major daily papers, one in the titular language and one in Russian (in addition to the all-Union newspapers, which were published in Moscow). These local papers frequently derived their articles from the nationwide publications. An exception here is the Ukrainian SSR, which had two major dailies in Russian (*Pravda Ukrainy* 'truth of Ukraine' and *Rabochaia gazeta* 'working newspaper'), along with a weekly in Ukrainian and one in Russian.

9. PERESTROIKA

When Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in 1985, the linguistic situation in the country he was to govern was radically different from the one Lenin had faced at the beginning of the Soviet era. Compulsory Russian-language education had been in place since 1958. thus the young generation of Soviet citizens was virtually guaranteed to have had some formal Russian training. Not just the youngest generations were affected. Nearly 70 years of language policy had left their mark, and the majority of citizens had studied some Russian in school and had some knowledge of Russian. The statistics for Russian bilingualism were high, and there was evidence of large-scale language shift for many portions of the population. Even in those areas where there was little to suggest massive language shift (e.g. the Armenian SSR), fear of Russification was high. Despite these fears, in many regions

the linguistic situation was essentially stable throughout the first years of Gorbachev's rule. His restructuring program, *perestroika,* focused governmental attention on economic and political problems. Until 1989, both language and nationality policies remained essentially unchanged from previous years; in fact they received little attention from the central government in Moscow. Yet even prior to the break-up of the USSR, a number of Union Republics began to change language policies within their own territories. For the first time the Soviet Union ceased to have a single, unified language policy for the entire nation. Despite these fears, in many regions the linguistic situation was essentially stable throughout the first years of Gorbachev's rule. For example, in 1987 Moldova passed a law intended to widen the spheres of Moldovan usage, and in 1989 officially changed to the Roman alphabet, bringing Moldovan in line with Romanian orthography. In January 18, 1989 the Estonian SSR passed a law granting its titular languages the status of state language. The other two Baltic Republics quickly followed suit, as did all the Union Republics except the Russian SFSR and the Transcaucasian Republics. The latter had already declared their titular languages to be their state languages in 1978, in the writing of their new Constitutions. In April 1990 the central Soviet government reacted by enacting "The law of the languages of the peoples of the USSR" which, for the first time, declared Russian to be *the* state language. This was more a reaction to what the Soviet government viewed as separatist-nationalist tendencies in the individual republics. Rather than a clear, focused language policy, the Soviet government maintained this reactive stance until its downfall in 1991. These language laws are discussed in Chapter 8, section 3.1.

CHAPTER 3

THE SLAVIC REPUBLICS AND MOLDOVA

The Soviet Union encompassed the homelands of all three of the East Slavic languages: Belarusan, Russian and Ukrainian (Chapter 1, section 2.1). Each of these was the titular language of a Union Republic; their populations, taken together, constituted a large percentage of the total population of the country, making up the Slavic majority of the Soviet citizenry. Although ethnic Russians accounted for far more than half of the country's population for many years, by the time of the break up of the Soviet Union, they made up a mere 51 percent of the total. This is largely due to extremely high birth rates in Central Asia, among Uzbeks, Turkmens and Tajiks, as opposed to low birth rates for ethnic Russians (see also Chapter 8, section 2). Still, the total number of people from these three Slavic groups constituted a full 73 percent of the Soviet population, making them a significant force in a number of ways. Adding to this total the ethnic population of Central Asia accounts for a full 90 percent of the total population. (Figures calculated on the basis of the 1990 statistics; see Chapter 1, Table 1.)

The Russian SFSR was the center of the Soviet government, and the Russian language had a major impact on all languages in the Soviet state. By virtue of their geographic and linguistic proximity, Belarusan and Ukrainian were in a precarious position. Many of the early Bolsheviks considered both simply to be dialects of Russian, as had been the prevalent view in tsarist Russia. It was not until 1919 that Ukrainian was adopted as an official language in its own right, distinct from Russian. Early years in the Soviet Ukraine show what appears to be a serious effort toward "Ukrainization;" by 1923 over 61 percent of the elementary schools were Ukrainian. For both Belarusan and Ukrainian, official policy encouraged creating new lexical items that differed from the Russian equivalents. Examples include the coinage of Ukrainian *vyrobnya* for Russian *zavod,* or 'factory', a slight departure from its original Ukrainian meaning of 'manufacture', or Ukrainian *litun,* rather than Russian *lëtchik,* for 'pilot'. Grammatical distinctions were encouraged too, such as the use of the vocative in Ukrainian (where Russian has no vocative), or the Belarusan prepositional plural ending *–okh,* as opposed to the Russian cognate morpheme *–akh.* This shifted dramatically in the 1930's, when the use of native Belarusan and Ukrainian forms was not only actively discouraged, but sometimes punished.

In the post World War II period, the pressures and legislation for Russification of Belarusan and Ukrainian only intensified. Both of these Slavic territories have a large percentage of speakers who have maintained their heritage language (83 percent of ethnic Ukrainians, and a full 98 percent of Belarusans), but a relatively large percentage of the population living in these regions is Russian. Russification has been intense, whether as a result of deliberate policies, or as the natural result of heavy contact between two closely related language groups, or a combination of the two. In addition, the Bolshevik Revolution brought about major changes in the

nature and scope of bilingualism: in tsarist Russia, bilingualism was largely between Russian and a European language, in particular French, where such bilingualism was limited almost exclusively to the upper levels of society. In tsarist Russia, French was the language of the gentry, and Russian the language of the peasants. In the post-Revolution era, bilingualism was chiefly found between Russian and a language of the USSR and affected nearly all sectors of the population by the late Soviet era, due to the emphasis placed on Russian-language instruction. The Slavic languages stand in a special position with regard to Russian: all three belong to the Eastern branch of Slavic, and are thus closely related. In a certain sense the close linguistic ties of Ukrainian and Belarusan to Russian prohibited their development: from Tsarist times through the Soviet era, claims were made by the authorities that Ukrainian and Belarusan were mere dialects of Russian, not distinct languages. Belarusan was, in particular, marginalized. It has the lowest language retention rate for any of the native languages with a million or more speakers, and the absolute lowest retention rate for any of the titular languages of a Union Republic (70.9 percent in 1989). The only other titular language with a retention rate of less than 90 percent is, significantly, Ukrainian (81.1 percent in 1989). By the same token, Belarusan has the highest assimilation rate to Russian of both of these two categories; this rate (28.5 percent) is on par with immigrant populations (e.g. Bulgarians, Poles) and with some of the endangered indigenous languages.

These same issues are reflected in language policy in Moldovan SSR, but with opposite results. The titular and majority language, Moldovan, is from a linguistic standpoint a dialect of Romanian and not a distinct language. Official policy treated Belarusan and Ukrainian as maximally close to Russian, at least in part to facilitate their coalescence, and at the same time taking measures to distinguish Moldovan from Romanian as much as possible. A crucial part of this was the change from Latin to Cyrillic alphabets, meaning that young Moldovans would need to learn a new alphabet to read Romanian, but not to learn Russian. These steps were intended to create a specifically Moldovan identity, thereby preventing a larger “Romanian” identity.

1. THE RUSSIAN SOVIET FEDERATE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

The Russian Federation was initially formed in 1917 as a result of the successes of first the February Revolution and then the October Revolution that same year. The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (the Russian SFSR) was officially established on July 10, 1918, with the ratification of the Constitution by the Fifth All-Russian Congress of Soviets.

1.1 The Russian Language

To a certain extent the story of Soviet language policy could be seen as a discussion of the development of Russian, although the two should not be entirely equated with one another. The present section focuses on the development of Russian as the first language of ethnic Russians in the USSR; the impact of Russian as the sole lingua

franca and leading second language of the Soviet citizenry is analyzed in detail in Chapter 8. The role of Russian in the USSR cannot be overstated, as the 1989 census figures show. By 1989, some 97.8 percent of the population of the Russian SFSR declared some knowledge of spoken Russian. The figures for first-language use are even more impressive: 86.6 percent of the Soviet population claimed Russian as its mother tongue, including 144,800,000 ethnic Russians, and 18,700,000 non-Russians.

The literacy campaign (Chapter 2, section 4) was aimed not just at non-Russian nationals, but at Russians as well. While Russia had relatively higher literacy rates than some other parts of the country, long-standing class distinctions between the bourgeoisie and the peasants were reflected in the educational divide, and a large percentage of the peasant population was illiterate. Regular sound change meant that the form of the Russian Cyrillic alphabet in use at the turn of the century no longer reflected the phonetic system of the language, making a poor match between orthography and sounds. The fact that certain sounds had collapsed, and others were lost, meant that much of the spelling seemed arbitrary, and learning to read and write involved a fair amount of pure memorization. The alphabet reforms were instituted to amend this problem.[26] The reforms involve eliminating archaic letters entirely, such as the letters *jat'*, *θ* and *i*, to be replaced by *e*, ***ф***, and *u*, respectively, and eliminating the use of the hard sign (ъ) at the end of words and in compounds. Certain morphological changes were proposed as well, which again involved replacing archaic forms that had been maintained in writing but lost in the spoken language. Examples are the older feminine forms of adjectives and pronouns, and archaic forms of the genitive singular of masculine and neuter adjectives.

It might be thought that alphabet reforms could not be a priority for a newly formed government, but in fact the government moved with remarkable speed in this matter. The tsarist monarchy fell on February 27, 1917, and shortly thereafter (on December 23, 1917), a decree was issued by the People's Commissariat of Education requiring all governmental and educational institutions to adopt the new orthography immediately. As of January 1, 1918, all government and state publications were required to use the new orthography.[27] The importance which the newly formed government placed on literacy is shown by the remarkable speed with which this new legislation was enacted. Alphabet reform was a high priority.

Beyond issues relating to orthography, early Soviet policy vis-à-vis Russian is twofold. First, it was concerned with coining economic and political terminology for the new Soviet state. While the roots of many of the new lexical items can be traced to tsarist Russia, it is in the Soviet period that we see an organized influx of new terminology aimed at reflecting the political spirit and beliefs of the new government. Second, language policy is marked by overt attempts at linguistic purification, namely, concentrated efforts to rid the Russian language of elements that were viewed as "impure," "undesirable" or "vulgar." The result was an early

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[26] See Comrie et al. (1996: 283–307) for a more detailed discussion of orthography and punctuation, with specifics about the development of orthographic reforms in the USSR.

[27] See Chernyshev (1947: 247–248) for the text of the decree; discussion can be found in Comrie et al. (1996) or Krouglov (1999:36).

kind of censorship which made many words taboo. The creation of new lexical items had an immediate impact on Russian, both in terms of the sudden influx of new terminology and in the creation of a large number of acronyms. The widespread use of acronyms in Russian dates to the years prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, but their use only increased in the early Soviet years. The sudden increase in the use of acronyms most likely stems from the fact that the newly created Soviet vocabulary was itself often cumbersome, with names for newly created institutions and Party programs consisting of several words. Some of these institutions, such as *Vikzhel'* (*Vserossiiskii ispolnitel'nyi komitet soiuza zheleznodorozhnikov* 'All-Russian Executive Committee of the Union of Railwaymen'), were created prior to the October Revolution, and the heavy use of acronyms came to be viewed as a trait that characterized "Soviet" Russian. Many of these acronyms are still widely used today, such as *OVIR* (*otdel viz i registratsii* (*inostrantsev*) 'the bureau of visas and registration (of foreigners)) or Stalin's economic policy which is also known in English by its acronym *NEP* (for the Russian *novaia ekonomicheskaia politika* 'new economic policy').[28]

1.2 Non-Slavic Languages in the Russian SFSR

In addition to the Slavic languages, the Russian SFSR was home to a large number of other languages. Those that were spoken in the vast territories of Siberia are discussed in Chapter 7; this section examines several of the languages in European Russia, extending from the easternmost borders of the RSFSR westward to the Urals, and from north of Leningrad to far south of Moscow, to the borders of the Transcaucasian region.

1.2.1 The Tatars

The Tatars are a Turkic-speaking group living in various parts of the former USSR. Tatars made up the second largest ethnic group in the Russian SFSR. second only to ethnic Russians: there were 3,901,834 Tatars in the RSFSR in 1939, or 3.6 percent of the total population of the Republic.[29] Although Tatars were second in size, the Russian population was significantly larger, at 90,306,276, or 82.5 percent. At the end of the Soviet era, they continued to be the second largest ethnic group in the Russian SFSR, with a population of 5,543,371 living in that Republic (or about 3.8 percent of the total population). In terms of their relationship to other ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, in 1959 they constituted the fifth largest ethnicity, coming directly after Uzbeks (see Chapter 1, Table *2).* The Tatars are one of three groups of

[28] See Comrie et al. (1996) for a discussion of the morphology of some of these acronyms, as well as more detailed information on their history and use.

[29] This ratio remained remarkably consistent in the Russian SFSR throughout the Soviet period. According to the 1989 census, there was a total population of 5,543,872 Tatars in the Republic, including the group of Crimean Tatars. They accounted for just under 3.8 percent of the total population of the Russian SFSR, while ethnic Russians made up 81.5 percent. The proportion of Russians to other ethnic groups had, however, shifted nationwide, in large part due to high birthrates among the Uzbek, and low birthrates among the Russians themselves; see Chapter 6, section 6.

"other," non-Central Asian Turkic people; the other two are the Chuvash and the Bashkirs. The Chuvash are traditionally Russian Orthodox and have been relatively isolated from the Bashkirs and the Tatars, which has helped them maintain an independent identity. In contrast, both the Bashkirs and Tatars are Muslim, which unites them not only with one another but with the Central Asian Turkic Muslims as well. The Bashkir language is closely related to Tatar, and the Bashkir people have been increasingly merging with them.

On March 23, 1918, the Bolsheviks decreed the existence of a Soviet Socialist Tatar-Bashkir Republic, but only subsequently, in April of that year, did they manage to take control of what the united Muslim Congress had declared to be an autonomous state. Due to the Civil War and political strife, no local governments were established. Just one year after the declaration of the Tatar-Bashkir Republic, the Soviets rescinded, and established the the Bashkir ASSR on March 23, 1919. Its territory was enlarged three years later, in July 1922. A separate Tatar ASSR was created on June 25, 1920. The Tatar ASSR was located inside the Russian SFSR on the Volga River to the east of Moscow. The capital of the Tatar ASSR was Kazan, and so this group of Tatars is sometimes referred to as the Kazan Tatars, or alternatively as the Volga Tatars. Most frequently in Soviet and other sources they are simply called the Tatars. They are Turkic-speaking descendants of the Golden Horde, which had established the khanate of Kazan and ruled over Russia until it was overthrown in 1522 by Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible).

The Bashkirs and the Tatars saw the formation of two separate Autonomous Republics as fracturing their political power and unity. In fact, it did have the net effect of splitting the Muslim population, and creating ethnic division. More Tatars lived in the Bashkir ASSR than did Bashkirs (947,986 Tatars and 898,092 Bashkirs in 1970), although 72 percent of the total Bashkir population lived in the Bashkir ASSR. Only 25.9 percent of the total Tatar population lived in the Tatar ASSR. In 1970, 49 percent of the population of the Tatar ASSR was actually Tatar, and 42.4 percent Russian. In the cities, however, non-Tatars clearly outnumbered Tatars, where they constituted only 36 percent of the urban population.

Tatars also live in parts of all of the former Central Asian Union Republics, with the heaviest concentration in the territories of the Kazakh SSR and the Uzbek SSR. According to the 1989 Soviet census, there was a total of 6,645,588 Tatars in the former USSR, with a total number of 5,715,000 speakers (86 percent), with an additional 370,000 Bashkir speaking Tatar as a first language. The Tatar population was spread throughout a number of Union Republics, most heavily concentrated in the Tatar ASSR within the Russian SFSR, but also living in relatively large groups in the Central Asian Republics: 328,000 in the Kazakh SSSR; 70,000 in the Kyrgyz SSR; 80,000 in the Tajikistan SSR; 40,434 in the Turkmenistan SSSR; and 468,000 in the Uzbek SSR. They lived in lesser concentrations in the Caucasus (31,787 in the Azerbaijan SSR; 3,102 in the Georgian SSR) and a relatively small number of speakers inhabited the Baltics (5,000 in the Latvian SSR; 4,000 in the Estonian SSR; 5,100 in the Lithuanian SSR). A sizable group (90,542) was located in the Ukrainian SSR.

Taken as a whole, the Tatars represent a very large ethnic group throughout the Soviet Union. The population size remained in roughly the same relative position

throughout the course of USSR history, as seen in Table 6; here the figures for Central Asia exclude the Kazakh SSR:

Table 6. Distribution of Tatars in USSR, 1959 and 1989[30]

	1959		1989	
	Tatar population	percentage of all Tatars	Tatar population	percentage of all Tatars
Russian SFSR	4,075,000	82.0	5,543,371	80.1
Central Asia	588,000	11.8	848,312	12.3
Kazakh SSR	192,000	3.9	327,982	4.8
Others	113,000	2.3	200,810	2.9
Total	4,968,000	100.0	6,920,475	100.0

Prior to 1918, the Tatar educational system was linked to their religious institutions, and Moslem clergy oversaw the schools. These were divided into primary schools (called *mekteps*) and higher schools (*medreses*). This system provided an early model for the development of schools in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan (Chapter 6, sections 4.1–4.2) under Tatar influence in Central Asia. One result was that the Tatars had higher levels of literacy than most of the Turkic-speaking peoples of the USSR. In 1926 the Tatar ASSR had an overall literacy rate of 48.2 percent, while the other predominantly Turkic republics ranged from the "high" of the Azerbaijan SSR at 25.2 percent to the low of the Uzbek SSR at 10.6 percent (Poliakov 1992:40–42).[31]

Alongside education, the Tatars had a well-established literary tradition at the time of the formation of the Soviet Union. Its literary heritage included not only common Turkic literature and Islamic texts, but also a rich body of poetry, based on Tatar legends. By the nineteenth century, Tatar literature had become an important vehicle for social and cultural debate, and played an important role in disseminating information and new ideas among Tatars. Like other (Soviet) Turkic languages, it was written using Arabic script. It was converted to the Latin alphabet in 1927, and then to Cyrillic in 1939–40. The change away from Arabic had the net effect of making older publications inaccessible unless rewritten (and republished) in the newer alphabet, thus guaranteeing State control over the population's reading. Publications in Tatar did continue throughout the entirety of the existence of the Soviet State. In 1971, a total of 81 Tatar-language newspapers were published in the USSR, with a circulation of 731,000. Given that the Tatar population for that same year was 5,931,000, with an official language retention rate of 89.2 percent (or a total number of 5,290,452 speakers), this is a relatively insignificant number. By 1989, an estimated 0.7 books in Tatar were published for each Tatar person (as opposed to the nationwide average of approximately 9 books per person). One

[30] 1939 census data from Poliakov et al. (1992:57); 1989 census data in Karasik (1992: 441-451).

[31] The Central Asian Union Republic with the lowest literacy rate in 1926 was the Tajik SSR (at 3.7 percent), excluded here because its titular majority is Indo-Iranian; it should, however, probably be included in the comparison on the basis of common historical and social background.

reason is that Soviet policy "ranked" languages for the purposes of allocating resources according to their political status, not according to the number of speakers. Republic languages had higher status than Tatar, although in terms of population size it outnumbered the titular languages of the smaller Republics. The lack of State support ultimately led to language shift away from Tatar to Russian.

In the late nineteenth century, the Tatar schools were well-established. They were not supported by the tsarist regime, but rather suppressed, largely due to their Muslim nature. After the 1905 Revolution, school reform flourished, and by 1911, in Kazan alone there were 1,822 schools, with 132,000 students enrolled. The schools had a strong religious component, and the curriculum included not only Arabic language and literature in addition to Turkic language and literature, but also the study of the Koran, prophetic tradition and Islamic history, alongside more traditionally Western topics such as mathematics and geography. The schools in Kazan became centers for Muslim study, and Muslims from all over tsarist Russia enrolled their children there.

One of the results of the nativization campaign was the declaration of Tatar as an official language in the Tatar ASSR. Initially, when the Tatar ASSR was created in 1920, the declaration of Tatar's official status, alongside Russian, meant that its use was obligatory in all governmental offices and establishments. In the 1930's this declaration was quietly forgotten, and Russian became the sole governmental language. Still, the emphasis on native-based education further meant that a number of institutions of higher education were established, including the Society for Tatar Studies. Despite this promising beginning, Soviet policy quickly shifted, and as early as 1929, the Society for Tatar Studies was closed. In the academic year 1930–31, more than 96 percent of all Tatar children were enrolled in schools with programs conducted entirely in the Tatar language (*Revoliutsiia i natsional'nosti* (1933) XII:63). This rapid success is not surprising, given that the Tatars had a well-established educational tradition long before the Bolshevik Revolution. In this the Tatars are unlike the majority of Turkic speakers in Central Asia, where not only did the educational institutions need to be created, but also the public's attitudes toward education needed to be addressed. Still, the Soviet government maintained at best an inconsistent policy toward Tatar-language education. Thus, for example, Tatar schools were permitted within the Tatar ASSR itself and in other parts of the Russian SFSR. In 1958, there were 2000 such schools in the Tatar ASSR, and another 1225 in the Bashkir ASSR and in other regions of the Russian SFSR (Burbiel 1975:408). Once again, given the large population size, this number of schools could hardly suffice. But despite large Tatar populations in other Union Republics, no Tatar schools were allowed. By the late 1980's, only 7 percent of Tatar children were enrolled in Tatar schools. This inconsistent attitude toward education in some of the native languages was typical of the Soviet government. The Crimean Tatars, for example, were not allowed to conduct Crimean language instruction in those areas where they had been deported, even after they were partially rehabilitated in 1967. Similar cases of of explicit discrimination include the Belorussians and Ukrainians, who were also not allowed native-language instruction outside of their titular Republics. In contrast, Armenian-language schools could be

found in the Georgian SSR, and Uzbek schools in the Kyrgyz and Tajik SSR (Burbiel 1975:408 fn 99).

Given these policies, it is not surprising that Tatar language retention rates have been steadily decreasing. In 1926, the native tongue retention rate was 98.9 percent; this showed a slight decline to 92.1 percent in 1959. It dropped more dramatically in the latter decades of the Soviet Union, and was down to 89.2 percent in 1970, and 83.2 percent in 1989. Clearly, the fact that they remained a relatively compact group had a positive effect on native tongue maintenance. Retention rates decrease with migration, but the Tatars who emigrated to territories with close cultural affinity and support maintained higher levels of native-language use. Thus, for example, language maintenance rates were very high in the Central Asian Republics, where there were close historical and cultural ties between the Tatars and the local population. In 1959 the retention rate for Tatars living in the Kyrgyz SSR and in the Tajik SSR was 91 percent, only one percent lower than the overall retention rate for that year. Some of this is offset by urbanization, and the Tatars who migrated to urban (non-Tatar) environments were more likely to give up use of their heritage language than were those who transferred to rural settings. In the Bashkir ASSR in this same time period (1959), migrant Tatars in urban settings were four times more likely to have adopted Russian than in rural settings.

The situation changed toward the end of the Soviet era. On August 30, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Tatar ASSR ratified the “Declaration of the Sovereignty of the Tatar ASSR,” which created the Republic of Tatarstan in place of the former Union Republic. It simultaneously ratified the official status of Tatar, on a par with Russian, and supported the preservation and development of other languages. On this basis, Tatarstan ratified first a language law (on July 8, 1992) and then a new constitution (on November 6, 1992); Article 4 guarantees that both Tatar and Russian have equal status, and Article 20 guarantees that citizens have the right to use their native language. In July 1994, the Tatarstan government ratified a program for the development of the languages of the Republic, specifying measures to be enacted and goals to be attained by the year 2002. The post-Soviet period has seen a marked growth in Tatar-language schools and daycare centers. The number of Tatar-language newspapers doubled and there was an increase in the numbers of journals, including the introduction of a children’s magazine and a youth magazine. By the mid 1990’s radio broadcasts from Kazan totaled six hours a day, and television broadcasts five hours a day, with half of the broadcast time exclusively in Tatar.

In addition to the Bashkirs and Volga (or Kazan) Tatars, the Crimean Tatars constitute yet another group of Tatars. They too are ethno-linguistically Turkic peoples. After the Mongol Conquest of the Crimean Peninsula and adjacent areas, they appear in historical records as Tatars. They lived with other Turkic people for centuries, occupying territory in the Crimea under governance of the Khans of the Golden Horde. In the fifteenth century (1440) they established an independent state, the Crimean Khanate. They existed under the same ruling dynasty until, after several invasions by Russian troops beginning in 1771, they were incorporated into tsarist Russia in 1783. By the end of the Soviet era, the Crimean Tatars were largely a diaspora population, inhabiting not only the Crimea (where they had been a minority group since the Revolution), but also parts of Central Asia, due primarily to the

enforced deportations of World War II. The Crimean Tatars are numerically a much smaller group than the Kazan Tatars, with an estimated population of only about 200,000 at the end of the nineteenth century. They are not counted separately in Soviet censuses, but rather recorded together with the (Kazan) Tatars. In the early 1970's they were estimated to number approximately 300,000 (Burbiel 1975:390).

A Crimean ASSR was established in October 1921. When the nativization campaign hit the Crimea in the 1920's, the Crimean Tatars were encouraged to establish their language and culture in the region. Tatar, along with Russian, became the official language of the Republic, the number of schools where Tatar was the language of instruction was increased, and in 1925, the Oriental Institute was founded at Tavrida University for studying Tatar language and literature. A variety of books, newspapers and journals were published in Tatar. The flourishing of Tatar language and culture came to an abrupt conclusion with the end of the nativization campaign, and Tatar leaders were purged.

Along with other ethnic groups such as the Chechen and Ingush, Balkars, Kalmyks, Karachay (see Chapter 5, Table 17), the Volga Germans, and the Crimean Tatars all became suspect during World War II. They were deported from their lands under allegations of collaboration with the Germans. Unlike some groups who were relocated to Siberia, the Crimean Tatars were sent to the Uzbek and Kazakh SSR's in 1944. In 1946 the Crimean ASSR was dissolved and the land was incorporated into the Ukrainian SSR. In conjunction with their deportation and alleged crimes, they ceased to be officially recognized as nationalities and they were stripped of their "rights" as Soviet citizens. The rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars has proceeded somewhat differently than that of the groups from the Caucasus or of the Volga Germans. The 1959 census does recognize an ethnic group of Tatars, but not a separate group of Crimean Tatars. A decree in 1967 rehabilitated them but did not return them to their territory, which continued to be part of the Ukrainian SSR and had been resettled by Ukrainians. Instead, the decree referred to them as "formerly resident in the Crimea."

The late 1980's saw the beginnings of Tatar-language instruction in Uzbekistan and in the Crimea. Significant changes were seen in teacher-training and the publishing of pedagogical materials: textbooks, which had been out of print for many decades, were reintroduced, and a Crimean Tatar faculty was opened at Simferopol State University. Radio and television broadcasts in Crimean Tatar were increased in Uzbekistan and were introduced in Tajikistan. A weekly supplement to the newspaper *Krymskaia Pravda* ('Crimean Truth') began to appear in Crimean Tatar.[32] Crimean Tatars were finally treated as a separate ethnic group in the 1989 census and were awarded a separate entry in the 1989 edition of the Soviet encyclopedia. It should be noted that, in contrast to the (Kazan) Tatars, the Crimean Tatars have maintained a relatively high level of retention at 92.6 percent (1989). In terms of raw numbers, however, there is a significantly smaller speaker base, as that

[32] Information from Lazzerini (1990:334), citing the expanded programming in *Lenin Bayrag'h* for Uzbekistan, and TASS from Dushanbe (January 11, 1989) and from Kulyab (February 18, 1989) for Tadzhikistan.

same census cites a total of only 271,715 Crimean Tatars, as opposed to 6,648,760 Tatars.

1.2.2 The Jewish Population

Beginning in the thirteenth century, Jewish populations from Western and Central Europe began settling territories in Lithuania, Poland and the western parts of Ukraine. When these regions were annexed to the Russian Empire after the Partitions of Poland in the late eighteenth century (1772–1795) and the Napoleonic Wars, the result was that the largest Jewish community in the world was under tsarist rule. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, the Jews in Russia had a well-developed system of schools, such that the Ministry of Education reported that some 400,000 Jewish children were enrolled in these schools toward the end of the tsarist regime (1912), distributed among 773 secular schools, 7,743 primary religious schools (*hadorim*) and 147 Talmud schools.[33] Education in the secular schools was primarily in Russian, and in the religious schools in Yiddish and Hebrew. Toward the end of this time period, Yiddish and Hebrew were being incorporated into the secular schools as well. The Jewish population living in Russia at this time is estimated to have been approximately 7 million; when the Bolsheviks gained control of the government, the population was halved, due to the separation of Poland, Lithuania and Bessarabia, where much of the Jewish population resided. By the time these territories were re-annexed in World War II, the population had been reduced to roughly 5 million.

A large percentage of the Jewish population was involved in the Bolshevik Revolution and joined the Communist party, and the initial history of the Jews in the early Soviet period has several contradictory points. At first both Lenin and Stalin argued against what they saw as "Jewish cultural autonomy," and yet at the same time, some development of Jewish culture was permitted. In August 1918, the first Soviet decree on Jewish schools was published, and in that same year, the Jewish sections of the Communist Party coalesced as the *Yevsektsiia* (from *ievreiskaia sektsia* 'Jewish sector'), and took on responsibility for revitalizing Jewish culture and economics in these early post-Revolutionary years. In the 1920's, Jewish culture and education flourished, as did the Yiddish language. At the same time, the use of Hebrew as a language of study, education, discourse or publication was outlawed. The Soviet government had begun encouraging the Jewish schools to teach "in the Bolshevik spirit." By 1931, the Yevsektsiia had organized a total of 1,100 Jewish schools servicing 130,000 students, ranging from primary education to teacher's colleges and technical-vocational schools. This initial support stems from the interpretation of the Jewish people as a "nationality," and Yiddish language and culture were put forward by activists such as the Yevsektsiia as crucial elements in Jewish identity. They were thus supported as part of the larger nativization movement (Chapter 2, section 3.3). Yet the Jewish population was not viewed as constituting a "nation" as defined by Stalin, as they lacked a common territory and, in many cases, a common language. Lenin did state that they had "a common

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[33]Source: *Vestnik Ope*, February 1914, cited in Schulman (1971:2–15).

descent and nationality" (1937:293), and Stalin that they "had a common religion, origin, and certain relics of a national character" (1936:6–8). Then in March 1930, the Yevsektsiia was abruptly disbanded, and many of its members fell victims to the Purges of the 1930's. In 1928, it had been officially announced that a Jewish territory would be set aside for the Jewish population in the Siberian Far East which, coincidentally, was a region that had no historical connection for these people. The existence of the Jewish Autonomous Region in Birobidzhan was decreed in May 1934, but few Jewish people settled there: according to the 1989 census, only 4.2 percent of its population is Jewish.[34] Yiddish was nominally its official language. Curiously in this same year, 1934, the language became formally renamed *Soviet Yiddish,* despite the fact that it did not differ substantially from "non-Soviet" Yiddish, except for a heavy influx of Soviet lexical items related to the new socio-political structures introduced by the Communist government, as well as political and technical terminology which Yiddish had lacked prior to the Revolution. (In this it was, however, similar to all the languages of the Soviet Union, including Russian. The language planners paid careful attention to the development of a "Soviet" vocabulary for each new written language; see Chapter 2, section 4.4.) As perhaps its new name suggests, "Soviet" Yiddish was identified as the ethnic language of the Jewish nationality. (Its position as an ethnic language in the USSR is further underscored by its Russian name, *evreiskii iazyk* 'Jewish language') This is in contrast to Hebrew, whose use was officially banned in 1920, as it was seen as a language of religion and symbolic of Zionism.

Yiddish is written right-to-left using Hebrew script. Semitic elements (including words taken from Hebrew) are written using Hebrew orthographic conventions, and non-Semitic elements are written using a vowelized spelling system, based in part on phonetic principles, and in part on German orthographic conventions. In the early twentieth century, even before the Bolshevik Revolution, Yiddish orthographic reform had become a topic of much debate both in and outside of Russia.35 The question of how to handle the spelling of Hebrew loanwords was particularly politicized, since the Hebrew orthographic conventions made sense only if one knew Hebrew. This led some to advocate Hebrew language instruction in the schools, an idea which never found widespread support. A discussion of proposals for spelling reform took place in March 1919 at a session of the Central Bureau of Yevsektsiia, and a few months later, in early 1920, Ajzik Zaretski, the key Yiddish linguist in the Soviet Union, published a discussion of the pros and cons of orthographic reform (Zaretski 1920, cited in Estraikh 1999:120–121). In Zaretski's discussion, orthographic reform would be motivated by educational concerns: the new spelling would facilitate learning written Yiddish, which would in itself result in more time for learning other subjects. Arguments against spelling reform centered on the

[34] It is often unclear how to count Ashkenazic Jews in the Soviet censuses. The 1989 census cited Mountain Jews, Goergian Jews, Bukharan (Central Asian) Jews and Krymchaks (Crimean Jews) separately, but there is no clear indication of how accurate this count is for Jews across Central Asia and Transcaucasia (Tolts 1999:134).

[35] See Estraikh (1999) for a discussion of the political motivations involved in the various proposals for orthographic reform. Fishman (1991:195–197) presents more information on Yiddish orthography; Estraikh (1999:114–140) provides a thorough history of Soviet Yiddish spelling reforms.

disruption of tradition and the difficulties of teaching those who knew the existing orthographic system to use the revised one, although Zaretski did not see that these arguments outweighed the benefits of reform. Shortly thereafter, in Moscow in May 1920, the first All-Russian Convention of Jewish Educators ratified Yiddish spelling reform based on phonetic principles for both non-Semitic and Semitic words. The new spelling rules were published only in 1932 in Kharkov (*Di sovetishe jidishe orfograje*), by which time they were already in use throughout the USSR.

The history of the Jewish Press is indicative of the decline of Yiddish itself over the course of the Soviet period. In the very early years, 1917–1918, an estimated 170 different periodicals were published. Some of these were Communist in nature and initially survived, while the non-Communist publications folded. By 1935, Jewish dailies were published in several cities, including Moscow, Minsk, and Birobidzhan. This activity ended quickly: in 1939, the Moscow newspaper *Der emes* ('Truth') was closed down; the Birobidzhan Yiddish paper became the sole Yiddish-language newspaper for the Russian SFSR. A mere seven Yiddish periodicals remained in the entire Soviet Union. Their total circulation was only 38,700 for a population of 3 million. Jewish cultural activity was revived, in a limited fashion, after the annexation of territories with concentrated Jewish populations: the eastern part of Poland was annexed in 1939 as part of the Soviet-Nazi pact, and the Baltic states were acquired in 1940. As a result, the total Jewish population increased to approximately 5 million, and the Soviet government responded by opening Yiddish schools and creating Yiddish-language publications, in large part for propaganda purposes (Pinchuk 1990:70–79, cited in Estraikh 1999:97). In 1942 the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee began the publication of a new Yiddish newspaper, *Ejnikait* ('Unity'), and some 100,000 books and brochures were published in Yiddish. These moves were at least in part designed to win support from non-Soviet Jews in the West.

By the end of World War II, all of the Jewish schools had been abolished, and attempts to reopen them met with failure until the end of the Soviet era. 1949 saw the close of virtually all Yiddish language institutions, including the handful of periodicals which had begun during the war (i.e. *Hejmland,* published in Moscow; *Shtern,* in Kiev; and *Birobidzhan*), all Yiddish theaters, including the Jewish State Theater in Moscow, and the very few schools which had remained open until this point. The Yiddish publishing house *Der emes,* located in Moscow, was also closed.

No real changes came until 1961, when the Yiddish journal *Sovetish hejmland* (*Soviet Homeland*) came into being. A monthly periodical created under the auspices of the Soviet Writers' Union, its early content ranged from memoirs, an and performance reviews and so on, with an official circulation of 25,000 in 1961. Many of these copies were sold abroad, which makes it difficult to calculate its real circulation within the Soviet Union. Regardless, the numbers of copies published dropped markedly over the next two decades, with an official circulation of only 10,000 in 1971 and 5000 in 1985 (Estraikh 1999; Moskovich 1987). In 1969 the journal began publishing Yiddish lessons. Collections of lessons were published in supplementary, booklet form. The other long-standing Jewish publication is *Birobidzhaner Shtern,* a two-page "newspaper" that appears three times a week and publishes translations into Yiddish from the Soviet news sources. In 1970 its official

circulation was 12,000, which amounts to a total of 4.28 copies per 100 Yiddish speakers (Katz 1975). Book publishing follows similar trends. In 1932, 653 different titles were published in Yiddish, with more than a million in print. In 1970 only four Yiddish titles were published, which Katz (1975:375) cites as a "good" year, since in many years none were published.

Language shift among the Jewish population was rapid in the Soviet period. In the 1897 census 96.9 percent of all Jews in (tsarist) Russia considered Yiddish to be their native language. This figure had dropped to 70.4 percent in 1926. Tolts (1999:135) argues that decline of Yiddish was well underway prior to World War II, estimating that in 1939 it was spoken by only approximately 40 percent of Ashkenazic Jews in the three Slavic Republics, with a rate of only 25 percent the Russian SFSR, 40 percent in the Ukrainian SSR, and a high of 55 percent in the Belorussian SSSR. By the 1959 census, only 17.9 percent of the Jewish population cited Yiddish as a mother tongue; by 1989, only 11.1 percent. Population size was not the determining factor, as the Jewish population was large—it was the seventh largest ethnic group in 1939 (Table 2, Chapter 1, section 1.2)—but the population was relatively dispersed, as opposed to other large nationalities, and it was in heavy contact with speakers of other languages, in particular of Russian. Moreover, in the post World War II era, there was little State support for Yiddish. Even the very low official language retention rates offer what is almost certainly an overly optimistic view of actual Yiddish vitality in the USSR. Tolts (1999:336) argues that a general ageing of the Jewish population has masked the true extent of Yiddish attrition, because the language is retained mostly by the elderly part of the population. Between 1959 and 1989, the overall proportion of the Ashkenazic Jewish group aged 65 and above rose from 9 to 27 percent in the Russian SFSR, from 9 to 25 percent in the Ukrainian SSR, and from 7 to 20 percent in the Belorussian SSSR.

Since 1989, the situation for both Yiddish and its speakers has changed considerably. In the years 1989–1991, an estimated 1000 people began studying Yiddish in the Soviet Union (Estraikh 1999:107). A lack of qualified teachers, coupled with mass emigration of the Jewish population, made it difficult to reinstate any kind of Yiddish schooling. In addition, Hebrew had gained prominence over Yiddish as the "Jewish" language for younger generations, in particular for those looking to establish ties with Israel. One of the marked demographic shifts in the population since the break-up of the USSR has been in the geographic location. In 1989, 39 percent of all Jews in the Soviet Union lived in the Russian SFSR. Ten years later, the number was closer to 60 percent, and ex-Soviet Jews were becoming more concentrated in Russia. The 1994 Russian micro-census asked questions not only about native and second language, but also about the language of primary conversation in the home. Only 2.4 percent of all Jews in Moscow, and 3.4 percent of all Jews in Birobidzhan, declared Yiddish as their primary language in the home. If one deducts mixed households and calculates language use for Jewish-only homes, the percentages rise to 16.6 percent in Moscow and 19.3 percent in Birobidzhan. Even so, the figures are hardly reassuring for the future vitality of Yiddish in Russia.

1.2.3 The Germans

Ethnic Germans constituted one of the largest nationalities in the Soviet Union: following the 1989 census, they were ranked fifteenth in size (see Chapter 1, Table 3), with over two million people. This made them the largest group of ethnic Germans in the Eastern bloc outside of the German Democratic Republic. Germans came to be living in Russian territory during the reign of Catherine the Great in response to her Manifesto, which was an invitation for settlement with the promise of land for purchase, exemption from military service, and religious freedom. In the period 1763–1767, thousands of Germans immigrated to Russia to settle in villages along the banks of the Volga River; from this they became known as the *Volga Germans.* Some 25,000–30,000 Germans settled in the region at this time. By the end of 1800's to the early 1900's, the population had grown enormously. Counts vary, but the population was well over one million by World War I.

As a non-autochthonous language, German was somewhat outside the purview of Soviet language policy, but by virtue of population size and long-standing written and educational traditions, and German was a language of instruction. By the late 1930's, there were seventeen German National Districts outside of the Volga German Republic; six of these national Districts were in the Russian SFSR. These districts had their own national schools and press. Yet with the outbreak of World War II, the German immigrants fell victim to strong anti-German sentiments and came to be viewed as potential spies and "enemies of the State." On August 28, 1941 the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet ordered their evacuation in a decree entitled *On the Evacuation of Germans in the Volga Area.* The entire population of Volga Germans was exiled to Siberia and Central Asia in early September of that year; an estimated one million Germans were relocated to Central Asia, primarily to the Kazakh SSR.[36] The Volga-German Republic was dissolved. They were not officially granted any kind of amnesty until September 17, 1955: an official decree lifted the prohibitions placed on their legal status, but they were required to sign a pledge not to return to their original settlements. They were rehabilitated only on August 29, 1964, when the Soviet government officially admitted that charges that prompted the deportations were groundless; a few months later, on January 5, 1965, an official statement voided the 1941 decree.

After amnesty was granted in 1955, some initial changes were made. In 1958 the publication of German-language newspapers resumed, with one (*Neues Leben*) published in Moscow and another (*Arbeit*) in the Altai Territory; somewhat later German-language radio broadcasts were begun in Alma-Ata. Nonetheless, the net result of the deportations and oppression, from a linguistic standpoint, has been one of language attrition. In 1926, the Soviet German population had a language retention rate of 94.4 percent; this had dropped to 75 percent by 1959 and was down to 48.7 percent by 1989. While there is some truth to the claim that the Germans are in many respects like other national minorities in the USSR (Lewis 1973:43), their history as a targeted group has had significant impact on German language vitality in

[36] Their deportation had a significant impact on Central Asians as well. Living in an exiled state, the Germans never became part of Central Asian society. They used, almost exclusively, Russian as a second language, and not the titular majority language.

the Soviet Union. By 1989 they had the lowest heritage language retention rate of any population over two million in the Soviet Union; the next lowest group is the Ukrainians, with a retention rate of 81.1 percent. Throughout, the Germans maintained a sense of living as a diaspora, and large numbers emigrated in the late Soviet period, with a total of 52,000 leaving in 1988 (Hyman 1996:468). During the period 1989–1995, more than 300,000 Germans emigrated from Kazakhstan alone, which has had a significant impact (e.g. the daily German newspaper was cut back to weekly publication, and so on; Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001:46, 90–91).

1.2.4 The Finno-Ugric People

Relatively large numbers of people from several different Balto-Finnic groups inhabited the regions to the north and northwest of Leningrad. This includes Karelian, Livvi and Ludian (of the Baltic-Finnic subgroup); speakers of Mari and the Chermisic languages are found east of Moscow. The former group, located to the north of Leningrad, inhabited territory at one point configured as the Karelo-Finnish SSR, which existed as a Union Republic until 1956. At this time it was abolished and replaced by Karelian ASSR. At least superficially, this would seem to have meant that the Karelians held regional autonomy and power, although Karelians constitute a minority in the Autonomous Republic, only 11.8 percent of the total population (as opposed to the Russian majority of 68.1 percent). Karelian is divided into three major dialects: Karelian, Livvi and Ludian, which are classified as three separate languages in the *Ethnologue.*

Sociolinguistic surveys conducted in rural and urban Karelia (1969 and 1972, respectively) show that language shift from Karelian to Russian was underway at this point and was more accelerated in the urban areas (Klement'ev 1971, 1974). According to the 1970 census, 95 percent of urban Karelians either have fluent command of Russian and/or consider it their native language. This is opposed to the data of the 1926 census, which showed that 76.5 percent of Karelians considered Karelian to be their first language. Klement'ev's study considered the correlation between language competency and domain of usage and age, level of education, and socioeconomic status. His questionnaire asked specific questions about language use with a variety of interlocutors (such as language use with one's spouse, parents, or children, or with relatives visiting from the village) and in different domains (at home, at work, in the army, daily use). The results of these surveys are not unexpected. Among urban Karelians, people aged 50 and over have a very solid knowledge of their heritage language; this declines for the group aged 30-49; and significantly drops for the youngest group in the survey, ages 16-29; in fact, less than half of those aged 16–19 report Karelian as their first language. Use of Russian increases in correlation with level of education; white-collar and highly skilled workers show an increased use and competency in Russian; unskilled laborers are more likely to use Karelian. In contrast, use of Karelian is much stronger in rural environments and in the villages, although there is some language shift here as well. Still, a comparison of the youngest group of respondents shows a marked difference between rural and urban settings. For Karelians aged 16–19, a full 85.5 percent of rural dwellers claim to have a fluent command of the language; only 45.5 percent of

this group does among urban respondents. The difference in language retention between the two settings almost certainly has to do with the kinds of situations where one or the other language was used. Certainly, Karelian cities were more "Russian" at this time: only 7.7 percent of the urban population was Karelian in 1970. There is a strong correlation between language use and the speaker's level of education and the type of work setting. An increase in Russian language use and fluency are associated with the younger sector of the population and with Karelians who have attained higher levels of education. The link with education is not surprising, given that all education (from primary school on up) was conducted in Russian. Other factors involved in language shift include the ever-increasing tendency toward urbanization: in 1926, a full 77.4 percent of the population was rural, as opposed to only 27.8 percent in 1959. Furthermore, there has been an increase in mixed marriages, with about 30 percent of all Karelian marriages mixed as of 1969.

Of the three Balto-Finnic languages spoken to the north and northwest of Leningrad, shift to Russian was greatest among ethnic Ludians, and had occurred to a significantly lesser degree among Livvi and Karelians as of the mid-1970's (Klement'ev 1976:28). More recently, an estimated 80,000 Livvi from a total ethnic population of 140,000, or 57 percent, maintained their heritage language (as of 1992), in contrast to Ludian, which is cited as having few child speakers. Karelian is somewhat more robust, with 118,000 mother-tongue speakers out of a total population of 170.000, or 68.6 percent, in Russia (as of 1993; recent figures from Grimes 2000).

The Finno-Ugric languages spoken in the regions around Moscow are on the Finno-Cheremisic branch of the family, which itself divides into two sub-groups, the Cheremisic sub-branch, which includes Low Mari and High Mari, and the Finno-Mordvinic sub-branch, which includes two Mordvinic languages, Moksha and Erzya. Low Mari is spoken in the Mari ASSR, on the left bank of the Volga, and in the Bashkir, Tatar and Udmurt ASSR's. Moksha and Erzya are often called simply Mordvinian, and Low and High Mari are referred to as Mari, and are treated in Soviet works as a single nationality. This has left us with historical records which force us to do the same. They were not distinguished until the 1994 mini census. Yet even these data are unreliable and inconsistent. The discrepancies appear to stem from different instructions to different census takers; Belikov (1999) concludes that only the census takers in Mordovia were told to distinguish Moksha and Erzya, as elsewhere the two groups are conflated into one single Mordvinian language.

The Mari have managed somewhat better levels of language retention than the Mordvinians, despite the fact that the Mari constituted a minority in their own Autonomous Republic by the late Soviet era. The numbers of ethnic Mari have been steadily increasing, from an official figure of 375,200 in 1897 to 670,868 according to the 1989 census. They ranked twenty-fifth in terms of population size in the USSR, and eleventh in the Russian SFSR. A Mari written language was created prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, and the first works to be published in Mari were translations of the Old and New Testaments, the Gospels, and catechisms. Between the years 1867 and 1905, more than 80 different titles had been published in Mari; these were written on the basis of what were identified as three main dialect groups:

High, Eastern and Meadow. Mari was taught in individual schools prior to the Revolution, and after 1917 was taught in secondary schools and in some institutions of higher education. It was used for the publication of magazines and newspapers in some key cities in the Republic, such as Kazan. In the years 1921–1937, work was done on developing a codified literary standard. At the XII Party Congress in 1929. the decision was made to create two standards, one on High Mari and the other on what Soviet sources refer to as "Eastern-Meadow." The first wave of orthographic reforms toward a Latin-based orthography was in the years 1930–1932 for Mari; this was revoked in favor of Cyrillic in 1938. The population is typically bilingual, with relatively high knowledge of both Russian and Mari. In answer to a survey question asking which language they speak better, 48.5 percent responded Mari, as opposed to 14.5 percent who claimed Russian; 35.9 percent claimed to know both languages equally well. Yet at the same time only 42.8 percent of Mari parents reported speaking only Mari with their children, while 74.1 percent reported speaking only Mari with their parents, suggesting that language shift is in progress. On October 22, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Mari ASSR ratified the *Declaration about the State Sovereignty of the Mari Soviet Socialist Republic* which stated, in Article 5: "In the Mari SSR—the Mari El Republic, the Mari language (Meadow, High) and the Russian languages will function equally as state languages and the preservation and development of the other national languages of those living in its territory is guaranteed." The Republic's newspaper (*Mariiskaia pravda* 'Mari truth') published the language law of the Mari El Republic which ratified the intrinsic value of the native languages of the Republic and declared them to have equal rights under governmental protection. By 1993, there were a considerable number of schools where Mari language instruction was conducted: 236 schools and 19,937 pupils in the Mari Republic; 190 schools and 10,887 pupils in the Bashkir Republic; 10 schools with 992 pupils in Tatarstan; and approximately 20 other schools in other regions. (See Neroznak 1995:151–53 for further information.)

The Mordvinians settled the territory of what is now Russia some three thousand years ago, inhabiting the land between the Volga, Oka and Sura rivers. There are two separate branches of Mordvinian, the Erzya and the Moksha; these names are ethnonyms of these groups. The 1897 census reported 1,023,841 Mordvinians, and yet many intellectuals of that time period were already predicting that they would be assimilated by Russians. Historical accounts of the Mordvinians dating to the seventeenth century already show a high degree of Russian assimilation, and a number of Russian borrowings appear in the first recorded documents in Moksha and Erzya, which were lexicons. Mordvinians were considered by the government to be completely Russified by 1868, when the Kazan Translating Commission of the Russian Orthodox Missionary Society purposefully chose to ignore translations into Mordvinian, considering the people's knowledge of Russian already sufficient. When the ethnographer Lev Shternberg examined the situation of the Volga people in 1910, he categorized the Mordvinians as already being in serious trouble. According to the 1989 census, the population totaled 1,152,000. The census does not distinguish between the Moksha and Erzya, and demographic information about these two groups is available only for those living in Mordovia. Feoktistov (1996)

puts the population at approximately 450,000 speakers of Moksha and 650-700,000 of Erzya.

Despite these dismal predictions at the turn of the century, Soviet language planners eventually decided to develop Mordvinian. The people did meet Stalin's criteria of a nation; in 1934 the Mordvinian ASSR was created. The first Erzya primer appeared in 1921 using the Cyrillic alphabet, and the first Moksha primer followed in 1924. In particular the Moksha primer was considered inadequate and flawed, and there were numerous complaints about the quality of pedagogical materials in general throughout the 1920's. The publication of native literary works began in the 1920's, and the first Erzya newspaper (*Chin' stiamo* 'Sunrise') was created in 1920; the newspaper *Iakstere teshte* 'Red star' appeared the following year, in 1921, and was published in both Erzya and Moksha. Despite these advances, both Erzya and Moksha had limited spheres of usage. In the villages in the Mordvinian Autonomous Republic approximately 40 percent of all public presentations were in Russian, while in urban centers this figure reached more than 95 percent (1981). In the 1960's, Mordvinian was used as a language of instruction in the lower grades of the elementary schools and was taught as a secondary subject in the upper grades. In the 1970's, however, all instruction was converted to Russian.[37] By the late 1970's, the situation for the language and people looked grim: 70 percent of all Mordvinians lived outside the Mordvinian ASSR, and complete language shift to Russian appeared to be a real possibility. Language retention rates in the ASSR were at about 95 percent, but dropped to 67 percent for that majority of Mordvinians living outside of their homeland. As of 1995, Mordvinian (or Erzya and Moksha) had still not achieved the status of state languages in the Republic of Mordovia, despite a proposed language law which would grant it this status. Yet by this time at least some advances had been made in terms of reinstating it in the schools, and by 2002 there were 178 Moksha and 116 Erzya elementary schools in the Republic, along with 33 Tatar schools. In 279 of these instruction for grades 1–4 is conducted in one of these language. They have also been introduced as secondary subjects in some schools with Russian and/or mixed student bodies (Neroznak 2002:240). Nonetheless, the overall prospects for Moksha and Erzya are not promising. They are taught in only 18 schools outside of the Republic, and are not languages of instruction within the Republic beyond the fourth grade.

2. THE UKRAINIAN SSR

The Ukrainian SSR was the second largest Union Republic in terms of population, with some 49,609,000 inhabitants (1979). The linguistic repression of many centuries created an atmosphere of hostility toward Russian in some places, and toward Ukrainian in others. Here, as elsewhere in the USSR, there is a marked difference in language attitudes between urban and rural areas.

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[37] Mordovian schools were converted to Russian in the 1970's (Neroznak 1995:163). In the 1973–74 academic year, there were 391 Mordvinian schools with Mordovian language instruction through the third grade. The switch to Russian-based instruction had been instituted from the fourth grade on by 1970 (Kreindler 1985:253).

In pre-Soviet times, the Ukrainian population was divided into several territories in three different States. Approximately 85 percent of the world's total Ukrainian population lived in Russian Ukraine, 13 percent in Austrian Ukraine, in the territories of Eastern Galicia and Bukovina, and 3 percent in Transcarpathia.[38] Although the use of Ukrainian was permitted in Austrian Ukraine, it was largely prohibited both in Transcarpathia, and in Russian Ukraine, where the majority of the population was located. Under the Tsarist regime, Ukrainian was declared to be a dialect of Russian; its use in any official capacity was forbidden. Tsarist reports abound with statements denying the existence of Ukrainian as a distinct linguistic system. Active repression of the language can be dated at least to 1876, with the official proclamation of Tsar Alexander II, which prohibited the use of Ukrainian in all schools, theaters, public performances, and so on. Tsar Alexander III softened the proclamation somewhat in 1881, authorizing limited use of Ukrainian in theaters with special permission, and allowing the printing of Ukrainian dictionaries, provided that they used Russian Cyrillic.[39]

The net result of active repression can be seen by the beginning of the 20th century and the Bolshevik Revolution. Since Ukrainian was prohibited in education and in all official capacities, it was not the language of the elite. Instead, the educated classes spoke Russian, and Ukrainian had very low prestige. Shevelov reports that even peasants were ashamed of speaking Ukrainian and used as much Russian as possible (1989:9). Two initial attempts at Soviet rule in the region—first in the period from December 1917 to March 1918, and second in the period January to August 1919—failed, in large part due to an inadequate understanding of the nationalities issues there. It was only in the summer of 1919 that the Bolshevik leadership recognized the magnitude of the problem when the Soviet Ukrainian government was forced to seek asylum in Moscow for the second time that year. This rethinking of policy resulted in Lenin's *Draft Resolution of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party on Soviet Rule in Ukraine,* which was then ratified in November of the same year. The resolution mandated the "free development" of the Ukrainian language and culture and included instructions that employees of all state institutions should be conversant in Ukrainian.

On March 9, 1919, the Third Congress of Soviets issued a decree that mandated school instruction of Ukrainian language, history and geography. Shortly thereafter, the use of Ukrainian alongside Russian in all government institutions was mandated (on February 21, 1920, by the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee, and on May 21, 1920, by the Fourth Congress of Soviets). The Council of People's Commissars reinforced these decrees in two subsequent decisions (September 21,

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[38]Figures from Rusov (1916:381–406), cited in Shevelov (1989:5). These figures total just over 100 percent because they have been rounded off.

[39]In Austrian Ukraine, the use of Ukrainian was much more freely permitted. A Ukrainian press was developed, and Ukrainian was used extensively in the schools. This situation continued with relative stability through 1916, with the exception of the time period of the Russian occupation in World War I (from fall 1914 to spring 1915 in Galicia, and from September 1914 to June 1915 in Bukovina), when the public use of Ukrainian was virtually outlawed and all Ukrainian institutions were oppressed. In Transcarpathia the use of Ukrainian was severely restricted, and Hungarian was the sole official language.

1920 and February 19, 1921). The status of Ukrainian was legally codified in 1922 in the *Kodeks zakoniv por narodnju osvitu v URSR* (Durdenevskii 1927:155), which declared both Ukrainian and Russian to be of national significance as the majority languages (in the villages and in the cities, respectively), and authorized their use in education. Despite these and a number of similar measures, attempts to declare both Ukrainian and Russian as official languages of the Soviet Ukraine were defeated at the full plenary session of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which instead declared the them to be "two generally used languages."

Following the debacle of failure immediately following the Revolution, a large number of resolutions supporting a movement toward an increased use of Ukrainian were passed in these early years. In February 1920 the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee decreed Ukrainian to have equal status with Russian; those in violation of this decree were "subject to the full severity of military-revolutionary laws." In the summer of 1920, the Council of People's Commissars ordered plans to be made to establish Ukrainian as the language of instruction in all schools. Books and newspapers were to be published in Ukrainian, and language courses were to be organized by government officials as well. Change was relatively slow, and in 1923 only 61 percent of elementary schools were Ukrainian, while nearly 12 percent were Russian–Ukrainian. By 1925, these numbers had improved to 71 percent all-Ukrainian and over 7 percent mixed.

An official commitment to Ukrainization continued, but in the 1930's it was coupled with purges of the Ukrainian intelligentsia, including many of the leading figures in the pro-Ukrainian language movement. This was just the beginning of what turned out to be a concerted effort toward Russification, and in March 1938 the Central government decreed the study of Russian to be obligatory in the national schools; a nearly identical decree was put forward and ratified on April 20, 1938 at the Fourteenth Party Congress of the Ukrainian Communist Party, under the guidance of the new leader Nikita Khrushchev.[40] Khrushchev declared that, as of that day, "all of the peoples will be studying Russian."

Major changes in language policy followed Stalin's death in 1953. due to changes in leadership and the general political atmosphere. The general political thaw under Khrushchev made it possible for Ukrainians to recommence work on developing their language and culture. Ukrainian language journals were quickly established; a number of printed declarations of the importance of Ukrainian were published. At the same time, however, the status of Russian was in no way diminished, and the spread of Russian in non-Russian republics continued in Ukraine as elsewhere in the USSR. In fact, all indications are that the Central government intended to increase, not decrease, the role of Russian in Soviet society. The November 1958 decision of the USSR Council of Ministers to rescind obligatory mother-tongue instruction in the native schools was met with opposition by Ukrainian Party officials and writers alike. It is interesting that this pro-Ukrainian stance was adopted by high-ranking Party officials in Ukraine. The two Ukrainian deputies who were involved in drafting the Supreme Soviet decision argued against

[40]Khrushchev, an ethnic Russian, was born in Kalinovka, Kursk Region, in 1894. In 1909, while still a child, he moved together with his family to the Donbass Basin, Ukraine, with his family.

making mother-tongue study optional, an argument that was also voiced in press by the secretary of the Kiev Region party committee, published in the party journal *Komunist Ukrainy*. Meanwhile, Party members of the writers' union in Kiev argued in favor of parental control over the language of instruction in the schools.

Language use in the Ukrainian SSR differed considerably between urban and rural settings. Demographic data from the early Soviet years is somewhat incomplete, but all indications are that in urban centers (such as Kiev and Odessa), primarily Russian was spoken, or a mixture of Russian and Ukrainian. The Ukrainian language had very low prestige at the time of the Revolution—a legacy of tsarist language policies. The division between high prestige for Russian (an urban language) and low prestige for Ukrainian (a rural language) was even further supported by Soviet policies. Although there was a slight shift in favor of Ukrainian from the 1950's to the 1980's, Russian still had a very strong hold on urban centers. The statistics for Kiev are telling, as provided in Table 7, which shows that the increase in the Ukrainian population over thirty years came largely due to the loss of the Jewish population; the Russian population dips only slightly over this same time period. Russians were a significant presence in the city throughout the Soviet era:

Table 7. Three Largest Nationalities in Kiev, 1959–1989

	Ukrainian		Russian		Jew	
1959	663,851	60.1 %	254,269	23.0 %	153,466	14.0 %
1970	1,056,905	64.8 %	373,569	22.9 %	152,006	9.3 %
1979	1,455,579	68.7 %	474,447	22.4 %	132,215	6.2 %
1989	1,853,143	72.4 %	534,798	20.9 %	100,427	3.9 %

Source: Guboglo (1990-91:10)

As these figures show, the increase in the Ukrainian portion of the population comes at the expense of the Jewish population, which dropped a full 10 percent. Strikingly, by the end of this time period only 78.7 percent of ethnic Ukrainians in Kiev claimed first-language knowledge of their heritage language; 21.3 percent of this same group spoke Russian as their native language. At the same time, just under three-fourths of the population was ethnically Ukrainian, with the remaining fourth of the population Russian and Jewish. The net result is that roughly half of the total Kievan population, or 56 percent, spoke Ukrainian as their first language in 1989. This figure included all ethnic groups in Kiev at the time. Of these, 85 percent claimed fluent knowledge of Russian as a second language, so that only 8 percent of the city spoke only Ukrainian (Guboglo 1990-91:10).

The shift away from Ukrainian toward Russian is most marked in urban settings, but at the same time, the population as a whole was striving to move away from the countryside and into the cities. The accompanying language shift alarmed officials. Other statistics confirm an increasing trend toward Russification. Publication data show an increase in the numbers of books and brochures published between 1950 and 1970, which is not surprising, given the post-Stalin changes under Khrushchev, coupled with the general increase in population. There is, however, a decrease in the

numbers of titles published between 1970 and 1980. There are no data available for the number of Ukrainian titles published in 1914, but a total of 602,000 copies were published in that year. To be sure, there is a marked increase between this number and the figures for 1950: 1856 titles, and 62,155,000 copies, and then again for 1970: 2842 titles and 87,325,000 copies. In contrast, in 1980 a total of 2167 titles were published, and 92,199,900 copies. Although the number of titles increased, the number of copies decreased, and this represents an overall decline from just two years earlier: in 1978, the total number of Ukrainian titles was 2293, with 101,190,300 copies.[41] Similarly, the number of translations published was disproportionate to the size of the population. (For Belarusan, the figures are even lower; see Chapter 3, section 3.) At this time, a total of 6,369 books were translated in the USSR, with a publication of 164,922,000. Russian books represented 76 percent of the total number of titles published in 1980, disproportionately high when compared to the percentage of ethnic Russians in the USSR (52 percent, 1979 census). Ukrainian titles represented only three percent of all titles, and Belarusan one percent. (Moldovan titles were less than one percent of all titles, while Estonian titles were on a par with Ukrainian.) This was disproportionate to the relative population size of each of these populations: ethnic Ukrainians accounted for approximately 16 percent of the total population of the country, Belarusans 4 percent, and Estonians only 0.39 percent,[42] following the 1979 census.

In October 1989, the Ukrainian government proclaimed the official status of Ukrainian, just two months after a similar move in Moldova.

3. THE BELORUSSIAN SSR

The Belorusans were one of the largest ethnic groups of the former USSR, following only the Russians, Ukrainians and Uzbeks in size in 1989. Yet during the Soviet era they were relatively unknown in the West, where they were often mistakenly conflated with ethnic Russians, which in large part accurately reflects their situation within the Soviet Union. They have, in fact, been in a marginalized position throughout much of their history. The Belarusan ancestors migrated into the region in the sixth century AD, and were under Kievan rule until the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century. At this point Belorusan territory was separated from Kiev, and annexed by the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was under the suzerainty of first the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569) that Belarusan emerged as a distinct East Slavic dialect and was developed as a literary language (Mayo 1993; McMillan 1980). Belarusan had some official status within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and was used as a language for official and

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[41] Data for 1914, 1950, and 1970 publications from Desheriev (1973:75); for 1978 from *Pechat' SSSR v 1978 godu* (1979), 20–22; for 1980 from *Pechat' SSSR v 1980 godu* (1981), 24–27.

[42] The much higher publication and translation rate of Estonian titles could represent the government's desire to appease Estonians, who were arguably more openly dissatisfied than the ethnic Slavs. In addition, Estonians had historically been a highly literate society, both in terms of numbers of people who knew how to read, as well as in terms of the overall numbers of people who spent time reading. Thus one can predict that the number of titles in print at least in part reflected a market for books.

private correspondence, and for all legal functions. This continued until the Polish–Lithuanian Union in 1569, at which point Belarusan entered into decline (in terms of social status and functions). First Latin, then Polish, displaced Belarusan as the preferred language for the nobility, and in 1697 it was banned from all court and state documents. Of course, the peasants continued to speak Belarusan, but it had lost all official status, and the nobility became thoroughly Polonized during this period. The Partitions of Poland (1772, 1793 and 1795) gave Belarus to the Russian tsar. During the Tsarist regime, Belarusan was treated as a dialect of Russian, and its use was prohibited in schools and in publishing. As the official language, use of Russian became widespread. It was only in 1905 that the restrictions on Belarusan were eased, prompted by political unrest, and attempts were begun to codify and standardize the language. This same period saw the flowering of Belarusan theater, publishing and civic life.

Immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution and the end of the Civil War, the titular language of the Belorussian SSR was intensely developed. As part of Lenin's language policy promoting the development and use of non-Russian (Chapter 2, section 1), the Belarusan program had several clear goals:

(1) introduction of the Belarusan language in the elementary, secondary, and advanced schools;
(2) introduction of Belarusan as an official language in the Party, Soviet, trade union, cooperative and other organizations of the Belorussian SSR;
(3) use of the Belarusan language by all town and village populations.

In large part, these goals were initially accomplished. Substantial portions of the government were Belarusized; 85.3 percent of elementary (four-year) and 66.6 percent of seven-year schools conducted education with Belarusan as the primary language; and Belarusan was the primary language in all areas of publishing. Yet Soviet patronage of Belorusan was a short-lived affair. The rise of Stalin marked the beginning of a new wave of Russification; the first 30 years of the century were only a brief interlude in an assimilation process that had begun in 1796 with the Partition of Poland. In 1924 the Belarusan language was banned from use in the upper echelons of government and education, and Belarusan history was revised and refocused to create a single Belarusan–Russian narrative.

Stalin's Russification process continued under Khrushchev despite periodic efforts, both from within and outside of the government, to slow the homogenizing influence. The use of Belarusan was limited in all possible spheres of public life: publishing, theater, movies, lectures, and choirs. This process continued right up to the years of perestroika. Publication data are particularly telling: publications in Belarusan in the Belorussian SSR fell from 425 in 1960 to 381 in 1985. At the same time, the overall number of publications rose from 1,602 to 3,431, such that the drop in Belarusan represents a decline from 27 percent of all publications to only 11 percent. The net result of these measures is that Belarusan was relegated to the private sphere and to only very limited public usage in rural areas.

A retrospective look at the Russification campaign suggests that it was very successful. The number of ethnic Belarusans throughout the former USSR claiming

Belarusan as their native tongue declined from 84.2 percent in 1959 to 74.2 percent in 1979. As elsewhere in the USSR, the local government reacted to this language shift by enacting language legislation, and on January 26, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Belorussian SSR proclaimed the official status of Belarusan. Yet Russification was already well underway. By 1992, only 74 percent of all Belarusans claimed Belarusan as a native language. (This figure includes all Belarusans world-wide, including those living in other parts of the former USSR, in Poland, and so on.) A 1992 poll by the Sociology Center of the Belarusan State University found that Russian was the preferred language of daily life for a surprising total of 60 percent (Fedor 1995:35). Thus by the time of the break up of the Soviet Union, a shift in primary language use had occurred. This is further confirmed by the 1999 census, which finds that just over a third (38 percent) of Belarusans use their language in daily life. And although only 13.2 percent of the inhabitants of Belarus are ethnic Russians, 28.5 percent of the population claims Russian as its mother tongue. Over 80 percent of Belarusans claim fluency in Russian.

The Soviet language policy is technically a thing of the past, but its legacy continues, and education is currently conducted primarily in Russian. Since Russian is the language spoken in urban centers, universities and the government, it continues to enjoy high prestige today. Belorusan remains to be viewed by society as unnecessary for socio-economic advancement, and its usage has shown an actual decline in the educational system in the post-Soviet era. For example, in 1994 Minsk had 220 schools offering instruction in Belarusan. As of 1996, the number was less than twenty. This is a marked decline over a two year period, although it does represent an improvement over the Soviet era, which was marked by a complete absence of Belorusan instruction in Minsk (Fedor 1995:41). The Belarusan secondary schools among those mentioned in 1996 educated only 11.2 percent of Minsk's students in 1998–99, a decline from the previous year, and a decline since the pre-independence national average of 20.8 percent for all schools (Prazauskas 1994:152).

A thoroughly Russified media continues to reinforce the language shift in the post-independence era. In 1993, Belarus had four television stations, three of which broadcast in Russian. Periodicals and books were also affected by previous language policy. In 1992, of the 586 periodicals published, only 140 were written in Belarusan, 159 were in Russian, and 241 in both (Fedor 1995:77). More recent data from BelaPAN, the only independent news source in Belarus in the late 1990's, reported that of the registered periodicals (newspapers, magazines, bulletins and literary miscellanies) published in 1997, only 118 of 988 were published in Belarusan. The remainder were published in Russian (294), some combination of Russian and Belarusan (429), and other languages (147). The 1988–89 statistics show more newspapers were published in Belarusan than Russian (131 versus 89). All other indicators show Belarusan in a disadvantaged position: 82 percent of library collections were in Russian, and the ratio of published book titles in Belarusan versus Russian was 1:5 (Prazauskas 1994:152-3). More recent data suggest an even greater decline of Belarusan: in 1999 only 10.6 percent of books, and a mere 8 percent of the total print order of all published materials, were in Belarusan, showing a decline of 19.7 percent from 1998.

It is important to point out that the creation of a monolingual Belarusan state does not appear to have popular support. As early as 1993, polls revealed that 72.3 percent of Belarusans favored a bilingual government. In May 1995 the government held a referendum asking, among other things, whether Russian should be re-introduced as an official language. The referendum passed with between 75 and 83 percent approval (Sanford 1996:146). Even before this time, the government was lax in enforcing the 1990 law making Belarusan the sole official language, which encountered resistance from the general population as well. Government officials, for example, refused to give interviews in any language other than Russian (Zaprudnik 1993:131; Fedor 1995:35). Thus is appears that language shift is so thoroughly underway that, at both popular and governmental levels, the Belarusan people favor extensive use of Russian. This is indicative of the success of Soviet policy, coupled with the historic low prestige of the Belarusan language.

4. THE MOLDAVIAN SSR

The history of Moldova typifies the naming difficulties seen elsewhere in the USSR. The historical changes that the region has seen, coupled with changes in names, can result in great confusion. Here I use the term *Moldova* to refer to the modern state, and *Moldovan* that dialect of Romanian spoken there. These are currently the most politically neutral terms and stand in distinction to the Soviet terminology of *Moldavia* and *Moldavian*; in Soviet times the region was called the Moldavian SSR, a term used here to refer, specifically, to that Soviet Republic. *Moldavia* was the label used to refer to the principality under Ottoman suzerainty in the 19th century as well.

Historically Moldova and Bessarabia, a territory lying between three rivers (the Pruth, Danube and Dniestr), were part of a region disputed by the Ottoman empire and tsarist Russia. Moldova became an independent state in 1359, and then accepted Lithuanian sovereignty in 1396. In this early period Old Church Slavic served as the official language for both liturgical and non-liturgical writings, including government documents. The Moldovan territory entered Russian history long before the beginning of the Soviet period. In 1812, Russia acquired Bessarabia and extensive rights in Moldova. The population of the region was approximately 80 percent Romanian at the time, and in a move that foreshadowed Soviet policy, the tsar set out to dilute the ethnic make-up of the population by encouraging immigration into the region. Jews who immigrated were exempt from military service; Bulgarians and Gagauz Turks were given land and financial inducements to settle in the south (Eyal 1990: 124). One long-term result of these policies is that urban centers, even to the present, are dominated by non-Romanian groups, while the Romanians (Moldovans) are more likely to be found in rural regions. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was matched by similar uprisings in Bessarabia, which demanded independence from Russia and sought a union with Romania.

The Soviet government never did recognize this union, and it disputed the ownership of Bessarabia until its annexation in 1940. In the meantime, in 1924 the Autonomous Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic was founded on what had been

Ukrainian territory bordering Romania along the Dniestr River. Part of this territory was later incorporated into the Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1940 with the annexation of Bessarabia and northwest Bukovina. What this means is that the actual geographic territory of "Moldavia" shifted somewhat in the early decades of the USSR. The particulars of language policy changed as well, but one clear theme emerges: language was manipulated in order to create an ethnic identity for the inhabitants of, first, the Moldavian ASSR and, later, the Moldavian SSR. Similarly, the ethnic distribution of what was called "Moldavia" by the Russian/Soviet government changed as well. The 1897 (tsarist) Russian census, which identified the population in terms of language, not ethnicity, found the area to be 47.6 percent Romanian, 19.6 percent Ukrainian, 11.8 percent Yiddish, 8.1 percent Russian, 3.4 percent Bulgarian, and 3.1 percent German (Tronitskii 1897:226–231). In contrast, the Moldavian ASSR was created out of territory which included a large part of what had been Ukraine, and did not include any of Bessarabia (with its heavy concentration of Romanians). Accordingly, its ethnic make-up was quite different, with only 32 percent Romanians, but 46 percent Ukrainians and 10 percent Russians (Bruchis 1982:54).

Thus the Soviet government began a campaign to create a Moldovan ethnic identity and, as a central part of that identity, a Moldovan language, distinct from ethnic Romanians and the Romanian language. Yet this attitude was not without its difficulties. While the official policy was that the Moldovans were a separate nationality, this sense of identity had to be created and supported. This was a very regional policy, i.e. limited to Moldavia, which was formulated in an attempt to create distance from Romania. And this sense of a distinct identity ran contradictory to the nationwide policies that attempted to squash any sense of ethnicity. So policy makers found themselves in a juggling act, creating a sense of identity without letting it become too divergent. Language played a central role in this game. Key Soviet linguists emphasized that this Moldovan code was a language distinct from Romanian, with some vacillation in this policy throughout its course. Because of the various changes in policy, they should be catalogued chronologically, in detail.

The Moldavian Autonomous SSR, created in 1924, had, as we have seen, a largely Slavic population. Just prior its actual foundation, the Politburo of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine was given the charge to develop the national *Moldovan* language (Deletant 1996:56). Quite possibly with that goal in mind, the Cyrillic alphabet was introduced for written Romanian in the region, in a symbolic gesture distancing this new Moldovan language from Romanian, and at least visually bringing it closer to Russian and Ukrainian. It was used until 1933 when the Latin alphabet was (re)introduced for Moldovan, along with orthographic reforms which make the Romanian–Moldovan links clear. It is unclear what precipitated this change. The Latinization movement which had begun in the 1920's for the rest of the country (Chapter 2, section 4.2) was already on the way out by the time Moldovan made the change to Latin in 1933. Thus Moldovan shows the opposite pattern: a shift from Latin to Cyrillic in 1924, and then from Cyrillic to Latin in 1933, a direct contradiction of national-level policies. In this case the change of alphabets may be the result of external politics, with the early shift to Cyrillic an attempt to distance Moldovan from Romanian, and the shift back to Latin

coming at a time when the Soviets were attempting to make conciliatory gestures toward Romania. This same later period saw an increased use of Romanian-based neologisms in Moldovan. The period lasted only five years, and in 1938 writing again reverted to Cyrillic, now in keeping with the national alphabet policy. These changes are accompanied by Stalinist purges of linguists and activists who had been involved in this "Romanianization" of the language; surviving linguists were called upon to rid Moldovan of these undesirable elements (Deletant 1996:59).

The situation came to a head in 1940 when the USSR demanded that Romania cede Bessarabia and North Bukovina. The annexation of these territories resulted in the creation of the Moldavian SSR in the same year. The former Autonomous Moldavian SSR had had a population of only about a half million people; most of this territory was returned to Ukrainian SSR with the annexation of the new territories. This radically changed the demographic map of what was called "Moldavia." The newly formed Moldavian SSR had a total population of approximately 2.4 million; as of the 1959 census, ethnic Moldovans made up only 65.4 percent of the population. This was followed by an influx of some 13,000 "specialists" from Russia, Ukraine and Belorussia. An estimated thousand teachers were brought in from Russia and Ukraine to further the teaching of Russian. In addition, it is important to keep in mind that the people of this region had been under Romanian rule prior to annexation, and were accordingly using the Latin alphabet. For these speakers, the Cyrillic alphabet was only gradually introduced, and its use was not official until May 1941. Yet shortly thereafter, with the German-Romanian invasion of June 22, 1941, the Moldavian SSR was conquered by the invading powers and ceased to exist until September 12, 1944.

This marked a turning point in Soviet Moldavian history from which there was little change throughout the remainder of the Soviet period. Beginning in 1944, the language planners pushed an agenda of createing a distinct Moldovan language. This involved maximizing those aspects of Moldovan which differ from Romanian, and supporting a heavy influx of Russian loanwords. With the exception of a brief period in the 1950's, when Shishmarev (1953) declared Moldovan to be closely related to Romanian, this official stance was maintained throughout the duration of the Soviet regime.

Two major changes in the region after World War II have had a major impact on the language. First, the population was becoming increasingly bilingual, as a result of general education and more specific language policies that targeted the teaching of Russian. Second, the population was becoming more urban, and Moldovan SRR had the highest urban growth rate of all the Soviet republics. A relatively large number of Moldovans migrated from rural areas to urban centers. This entailed a shift in the ethnic make-up of the cities as well. For example, in 1959 the urban population was only 28.2 percent Moldovan, while Russians constituted 30.4 percent of the whole. In 1970 the balance had shifted, with 35.1 percent of the population Moldovan, as opposed to only 28.3 percent Russian (figures from Livezeanu 1981:335). As late as 1989, Moldavian SSR was a relatively rural

republic, with an urban population of only 47 percent.[43] However, there was rapid growth in the number of ethnic Moldovans in the capital of the Republic, Kishinev, over the final three decades of the Soviet empire. In Kishinev in 1959, there were 69,722 Moldovans (32.3 percent of the population there); this figure climbed to 325,272 in 1989 (49.2 percent). While this suggests a potential increase in a "Moldovan" presence in the capital, that increase was largely offset by the ever-increasing Russianization of Kishinev. (This is much in keeping with the general nationwide trend toward Russianization in urban areas: Chapter 8, section 2.) Almost 12 percent of Moldovans in Kishinev claimed Russian as their native language, and 75 percent claimed knowledge of it as a second language (1989). This means that a full 87 percent of the Moldovan population spoke Russian by this date. If one takes into account that 26.4 percent of Kishinev was Russian in 1989, only a very small portion of the city's population knew only Moldovan.

It is therefore not surprising that the general Russification of the Republic triggered high emotions among its populace. With the loosening of governmental controls under *perestroika,* Moldovans reacted strongly to Soviet language policy. In 1987 the Moldavian Republic passed a law intended to widen the spheres of Romanian (Moldovan) usage. In late August 1989 the Republic instituted legislation which would affect language use in several ways. First, it mandated that the Republic revert to a Latin-based orthography. Second, it declared the official status of Moldovan/Romanian. Finally, it introduced a law which would have required non-native Moldovans in leadership positions to take a language proficiency test by 1994. This law was repealed in April 1994 by the Moldovan Parliament.

In late December 2001, the Moldovan Education Ministry announced that Russian-language instruction would be compulsory as of January 2002, with Moldovan children required to devote at least two classes per week to learning Russian, beginning with the second grade. At the very end of 2001, parliament members who represented the ruling Communist Party petitioned the Constitutional Court to make Russian the second state language. Both of these moves were met with massive protests, led by the Christian Democratic People's Party, in direct confrontation with the Communist Party. The protests were timed to coincide with the resumption of classes after the New Year. Despite the government's attempts to maintain its position and quell the protests, they continued with increasing strength. In February the Moldovan Cabinet amended its earlier position, to make Russian language optional in the second grade, and mandatory as of the fifth grade. These concessions did little to satisfy the protestors, who continued with increased zeal. On February 26, Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin fired Education Minister Ilie Vancea, who had approved the plan. By early March the plan for compulsory Russian instruction was officially revoked, and the Moldovan Constitution Court declared the bill giving Russian official status as a state language to be unconstitutional. By June 2002, the Court outlawed a parliamentary move which would have required that all civil records be kept in two languages, declaring Moldovan to be the sole official language of the Republic.

[43] *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1989 g., Statisticheskii ezhegodnik*, p. 24. (Moscow: Finantsy i statistika 1990).

5. THE BACKLASH OF REFORM

By the late 1980's, Belarusans, Moldovans, and Ukrainians alike were alarmed by the level of Russification in their territories. As the governmental controls on the Union Republics eased, they each responded by passing their own language laws. In this they followed the language laws of the Baltic Republics (see Chapter 4, section 5) and Central Asia (see Chapter 6, section 6). The Moldovan law comes first chronologically, and was passed on September 1, 1989. The Ukrainian SSR passed its language reform law on October 28, 1989, and the Belorussian SSR on January 26, 1990. Given the magnitude of inter-ethnic pressures and discontent in the Slavic territories, it is not surprising that the Belorussian and Ukrainian laws begin with a clear formulation of their goals, as exemplified in Article 1 of the Ukrainian law:

> ... the regulation of social relations in the language sphere through the all-sided development and use of Ukrainian and other languages which are used by the population in governmental, economic, political, and public life, the safeguarding of the constitutional rights of the citizens in this sphere, the inculcation of a respectful attitude toward the national worth of the individual, his or her culture and language, and the further strengthening of the friendship and cooperation of the peoples of the union.
>
> (cited in Pigolkin and Studenika 1991:44–5)

These language laws are a natural reaction to ever-increasing Russification policies by the Central government. In the Belorusan and Ukrainian Union Republics, where the Slavic populations were close (geographically, historically, and ethnolinguistically) to the Russian people, the threat of Russification was acutely felt. The Ukrainian language law reflects the attitudes of the people for the need to reinstate the value and autonomy of their language and culture.

CHAPTER 4

THE BALTIC STATES

1. INTRODUCTION TO THE BALTICS

The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), all of which were part of tsarist Russian territory in pre-Soviet times, each declared their independence from Russia within a year of the Bolshevik Revolution. They maintained some degree of autonomy until August 1940 and officially became part of the USSR in 1944–45. The three titular languages come from two different language families: Estonian is a Finno-Ugric (Uralic) language, and Latvian and Lithuanian both Baltic (Indo-European) languages; all are written in Latin script. A standard literary language for Estonian was established in the nineteenth century, but publication of books had begun much earlier, in the sixteenth century. Both Latvian and Lithuanian have had written forms since the sixteenth century as well. Of these three republics, Latvia was arguably the most Russianized, in the sense that by 1989 only 54 percent of the population was Latvian, and over 30 percent Russian; Russian bilingualism rates were also higher here than in the other two Baltic Republics. The "Russification" of Latvia can be put into perspective by comparing it to Estonia, where under 30 percent of the population was Russian and 65 percent Estonian. Even greater contrast is provided by Lithuania, where less than 10 percent of the population was Russian and a full 80 percent Lithuanian.

The three Baltic Union Republics are generally grouped together on the grounds of cultural similarity and geographic proximity. Alternatively, they could be divided on the basis of linguistic criteria into Estonia on the one hand, and Latvia and Lithuania on the other. Latvian and Lithuanian are Indo-European, belonging to the Balto-Slavic branch. Baltic is divided into two branches, East and West. Only one West Baltic language is attested, Prussian, which is now extinct, giving way to German in the 15th century. The Eastern branch of Baltic includes two living languages, Latvian and Lithuanian, and three which are now extinct and only sparsely attested: Curonian, Selonian and Zemgalian. Toponymic evidence suggests that Baltic speakers once inhabited a much larger territory, extending as far as Moscow in the East, and into what is currently German-speaking territory to the West.

A more complete picture of the ethnic composition of these three Republics is provided in Table 8. Although the percentage of the total population varied greatly, Russians constituted the second largest ethnic group in each of the Baltic States. It is also noteworthy that the overwhelming majority of the "other" nationalities in each Republic was constituted by Slavs (i.e., Russians, Belarusans and Ukrainians). Put differently, the Slavic population reached nearly 20 percent in Lithuania, 32 percent in Estonia, and 42.5 percent in Latvia.

Table 8. Ethnic Composition of the Baltic Republics, 1979

	Thousands	Percent of Total
Estonian SSR	1465	100
Estonian	948	64.7
Russian	409	27.9
Ukrainian	36	2.5
Belarusan	23	1.6
Jewish	5	0.3
Other	44	3.0
Latvian SSR	2503	100
Latvian	1344	53.7
Russian	821	32.8
Belarusan	112	4.5
Ukrainian	67	2.7
Polish	63	2.5
Lithuanian	38	1.5
Jewish	28	1.1
Other	30	1.2
Lithuanian SSR	3392	100
Lithuanian	2712	80
Russian	303	8.9
Polish	247	7.3
Belarusan	58	1.7
Ukrainian	32	0.9
Jewish	15	0.4
Other	25	0.4

Source: Vestnik statistiki (1980/2:27-30)

Chronologically, the Baltics were the last regions to be annexed to the Soviet Union. The Soviet forces took possession of their territories in August 1940, beginning with Estonia as the thirteenth Soviet Socialist Republic, followed by Latvia, and then Lithuania. The Sovietization of each of these territories began immediately, and forcefully, upon their annexation, but was interrupted in June 1941 by the German invasion of the USSR, an invasion that resulted in German control of the Baltics until 1944–45, when the Soviet Army conquered them again. The timing of their annexation meant that language policy in this region started on a somewhat different course than it had in the rest of the country. Engaged in post World War II reconstruction, the Soviet government did not have the resources to develop a Russian-based educational program at the time of annexation. The initial decision was to teach all subjects in the native languages, but an additional year was added to the secondary school time scale to provide extra time for Russian-language acquisition. One result of the Education Reforms of 1958–59, typical of all regions

of the USSR, was an increase in the number of bilingual schools. By 1965, nearly all Latvian schools were bilingual. Even at the time the Reforms were instituted, the percentage of pupils taught in Russian was slightly higher than the percentage of the population constituted by ethnic Russians (e.g. in 1959, 33 percent in Latvia, as opposed to a Russian-native-speaker population of 27 percent).

All the Baltics felt the impact of the intense Russification campaign of the Brezhnev era. These effects increased as a result of the 1978 nation-wide decree that Russian-language instruction be continued from pre-school through university levels. Lithuania and Estonia were the last two holdouts of the Soviet Republics; study of Russian in the first grade was not introduced until 1980–81. The Baltic Republics were also the first to declare their own languages to be official state languages. Both Lithuania and Estonia declared their independence in 1990, although at that time the Soviet government proclaimed their declarations invalid.

2. THE ESTONIAN SSR

Estonia is a small territory of only 17,413 square miles on the Baltic Sea. Its population hovered around one million throughout the Soviet era, reaching a high of 1,571,000 in 1989, with 65 percent Estonian, and a large Russian minority of 28 percent of the population (as well as five percent Ukrainian and Belarusan each). Throughout its history, it has frequently been subject to foreign occupation, due both to its strategic location—between Russia to the east and Germanic countries to the west—as well as its small size. It first became part of the Russian empire in 1721 with the Treaty of Nystad. By the end of the nineteenth century, the efforts of the tsarist regime to Russify the territory had become quite pronounced, but these were met with an increased sense of ethnic awareness and a national pro-Estonian movement. The 1905 Revolution was perceived in Estonia as a possible opportunity to realize their own nationalistic hopes, which were eventually crushed when the Germans took hold of the region in February 1918. After the withdrawal of German troops later that year, fighting broke out between Estonian and Bolshevik troops. These clashes ended with the signing of the Peace of Tartu in February 1920, at which time the Soviet government renounced any rights to the region for all time. Yet Estonian independence lasted only briefly, and as part of the result of World War II, the region was annexed by the Soviet Union in the summer of 1940. The Estonian SSR was formed on July 21, 1940, and this newly formed Republic was officially accepted into the USSR on August 6, 1940.

Estonians enjoyed a history of administrative and educational prestige that was not found in some of the other Soviet republics. Estonian literacy was well-established at the time of annexation, with literacy rates of near 100 percent. This was the result of its well-established literary history: the Estonian literary language had been established in the sixteenth century, long before the Bolshevik Revolution, thanks to a combination of the Protestant Reformation and the advent of movable type. (These brought both the development of a written literary language and a printed language.) By the 1920's and 1930's, in conjunction with Estonia's newly founded autonomy, there arose a movement to create a modern and independent

Estonian culture. Language was a corner piece of this movement. Estonian was implemented as the language of governmental administration, and it became the language of education. By 1922, a full 89 percent of the population was literate. (This can be compared to official literacy rates of only one to two percent in parts of Central Asia at this time; see Chapter 6, section 2.) One indication of Estonian commitment to education and literacy is its publication record: an impressive 25,000 total titles were published during independence, in the years from 1918 to 1940, i.e., in the time period prior to Soviet occupation.

All this changed drastically with the coming of Soviet power. Prior to annexation, the single most influential foreign language in the region was German; virtually overnight this shifted unequivocally to Russian. Initially the very high cultural and sociolinguistic achievements of Estonian insulated it somewhat from the impact of Russian, but even in the early years of the life of the Estonian SSR (1940–41), Russian provided the model for the development of the native languages. The spelling of Russian proper names and geographical terms corresponded to already existing norms, and so in that respect the impact was small. But the overall influx of Russian terminology was extensive, and it is specifically in the area of the lexicon (as opposed to syntax and phonology) that Russian has had the largest and most lasting effect on Estonian. This is a phenomenon common to all Soviet languages that came into contact with Russian, as the accelerated changes in the socio-economic and political structures of the USSR required a new vocabulary to accommodate the new concepts that these changes introduced. In terms of the Estonian language, the primary means of generating new lexical items was in terms of calques from Russian; direct loans (e.g. *kulak, oblast'*) were a secondary means. A prescriptive grammar published in 1976 recommends using native Estonian words instead of Russian loans in a number of cases, such as replacing the Russian *propusk* with Estonian *läbipääsuluba* 'pass' (Raun 1985:24). (See also sections 4.2 and 4.3, this chapter, for further discussion of the impact of Russian on the Baltic languages.)

One telling statistic is the number of hours devoted to one or the other language in the schools. In the period 1956–57, 77 percent of the schools used Estonian. This figure dropped only slightly to 73 percent by 1972, which was higher than the Estonian percentage of the population. Yet it is important to contrast this with the number of hours devoted to language study of both languages over this time period, as summarized in Table 9:

Table 9. Hours Per Week Devoted to Language Study

Year	Estonian	Russian	Ratio
1956-57	77.5	55.5	1.4
1959-60	72.5	45.5	1.6
1969-70	75	44	1.7
1974-75	69	42	1.6
1978-79	68	43	1.6
1981-82	66	41	1.6

Source: Raun (1985:25)

Between the time of its annexation and the time of its declaration of sovereignty in 1988, one of the striking features of the Estonian SSR is the rapid shift in demographics, with a marked decline in the percentage of the population constituted by ethnic Estonians. Prior to its annexation, the territory was for the most part Estonian, with Estonians making up approximately 88.2 percent of the total populace. In 1934, Russians constituted a mere 8.2 percent of the population; moreover, the Russians were not by and large integrated into Estonian society, but lived in concentrated regions along the Eastern border of Estonia and the Russian SFSR. By 1960, only 74.1 percent of the population was ethnic Estonians; this dropped to 68.2 percent in 1970, 64.5 percent in 1980, and 61.5 percent in 1989 (Kionka 1990:47). This decrease was due to a combination of factors, including above all a drop in the birth rate and a relatively large influx of immigrants, in particular Russians. One of the results of this demographic shift was a growing awareness on the part of Estonians of the threat of Russification. By the late 1970's, Russification was perceived as a real threat to both linguistic and cultural identity; fears were further fueled by official policies that attempted to augment the role of Russian (Chapter 2, section 6). One result was an open protest in October 1980, when some 2000 secondary students marched openly in Tartu against Russian rule. The protests were crushed by police force, and Russification moved forward. Legislation was introduced that mandated Russian-language instruction in elementary schools. The result was that by 1981, Russian was taught from the first grade on. Language became a major issue in the Estonian SSR and was one of the catalysts for Estonia's backlash against Russian and the Soviet government (Chapter 4, section 5).

3. THE LATVIAN SSR

In many respects Latvia stands in the middle ground between the other two Baltic republics. In terms of size, it is slightly smaller than Lithuania, with a territory of 24,695 square miles and a total population of 2,673,000. It has the smallest percentage of its titular nationality: only 54 percent of the total population was Latvian in 1989. In this latter respect it is more like Estonia, although the Russian population is proportionally larger in Latvia (at 33 percent) than in Estonia (at 28 percent). Like the other Baltic states, Latvia has been under the dominion of another power for most of its history. In October 1917, Latvian nationalists passed a resolution demanding a completely independent Latvian state. In November 1918, Latvia obtained its independence from Russia only to lose it shortly thereafter, in 1919, with the invasion of the Red Army. At this point a Latvian Soviet Republic was established, but it was dismantled by Latvian nationalist troops, who worked with the support of Western allies. Latvian independence was only transitory: just two decades later, it was lost once more. The Soviets again occupied Latvia (1940-1941), a period that was immediately followed by German occupation until 1944, when Latvia was again incorporated into the USSR.

The Latvian language was first written in the sixteenth century. The earliest known books are a Catholic catechism (published in 1585) and a Lutheran catechism

(1586); both were written by German-speaking clergy who, judging from their work, had only a limited knowledge of Latvian. The first bible translation was published in 1689. The orthography used in the sixteenth century was based on the alphabet used by these clergy for writing their own Lower German dialects; this orthography continued to be used until the middle of the nineteenth century. At this time a written language was developed on the basis of Central Latvian, one of the two major dialect divisions. (The other dialect group is High Latvian; these are also called West and East, respectively.) Standard Latvian is based on the Central dialect to this day. In the late nineteenth century, the Baltic German clergy had taken a sincere interest in the development of the Latvian literary language. They made such gains that by the time of the tsarist census of 1897, Latvians claimed literacy rates of nearly 100 percent. Soviet statistics, however, put literacy at a low of 60 percent in 1940 (Desheriev 1976:257). These discrepancies may reflect differing definitions of "literacy," which can be defined as the ability to read, or the ability to read and write.

3.1 Language and Education

As in the other Baltic Republics, the education system in the Latvian SSR grew in the years following World War II. In 1940-41, there were some 242,000 pupils enrolled in general elementary and secondary schools, with education primarily in Latvian. A 1947 law made compulsory a seven-year education in the native language. By the late 1960's the system had expanded to include schools with varying degrees of language instruction; Latvian was taught as a secondary subject in all non-Latvian schools, and Russian taught as a secondary subject in all non-Russian schools. More Russian was used in urban centers, and more Latvian in rural areas, in accordance with the patterns in other Union Republics.

It is difficult to evaluate the realities of language use in the schools at all levels in general, and at the level of higher education in particular. The first Polytechnic Institute of the (Russian) tsarist regime was founded in Riga in 1861; instruction was primarily conducted in Russian. Just over a century later, during the academic year 1974-75, ten different institutions of higher education were functioning in the Latvian SSR, and some 44,000 students were enrolled. Officially, the languages of instruction were both Latvian and Russian, but Communist discussions of these educational institutions suggest the usefulness of Russian as a language of wider communication, indicating that scientific literature written in Latvian is not accessible to the wider readership of the Soviet citizenry. Official records do not provide statistics for the distribution of Russian or Latvian instruction for the years 1940-1975.

Publication statistics provide valuable information about official attitudes toward language use, as all publications were tightly controlled by the Soviet government. In 1967, a total of 85 different newspapers were published in the Latvian SSR; of these, 55 (or 65 percent) were in Latvian. In that same year, 1876 different book titles were published, with 1003 (53 percent) in Latvian. Given that ethnic Latvians constituted approximately 54 percent of the population at the time, these figures may

not be surprising. They do show an overall decline in the percentage of the publishing market devoted to Latvian since the annexation of the territory: in 1940 a total of 392 titles were published, with 286 (73 percent) in Latvian, a percentage that was maintained in 1950 (Latvian titles accounted for 74 percent of the total, or 977 of 1314). A drop in Latvian publications also occurred, with 76 percent of journals in Latvian in 1950 (19 out of 25), as opposed to 58 percent in 1967 (56 out of 97).

3.2 "Bilingualism" in the Latvian SSR

Soviet policies promoted bilingualism for all Soviet citizens, but the bilingualism that resulted from official dogma has often been said to be unilateral. Non-Russian nationalities acquired Russian as a second (or often a first) language, while Russians remained overwhelmingly monolingual.[44] Statistics for bilingualism in the Latvian SSR are particularly telling in this regard. Following the 1970 census, the total population of ethnic Latvians in the Soviet Union as a whole was 1,429,844. Of this number, 1,361,414 (95 percent) considered Latvian to be their native language, and 65,092 (just under 5 percent) considered Russian to be their first language. In addition, 45 percent of all Latvians in the Soviet Union (646,031) claimed to speak Russian fluently. The majority of ethnic Latvians, or 1,341,805 people of the total population of the Latvian SSR of 2,364,127, lived within the borders of the Republic itself. Of this group of Latvians, 1,316,152, or 98 percent, considered Latvian to be their native tongue; the majority of the remaining Latvians claimed Russian as a first language. The impact of Russian is particularly striking in terms of its use by non-Latvians and non-Russians in the Republic. Of this group, 152,897 claim Russian as a first language, while only 28,444 claim Latvian, providing further evidence that Russian, not Latvian was viewed as the language needed for success. While the percentage of Russians who know Latvian is fairly steady over the last few decades of the Soviet period, the percentage of Latvians claiming knowledge of Russian rises consistently, as summarized in Table 10:

Table 10. Knowledge of Languages by Nationality, 1970–1989[45]

	Latvians knowing Russian	Russians knowing Latvian
1970	47%	18%
1979	61%	20%
1989	—	21%

The data for language use in the schools are equally provocative, especially when

[44]Where Russians in the USSR studied second or foreign languages, it was most usually the languages of Europe, such as English, French or German, and not their country's autochthonous languages.

[45]Tables 10 and 11 from Karklins (1994:152-153). Data for Table 10 taken from official census data. Percentages in Table 11 are based on Karklins's own calculations, based on data in *Obshcheobrazovatel'nye shkoly vsekh vidov, vysshie i srednie spetsial'nye uchebnye zavedeniia na nachalo 1989/90 uchbenogo goda.* Riga: Gosudarstvennyi komitet statistiki Latviiskoi SSR, 1990, p. 26, and official census data.

compared with demographic data. Together they suggest that all non-Latvians (i.e. ethnic Russians and all other groups) were enrolled in Russian-language schools, and some Latvian students were enrolled in Russian-language schools as well. By 1989, Russian-language students comprised a large majority of all students in urban centers, as indicated in Table 11:

Table 11. Language in Schools in Latvia, 1989–1990

	Latvian	Russian	Other
Enrollment by language of instruction			
All of Latvia	52.5%	47.5%	
Urban Centers	30.7%	69.3%	
Nationality of children			
All of Latvia	53.3%	36.5%	10.2%
Urban Centers	45.6%	43.6%	10.8%

As seen here, in urban centers nearly 70 percent of all children were enrolled in Russian-language schools, although ethnic Russian children constituted less than half of the population.

3.3 Immigration and Demographic Change

A key element in this one-sided bilingualism is the shifting demographics in the region. In 1935, just prior to the losses due to World War II and Soviet occupation, ethnic Latvians constituted 77 percent of the population (or 1,467,000 out of 1,905,000). This dropped to 62 percent in 1959, 54 percent in 1979, and 52 percent in 1989. This shift is in part due to the relatively low birthrates of Latvians, as opposed to the other groups in the region, but more importantly, immigration into the Latvian SSR dramatically changed the ethnic balance. The immigrants can be divided into two basic categories: expatriated Latvians who returned to the region, and representatives of other ethnic groups (primarily Russians, but other nationalities are included here as well).

In order to understand the impact of the return of the expatriated Latvians to the Republic, one must take into account the history of Latvia. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, some but not all Latvians had sided with Germany. Still others sided with the Russians, at least in part as an act against Germany, to offset some of the economic and political dominance that Germans had held over Latvians. Accordingly, more than 200,000 Latvians left their homeland for areas of Russia, where they were offered free land. Nearly half of the Latvian population was dislocated during World War I, and an estimated million Latvians fled eastward. In 1920, when Latvia became an independent republic, many people returned. A large number of Latvians continued to reside in the USSR. Although many perished in Stalin's purges, by 1939 this group totaled an estimated 126,000 Latvians (Dreifelds 1990–91).

At the same time, Latvia suffered serious losses as the result of World War II, deportations, executions, and emigration: it lost approximately a third of its total population by the time it was annexed to the USSR in 1940. This led to gaps in the labor force; in particular, the Soviet government saw a shortage of trustworthy personnel who would be supportive of the new regime. Reliable people were brought in from elsewhere in the USSR to fill these posts; this group included a large number of Russians, as well as "Russianized" Latvians. The latter group had generally been in the Russian SFSR long enough to be alienated from Latvian language and culture, and were viewed by the native Latvians with suspicion and disdain. At the same time, they tended to see their local counterparts as anti-Soviet nationalists and potential Fascist supporters. Bringing in these ethnic Latvians from Russia to fill key administrative posts in the government and party only increased the distance and hostility between the two groups. Crucially, they were not advocates for Latvian language and culture, but were instrumental to furthering the Russification of the Republic.

In addition to the immigration of Russianized Latvians, there was a significant influx of Russians and other Slavs during the Soviet years. The number of Russians in Latvia jumped from a mere 8.8 percent of the population in 1935 to 26.6 percent in 1959, to 34 percent in 1989 (or, in terms of raw numbers: 168,300 in 1935; 556,400 in 1959; 905,500 in 1989). In contrast, the percentages of the other ethnic groups in the region changed considerably less, although the other Slavic groups showed increases as well: Belarusans increased from 26,800 in 1935 (1.4 percent) to 119,700 in 1989 (4.5 percent), and Ukrainians from 1,800 (0.01 percent) to 92,100 (3.4 percent).[46]

3.4 *Urbanization*

The capital city of Riga is the largest city in Latvia, and in many respects is the heart and soul of the region: it continues to be the center of culture, higher education and publishing. It is home to 34.1 percent of the total population of the Republic; by 1989 ethnic Latvians constituted only 36.5 percent of the capital's inhabitants (as opposed to 63 percent in 1935). In Riga alone, the Russian portion of the population grew from 7.4 percent in 1935 to 47.3 percent in 1989 (Mukomel 1994:156). In fact, Latvians had become a minority in six of the Republic's seven largest cities by 1979. According to a report in the newspaper *Jurmala* (January 12, 1989), only 17 percent of Latvians in Riga would begin conversations with strangers in Latvian; the overwhelming majority spoke in Russian. Similarly, 96 percent of Russians and 85 percent of all other groups used Russian. One result was a general isolation of Russians living in Latvian cities, where they established relatively separate communities and did not integrate with local populations. In this way, the cities became oases of Russian culture and traditions.

[46] *Latvija Sodien,* p. 13; Cina, June 23, 1971; 1989. *Gada Vissavienibas Tautas Skaitisansan Resultati Latvijas PSR,* p. 10; both cited in Dreifelds (1990–91:48). Dreifelds points out that the 1935 data exclude the Abrene territory, which was added to the RSFSR in 1944.

4. THE LITHUANIAN SSR

The Lithuanian SSR was the largest of the three Baltic republics, covering 26,173 square miles. In 1989 its total population was 3,690,000, with approximately 80 percent ethnic Lithuanian (9 percent Russian, 7 percent Polish, and 2 percent Belarusan). In fact, over 95 percent of all Lithuanians world-wide (3,068,296 total population) lived in the Lithuanian SSR in 1989.

The Lithuanian literary language dates to the mid 1600's, and the first Lithuanian book (a Lutheran catechism and songbook) was published in 1549. The first Lithuanian dictionary was published in 1629 in Vilnius, a trilingual Polish–Lithuanian–Latin edition. The first Lithuanian grammar was published in 1653 in Königsberg in Latin; an abridged version was published in German the following year. The use of the literary language grew from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. In 1795 Russia annexed Lithuania, and tsarist censorship had a negative impact on the further development of Lithuanian. All printing in the language was outlawed for the period 1864-1904, although books were illegally published abroad. This period coincides with the formation of a sense of Lithuanian nationalism and the development of a national language. With the creation of the Lithuanian autonomous government in 1918 in Vilnius, use of the literary language quickly spread as it became the official language and was used in the schools, theaters, government, and the press. The period of Lithuanian independence (1918-1940) is marked by the intensive development of Lithuanian, in terms of its lexicon and standardization of grammatical norms. At the time of Soviet occupation, Lithuanian had already been a full-fledged national language for many decades.

In large part because it was an agrarian society for so many centuries with limited communication among various settlements, dialect differences are strong in Lithuanian. The basic dialect groups are Aukshtaitish (or Highland Lithuanian), Dzukai, Zemaitiskai (or Lowland Lithuanian), and Suvalkietai. Zemaitiskai differs the most from the remaining dialects, and speakers of the other varieties are reported to have a difficult time understanding it. In contrast, Aukshtaitish and Suvalkai are highly mutually intelligible, while speakers of both have some difficulty understanding Dzukai. The earliest recorded Lithuanian texts were written in Zemaitiskai, but the Western Aukshtaitish dialect was chosen as the basis of the literary language, which has lent it some amount of prestige; its use spread rapidly throughout the region.

Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union as a direct result of shifting alliances in World War II, although the Lithuanian people resisted Soviet rule. In October 1939, Soviet army bases were established in the region in accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 23, 1939 (amended September 28, 1939), which reclaimed the city of Vilnius from Poland. In mid-June of the following year, Lithuania was fully occupied by Soviet forces, which had allegedly come to uphold the pact of 1939. On August 3, 1940, Lithuania was formally incorporated into the USSR, but less than one year later, on June 23, 1941 to be exact, the people revolted against communist rule. Establishing their own provisional government, they declared independence. Their independence was, however, short-lived, and quickly suppressed by the Nazis. German occupation of Lithuania continued from 1941 to

1944. At the end of World War II, when the Soviets returned to Lithuania, they were hardly welcomed, and met with fierce opposition. Partisan resistance lasted into the early 1950's, by which time Soviet rule was firmly established.

In contrast to the other two Baltic Republics, where the percentage of Russians increased during the Soviet era, ethnic Lithuanians constituted a steady 80 percent of the Republics population throughout this time period. Despite the fact that the Russian population nearly quadrupled in these years, it did not exceed 10 percent of the total population. Thus the ethnic Lithuanian population maintained a solid majority. Accordingly, use of Russian as a lingua franca was not necessitated by population demographics in the same way as in other parts of the USSR, where the proportion of ethnic Russians was much higher. Its use was, however, dictated by political realities.

4.1 Education Policies in the Lithuanian SSR

By the beginning of the Soviet era in Lithuania, the language had already achieved the status of a widely used and fully functional norm. There was little for Soviet language planners to develop, although they did proclaim the institution of a new school system for the region, beginning with children of ages 7-8 in 1944 (Desheriev 1973:107). This new school system meant early education was accessible to all, and illiteracy was almost completely eradicated. (Note that even prior to Soviet occupation, literacy rates were already very high, so that the low illiteracy rates can hardly be attributed solely to successful Soviet policies, despite official claims.) By 1959, according to official census data, the literacy rate for urban males was 98.9 percent and for urban females 98.1 percent, with only slightly lower rates in the villages (98.6 percent and 97.9 percent, respectively). Lithuanian was the primary written language in use at this time.

The Soviet language planners claim great strides in education during the initial years of the Soviet period, although the actual gains are clearly overstated: the statistics for the pre-Soviet era are almost certainly low due to war-time pressures, and official statistics of Soviet achievements quite likely inflated. Be that as it may, official statistics (Desheriev 1976:214–215) do indicate a marked increase in both numbers of schools as well as children attending them. In 1938 more than 60 percent of eligible children did not attend school; only 9 percent of the children entering elementary school completed it. In the years 1940-41, the number of children enrolled in schools grew to 333,000. In addition, the government instituted a system of 980 schools for (illiterate) adults, which enrolled more than 93,000 adult learners. The years immediately following World War II were marked by a rapid growth in educational institutions: by 1953-54, the system had grown to 2365 elementary schools, and by 1967-68 there were a total of 4274 schools of all types of general education, embracing some 568,000 students. The total number of students had more than quintupled since 1917. Schools were divided into three basic primary languages of instruction: Lithuanian, Polish, and Russian, with Lithuanian taught as a separate subject in the latter two groups of schools, and Russian taught in all schools. In 1967-68, the majority of children studied in Lithuanian at the elementary and

secondary levels (for grades 1–4: 199,935 in Lithuanian schools, 29,429 in Russian, and 9654 in Polish; for grades 5–10: 224,189 in Lithuanian, 33,940 in Russian, and 11,463 in Polish). In the Lithuanian SSR, as elsewhere in the Baltics, the number of children enrolled in Russian-language schools exceeded the number of native Russians. This trend began early on; the official data for 1950 show 11 percent of the children in the Lithuanian Republic in Russian language schools at a time when only 8.5 percent of the population claimed Russian as a first language.

At the level of higher education and in more specialized schools, the impact of Russian is more acute. The official explanation for this is strictly pragmatic as necessitated by limited resources: "Since each national school cannot organize education in the native language for all specialized subjects in the USSR, there arises the need for a command of Russian as a means of international communication, which will allow each citizen of the USSR with the corresponding preparation to receive a specialized education in any corner of the Soviet Union where there is a secondary specialized school offering the topic chosen by him" (Desheriev 1976:216-7).

4.2 Language Policy under Brezhnev

Language policy took a marked turn against Lithuanian and in favor of Russian in the 1970's. Russification proceeded in an intensive manner in all spheres. As part of this Russification movement, the Lithuanian language was no longer used in government, economic and Party documents. By the middle of this decade, all meeting minutes for the Central Committee were recorded in Russian, despite the fact that Lithuanians constituted a majority of the Committee members. In terms of education, Russian became pervasive at every level. Russian language instruction was now introduced in the kindergartens. On the opposite end of the scale, beginning in 1975 it was mandated that all doctoral dissertations be written in Russian; use of Lithuanian was no longer permitted (Vardys 1990:77).

As the titular language of the Republic, Lithuanian was taught in all elementary and middle schools, but already by the early 1970's Party propaganda stressed the importance of the use of Russian for the "cultural" development of all children. Language planners of this time were enthusiastic about the significance of the language of communication in early development, but at the same time they were vague about which language of communication is actually used and provide only ambiguous statistics. For example, Desheriev (1976:224) cites a total of 805 daycare centers in Lithuania in 1973 (servicing a total of more than 100,300 children), claiming that the language of communication in the village daycare centers is Lithuanian, but that there is parallel Russian–Lithuanian use in urban areas. It is unclear to what extent Russian was actually used in the daycare centers at this time, and equally unclear how to interpret "parallel" use.

Use of Lithuanian in publishing was outlawed by the tsarist government from 1864 to 1904, and Soviet language planners were proud of the publication record in Lithuanian during the first thirty years of the existence of the Lithuanian SSR. The Party propagandists point to the important role of the "Soviet" book in reaching the

working class, and the significance of the development of Lithuanian from a bourgeois language into a language of the people and of Socialist realism. In fact, the total numbers of titles published more than doubled in the first ten years after annexation, as seen in Table 12. Despite the significant increase in the total number of titles published in the span of thirty years, this increase is accompanied by a marked drop in the percentage of total titles published in Lithuanian, as opposed to Russian, as the figures in Table 12 indicate:

Table 12. Titles published, 1940–1970

	1940	1950	1960	1970
All languages	387	1073	2206	2186
Lithuanian	336	916	1768	1412
Percentage of total in Lithuanian	87%	85%	80%	65%

4.3 The Impact of Russian on the Lexicon

Certainly the single most marked effect of this "Soviet" role of language is seen in the area of the lexicon, with a massive influx of borrowed (Soviet) terminology from Russian into Lithuanian, as was the case with Estonian (section 2, this chapter). The influx of new lexical items was the result of deliberate planning, and Party language officials intentionally drew new vocabulary from Russian stock. That this was in fact a deliberate and conscious policy is specified repeatedly in the Soviet press, in particular in statements such as the following: "When a new term is needed... it must not be created anew but most boldly be taken from Russian, which is the richest of languages and which in the Soviet Union is the international language" (*Bolshevik* No.8, 1952; cited in Knowles 1990:151). "Taking" lexical items from Russian included direct loanwords (e.g. *kolukis* 'kolkhoz') as well as caiques (*penkmetis* 'five-year plan', and *tarybinis* 'Soviet'). In the discussion of the development of the Lithuanian lexicon, Sabaliauskas (1973:114–115) writes with triumph that thousands of words have entered the Lithuanian language, words without which it is hard to imagine life.

It has been estimated that 70 to 80 percent of all new terms in the Baltic Republics were created using Russian models as their base (Knowles 1990:156). A number of different linguistic strategies were used: direct borrowings from Russian, in particular in the realm of socio-political terminology and in the heavy use of acronyms; caiques from Russian; translations of collocations based on Russian patterns, and so on. At the same time, while glorifying Russian as "one of the most developed international languages," party officials were ready to point to the full fledged use of Lithuanian. Desheriev (1976:229) cites 22 social functions of both languages so as to bolster the image of Lithuanian as enjoying all the privileges of Russian, while also showing the necessity of Russian for inter-ethnic communication with Soviet citizens who have no knowledge of Lithuanian.

5. REFORM AND REVOLT

By the middle of the 1980's, the titular majorities of each of the Baltic republics had become very concerned by Russification trends. As the preceding discussion has shown, language use in the Baltics was largely influenced by policy decisions made in three interrelated areas: education, urbanization/industrialization, and the use of the press. In terms of education, general policies have led to an increase in the number of Russian-language schools in each of the Baltic Republics, and an increase in the use of Russian in all schools. From the moment they entered a school during the Soviet era, Baltic children were exposed to Russian-language instruction. By the time they reached any institution of higher education, instruction was largely—if not exclusively—in Russian.

The use of Russian was further bolstered by the press and media. In a centrally controlled system like that of the USSR, decisions as to what language to use in radio and television broadcasts, in newspapers and journals, and in books, as well as the frequency and content of these broadcasts, or numbers of publications, and so on, were all centrally determined and linked to specific political goals. For example, television broadcasts in Estonian decreased from 26 percent of the total programming in the period 1970-1977 to only 17 percent in 1980. (Alternatively, the majority of radio broadcasting was in Estonian, with an increase from 80 percent in 1965 to 88 percent in 1980; Raun 1985:27).

Urbanization is closely tied to an increase in the usage of Russian in the Baltic, as is also the case in the rest of the Soviet Union (Chapter 8, section 2). Over half the population of each Baltic Republic was urban by the middle of the 1970's: in 1974 in the Estonian SSR 67 percent of the population lived in cities; in the Lithuanian SSR 65 percent; and in the Latvian SSR 55 percent. In addition, surveys taken at this time indicate that at least some of the people remaining in the countryside wished to move to a city. Baltic urbanization is the direct result of industrialization, which occurred very rapidly in this region, with an increase in industrial output of more than twenty times from 1940 to 1967. Not only were ethnic Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians increasingly more likely to be involved in industrial labor (and accordingly to move to the urban industrial centers), but the rapid rise in industry created a demand for an expansion of the labor force that could not be met by native workers. This led to a rise in immigrant workers, in particular from the Russian SFSR, which resulted in an increase of native speakers of Russian into the Baltics.

By the 1980's, the culmination of these factors was causing alarm throughout the Baltic states, which ultimately resulted in the rejection of the Soviet system. The paths of first reform and then revolt were similar in all three Republics. While the level of anti-Soviet animosity may have varied in different Republics at different times, and with different individuals, it is safe to say that it never disappeared throughout the entirety of Soviet rule. This latent animosity led to widespread demonstrations and revolts in the region, beginning in 1988 in Estonia. At the heart of these demonstrations lay anger against Soviet rule and its imposed policy of Russification. Language issues were a key factor in fueling animosity and fears. As early as 1979, over half of the population of both the Latvian and Lithuanian Union

Republics claimed a functional knowledge of Russian. Such statistics increased the sense of apprehension that Russian was encroaching on the indigenous languages. The overall trend toward an increasing knowledge of Russian is captured in Table 13:

Table 13. Population by Nationality & Language

	Population (thousands)		Number of speakers (percent)					
			titular language		Russian		other	
	1970	1979	1970	1979	1970	1979	1970	1979
Lithuania	2665	2851	97.9	97.9	35.9	52.1	1.9	1.5
Latvia	1430	1439	95.2	95.0	45.2	56.7	2.4	2.2
Estonia	1007	1020	95.5	95.3	29.0	24.2	2.0	1.9

Source: Vestnik statistiki (1980/2:24-26)

Only in the Estonian SSR did the claimed level of Russian knowledge decrease over this period. In the Latvian and Lithuanian Union Republics, the proportion of the population claiming knowledge of Russian grew, although their claimed knowledge of the titular language held steady. This suggests an increase in bilingualism in both of these Republics.

By the late 1980's, the expansion of Russian at the expense of the titular languages caused a backlash from all three Republics. In the course of 1989, each Republic individually passed a law giving its titular language the status of state language. The first of these was the Estonian SSR, which passed a law on January 18, 1989 which made Estonian its official language. This law came after a decision in November 1988 by the Estonian Supreme Soviet to declare its sovereignty. Bearing in mind the relatively high percentage of Russians in Estonia (28 percent of the total population), it is not surprising that the Estonian nationalist movement met with some resistance here by local Russians, who formed their own countergroup called *Edinstvo* ('unity'). In August 1989 a number of Russians went on strike to protest anti-Russian discrimination. The Estonian legislation is a law specifically about language; in its preamble, it guarantees the teaching of the Estonian language, and the right to conduct research on the Estonian language. Article 19 explicitly recognizes the rights of citizens to the development and use of their native language. The status of the Russian language is defined with respect to Estonian, as being the second most frequent native language (after Estonian) of Estonia's citizens, and the language of all-union communication. At the same time, the law is somewhat vague about Russian-language instruction. Although guaranteed under Article 19, which explicitly recognizes the right to native-tongue instruction, the law saw that Russian is guaranteed according to "stratification of the Russian-speaking population," a phrase which is unclear. Article 4 of this language law established requirements for the use of Estonian by workers in government and administrative agencies, and in those institutions where the employee's activity involved service to the public. Employees were given a four-year deadline by which to learn Estonian. Following

Article 38, Estonian employees who are in direct contact with the public and infringe upon the language law are liable for prosecution.

As in Estonia, anti-Soviet dissent reached new heights in Lithuania in the late 1980's. In October 1988 some 200,000 people gathered as part of *Sajudis,* the Lithuanian Movement to Support Perestroika, openly singing patriotic songs and waving the Lithuanian flag. A number of measures aimed at promoting Lithuanian nationalism and the Lithuanian language were undertaken in quick succession. In 1989 the government reopened the University of Kaunas, which had been closed in 1950 by Stalin. Instruction was to be conducted in Lithuanian. On March 11, 1990, the Lithuanian congress unanimously voted in favor of its independence from the Soviet Union. The USSR Congress of Deputies immediately responded by voting not to recognize their declaration, maintaining that it had no legal force.

The Lithuanian SSR passed its language law just a week after the Estonian SSR, on January 25, 1989. The law differed somewhat in that it specifically addressed the issue of the *state language* of Lithuania, while the Estonian law was a *language* law. The Lithuanian law required knowledge of the state language for certain governmental positions, and required that employees acquire that knowledge within a three-year period. Article 7 of the law guarantees that the necessary conditions for learning Lithuanian will be created in the Republic. In late 1990, the Supreme Soviet of Lithuania recognized that this deadline was unrealistic, and amended the stipulation for those regions where a majority of the population speaks another language to "minimal requirements of knowledge of the state language" until January 1, 1995. It cites the use of Russian only where necessary for correspondence with other Republics.

Latvia lagged somewhat behind the other two Baltic states, and in November 1988 its Supreme Soviet decided against pushing for full independence. On May 5, 1989, the *Law on Languages of the Latvian SSR* was passed. In its section on "General Propositions," the law explicitly addresses the use and defense of Latvian and Latvian only within the Republic. The law's intent was to guarantee Latvian citizens the right to use the language of their choice in communications with public officials. These officials lacked sufficient fluency in Latvian to make the measure viable, however, and the law stipulated a transition period of three years to enable state employees to acquire a working knowledge of the language. Article 2 of this law guarantees that the State will make acquisition of Latvian possible through financing it, and Article 11 guarantees the right to education in both Latvian and Russian at the general secondary level. Article 12 further guarantees instruction in both languages in vocational-technical and secondary-specialized schools, and in institutions of higher education. It also puts forward the idea of a graduation examination in the state language, an idea not found in either the Estonian or Lithuanian laws.

On September 6, 1991, the Soviet Union recognized the independence of all three Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

CHAPTER 5

THE CAUCASUS

1. OVERVIEW OF THE CAUCASUS

The Caucasus is one of the most linguistically and ethnically diverse areas of the world. In the Soviet era, it was defined as consisting of three Union Republics—the Armenian SSR, the Azerbaijan SSR, and the Georgian SSR—and territory in the Northern Caucasus that was officially part of the Russian SFSR, a territory which includes Chechnia, Ingushetia and Daghestan. The titular language of each republic is genetically distinct from the other two majority languages: Armenian is Indo-European, Azerbaijani is Turkic, and Georgian is South Caucasian (Kartvelian). Both Georgian and Armenian have long-standing literary traditions with literary languages dating to the fourth to fifth centuries; each uses its own distinct script. Azerbaijani was written in Arabic script until 1929, when the writing system was changed to a Latin-based script. In accordance with writing reforms going on throughout the USSR, this was changed to Cyrillic in 1939. Since independence, Azerbaijani has again reverted to a Latin script. These three majority ethno-linguistic groups of the Caucasus—Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian—were relatively stable throughout Soviet history and managed to maintain a relatively high degree of autonomy during the Soviet regime.

In addition to the three titular nationalities of the Caucasus, it is important to remember that there are literally dozens of other minority language groups. The Caucasus are characterized by high language density, with a large number of languages from genetically distinct families spoken there today. Of the many languages indigenous to the Caucasus, only Armenian is Indo-European. In the Northern Caucasus, Chechen and Ingush are spoken in the territory of the former Chechen-Ingush ASSR, and some 25–30 languages are spoken in the small region of the Daghestan ASSR. The fate of the minority languages differs from that of the titular languages for several reasons. All three titular languages had well-established literary traditions prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, while the many minority languages were oral only, with their populations using a different language for written communication (e.g. Arabic in Daghestan). Furthermore, while the titular languages were, to varying degrees, competing with Russian for official status and recognition, the minority languages were consistently in the position of competing with both a titular language and Russian. And finally, the relationship of any given minority language to a titular language could be and was manipulated for political goals. This "relationship" includes such issues as orthographies, development of languages for education, publications, media use, as well as such issues as choice of dialect for the basis of the standardized language.

The impact of Soviet language policy on individual groups within the Caucasus has been as varied as the languages themselves. While the three titular groups (Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian) were guaranteed mother-tongue education

from primary school through post-secondary levels, the many minorities were not.[47] Only the Abkhazians, who held an autonomous republic within the territory of the Georgian SSR, had any native-language schooling: four years in primary school, after which the language of instruction was Russian. By the end of the Soviet era, Abkhaz and Georgian were taught as separate subjects. Some of the smaller ethnic groups have lost their mother-tongue instruction altogether; for these groups the native language was taught only as secondary, subsidiary subject.

1.1 Demographics and Historical Overview

Transcaucasia refers to the territory separated from Russia by the Caucasian mountains, and bounded by the Caspian and Black Seas. The period immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution was a time of great turmoil in Transcaucasia. In 1917 the region as a whole was under the influence of Armenian Dashnaks, Azeri Musavets (a Muslim Democratic party), and Georgian Mensheviks. Transcaucasia was initially united as one Republic, but this unity broke down on May 26, 1918, when the Republic's Assembly disbanded itself. At that same time, the Mensheviks in Georgia declared themselves to be an independent state, to be followed by first Azerbaijan and then Armenia (Herzig 1990). After the Brest–Litovsk Treaty, also on May 26, 1918 the creation of the Georgian Soviet Democratic Republic was proclaimed and recognized by Germany, Turkey, and the Moscow Soviet. In May 1920, a treaty was signed between Georgia and the Soviet Union, agreeing on the border between the two. This treaty was broken when the Red Army marched into Georgia in February 1921. In 1922, the three republics were merged into a single Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic. This continued until 1936, when the Transcaucasian Federation was dissolved, to be replaced by the three constituent Soviet Republics.

The Azerbaijan SSR was the largest of the three Caucasian Soviet Republics, measuring some 33,436 square miles (86,600 sq. km.), roughly the size of Portugal. It is followed in size by the Georgian SSR, which was 26,991 square miles (69,700 sq. km.), the size of the Republic of Ireland; and the Armenian SSR, approximately the size of Belgium, 11,506 square miles (29,800 sq. km.). Georgia shares the longest frontier with Russia, and the Georgian Black Sea coast is the only subtropical climate zone of the former Soviet Union. Population data mirrors geographical territory: as of the 1989 census, the Azerbaijan SSR had a population of approximately 7 million; the Georgian SSR was 5.4 million; and the Armenian SSR was 3.3 million. Georgia is arguably the most ethnically diverse, with only 70 percent of its population constituted by ethnic Georgians, and Armenia the most ethnically homogeneous, with over 90 percent of the population consisting of ethnic Armenians. In addition to the three Soviet Republics, the Caucasus includes the territories of the Daghestan ASSR and the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, which were both part of the Russian SFSR in Soviet times.

[47]Although the number of linguistic minorities is highest in the North Caucasus, the titular republics are home to minority groups of significant size and political importance. *The Ethnologue* cites Azerbaijan as home to fourteen languages, and Georgia and Armenia to six (Grimes 2000).

The rich ethno-linguistic diversity of the Caucasus has posed certain challenges historically. Soviet language planners faced a multitude of differing languages in the Caucasus, with varying levels of literacy and literary traditions. The top ten languages in terms of number of speakers are presented in Table 14:

Table 14. Ten Largest Languages in the Caucasus

language	population, 1979	percentage of mother-tongue speakers
Azerbaijani	5,477,000	97.9%
Armenian	4,151,000	90.7%
Georgian	3,571,000	98.3%
Chechen	756,000	98.6%
Avar	483,000	97.7%
Lezgi	383,000	97.7%
Dargwa	287,000	98.3%
Kumyk	228,000	98.2%
Ingush	186,000	97.4%
Lak	100,000	95.0%

The absolute dominance of each of the titular languages in terms of population size is clear from these figures. In fact, the remaining seven languages are spoken primarily in the Northern Caucasus, in a region which was part of the Russian SFSR during the Soviet era and is territory claimed by the Russian Federation today, although some of these have enclaves in the Caucasian Republics as well. (For example, approximately 44,000 Avar speakers lived in the Azerbaijan SSR in 1979.)

1.2 Ethnicity in the Caucasus

The ethnic situation in the Caucasus is extremely complex. The peoples of the North Caucasus are generally divided into four groups: Circassian or Adyghe tribes of the northeast and Black Sea coast, including Adyghes, Cherkess, and Kabardians; indigenous Caucasian nations like Chechen and Ingush; the descendants of locals and the Turkic-speaking invaders of the thirteenth century like the Karachay, Balkars, and Kumyks; and the Iranian-speakers like the Ossetians, as well as much smaller ethnic groups.

From a scholarly standpoint, it would be misleading to rely solely on linguistic criteria to establish ethnic identity in this region (as is also true for many other regions of the USSR). Migrations and dislocations due to political circumstances (such as forced deportations) have had major repercussions for the different ethno-linguistic groups in the region. Moreover, some of the different groups in the North Caucasus lacked a sense of national or ethnic identity to the extent that they did not have a name for themselves as a group sharing a collective identity. The lack of ethnonyms for people sharing a common language and culture is indicative that they saw themselves as more closely associated with tribes or clans rather than the larger

whole. Many groups used place names to refer to themselves, a pattern that was frequently found among mountain-dwelling groups. (This was a frequent pattern of Siberian peoples as well; see Chapter 7.) For an outsider to the region, identification of the differing groups is further complicated by Soviet policies that aimed at creating distinct labels where people may have felt there to be none. An example is provided by the Balkars, who did not have a collective name to refer to themselves in pre-Revolutionary times. Instead, they used the names of the gorges in which they lived (e.g. *Malkarly, Kholamly, Byzyngychy, Chegemli, Baksanchy*) to refer to their different tribes. The only term the Balkars used for self-identification was *Taulu,* meaning 'mountaineer'. But they used *Taulu* to refer to other mountain-dwelling peoples as well, such as the Karachay, Ossetians, and some others. The term *Balkar* was given to them by the Kabards and the Russians. Similarly, the people who were subsequently called the *Rutuls* lacked a name for their language and their ethnic group. Thus when such terms as Balkar or Rutul were applied to any given group by outsiders (such as the Soviet planners), these terms lacked any significance for the insiders themselves. In addition, the Soviets created ethnic boundaries where the people themselves saw none. For example, the Moslem consciousness throughout the USSR was not based on ethnicity, but on religious ties, and Muslims in the Caucasus (such as in Azerbaijan) often felt themselves part of a larger group of Muslims who also happened to be living in Central Asia and other parts of the world. The Chechen and Ingush consider themselves to be parts of one larger group of people, whom they call *vaj nach,* but who were divided by the Soviet government (see Chapter 5, section 5.4). Similarly, the Cherkess, Adyghei and Kardage all consider themselves united as the *Adgye* people. Ethnic ties were not always particularly strong in the Caucasus: tribal, clan, and religious ties were often much stronger and more meaningful to the people themselves.

1.3 Overview of Language Policy in the Caucasus

When the Bolshevik government annexed the Caucasus, it acquired a territory with very high language density and diversity. Several well-established written languages—Arabic, Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Georgian—were already widely used in parts of the region, while most of the remaining languages indigenous to the Caucasus did not have written forms, but were used by traditionally oral cultures.[48] In the early Soviet years here, as elsewhere, language planners set about documenting and describing native languages, and as early as the late 1920's major decisions had already been made as to which languages would receive written standards, and which would remain "undeveloped." The linguistic complexity of these languages, coupled with the sheer magnitude of their diversity, made the implementation of Soviet language planning goals especially difficult. One of the greatest challenges was the phonological complexity of many languages, which made the development of writing systems for them especially difficult.

[48] An exception is Bats, described in Schiefner (1859). This publication is one of the first published grammars for any Caucasian language. Ironically, Bats has been largely neglected since that time; see also section 2.2, this chapter.

The Caucasus presents one of the most striking examples of the ways in which language can be manipulated to unify or to divide people. By the late 1950's, it was clear that the central authorities had moved away from earlier nativization policies aimed at extending and strengthening the use of native languages toward focused policies for promoting Russification. In the Republics of the Caucasus the titular languages were so well-established that it was virtually impossible to establish Russian as the sole major language of communication. Yet at the same time, significant portions of the population claimed first-tongue fluency in something other than one of these three titular languages. Soviet language policy in the region was designed to facilitate the use of Russian as a general lingua franca. For example, the policy of unifying the orthography of Russian loan words includes an explicit statement to the effect that such unification is intended to aid "the perfect acquisition of the norms of Russian and the native languages" (Desheriev 1969: 200).

2. THE GEORGIAN SSR

Georgia presents an interesting case in terms of the long-standing history of the Georgian language, its historically high literacy rate, and its general resistance to Russification. (Current literacy rates are 99 percent for the population as a whole, with male literacy at 100 percent and female literacy at 98 percent.) A number of language families are spoken in this region: Caucasian, Indo-European (both Russian and Armenian, as well as Osetin or Ossete, which is Indo-Iranian), Turkic (Azerbaijani and a few Urum speakers), and Afro-Asiatic (as represented by Assyrian Neo-Aramaic, Semitic). Caucasian languages predominate by far, with Georgian speakers constituting approximately 70 percent of the total population of 5.4 million (1989); the next largest group is Russians, 7 percent of the population, followed by Azerbaijanis, at 5 percent. In addition to Georgian, a number of Caucasian languages are spoken within the borders of the Georgian SSR. These include Svan, Laz and Mingrelian (South Caucasian), and Abkhaz and Bats (North Caucasian). Mingrelian and Laz are officially grouped together as one language (Zan), but these two lack mutual intelligibility. Although the Mingrelian population is the largest of these five (with an estimated speaker base of more than 400,000; see Klimov 200b:53), they do not appear in the Soviet censuses as they were required to declare their ethnicity as Georgian until the 1989 census, when they were recognized as a distinct group. Officially, then, the second largest language in the Georgian SSR in terms of number of speakers is Abkhaz, at nearly 100,000 (1989 census). It is followed by Svan, with only 35,000 speakers (as of 1975). Abkhaz currently has an established literary language and is the official language of Abkhazia, where 94 percent of its people speak it as a native tongue.

Both the Abkhazian and the Ossetian minorities were allocated autonomous territories during the Soviet period. Similarly, the Adkhars (the Georgian Muslims) also had an autonomous region. The most recent data on languages and speakers in Georgia (taken from Grimes 2000) is given in Table 15. The dates of speaker counts are given, as up-to-date information for many languages of the Caucasus is not readily available.

Table 15. Languages and Speakers in Georgia

Language family	Language	Number of speakers
South Caucasian	Georgian	3,901,380 (1993)
	Svan	35,000 (1975)
	Judeo-Georgian	20,000 (1995)
	Mingrelian	500,000 (1989)
	Laz	2000 (1982 est.)
Nakh-Daghestanian	Bats	2500-3000 (1975)
Northwest Caucasian	Abkhaz	101,000 (1993)
Afro-Asiatic, Semitic	Assyrian Neo-Aramaic	3000 (1999)
Indo-European	Osetin	164,000 (1993)

2.1 The Georgian Language

The Georgian language has an extensive literary history. The Georgian people were Christianized in 337 AD, and the advent of Christianity brought about the necessity of spreading the written word. A unique alphabet was created for Georgian, which has undergone several transformations since its first attestation in fifth-century inscriptions in Jerusalem and in Georgia. The modern alphabet is called *mkhedruli*; this is the secular alphabet and, unlike the religious alphabet (*xucuri*), it makes no distinction between upper and lower case letters. The creation of the Georgian alphabet is generally attributed to Mesrop, who is also credited with the creation of the Armenian alphabet. The Georgian alphabet is fully phonemic; the modern *mkhedruli* contrasts with earlier alphabets in the forms of the letters (with its immediate predecessor, *kut'thovani*, having more angularly shaped letters, and its predecessor, *mrg(v)lovani* more rounded).[49] The first Georgian printing house was established in 1709, publishing the works of the still famous Georgian poet Rustaveli.

From the Soviet perspective, the net result of this long-standing literacy was twofold. First, at the time of the Revolution, Georgia had very high literacy rates and the average level of education was significantly higher than in most other parts of the Soviet Union. Second, the Georgian people had a well-established sense of ethnic identity and heritage, and equated that in part with linguistic heritage and traditions. Georgians have historically had intense contact with Russia and yet, throughout the history of the USSR, Georgians fought hard to maintain linguistic separatism and self-determination. The only other group comparable in terms of both tenacity and success in this regard is the Armenians, and it is probably no

[49] See Hewitt (1985) for further discussion of Georgian literary history; p. 164 provides information about the development of the alphabet. For more details, see Holisky (1996).

accident that both had long-established literary traditions, high mother-tongue retention, and a high percentage of monolinguals. One result of the prestige of the Georgian language is that it was granted official status in the 1924 Constitution of the Georgian SSR and declared a state language in 1936.

Census figures show very high language retention among Georgians. Judging from the 1970 data, the use of Georgian as a first language is very high throughout the Republic, and (admitted) knowledge of Russian as a second language very low, as summarized in Table 16:

Table 16. First and Second Language Knowledge, the Georgian SSR

		Total speakers	Percentage
First language	Georgian	3,193,491	98.4%
	Russian	44,026	1.36%
	Other	7783	
Second language	Georgian	17,795	
	Russian	690,801	21.29%
	Other	16,161	
Total	Georgian	3,211,286	98.95%
	Russian	734,827	22.64%
	Other	23,944	

Adapted from Hewitt (1985: 173–4)

These figures are somewhat misleading because the census treats both Mingrelians and Svans as Georgian, and so neither group officially has a distinct language (see also Table 14). More recently, official figures cite only 71 percent of the population as speaking Georgian, Russian at 9 percent, Armenian 7 percent, Azerbaijani 6 percent, and other languages 7 percent.[50] The official figures for ethnic groups in modern-day Georgia roughly match: Georgian 70.1 percent, Armenian 8.1 percent, Russian 6.3 percent, Azerbaijani 5.7 percent, Ossetian 3 percent, Abkhaz 1.8 percent, other 5 percent. The differences between 1970 and the post-Soviet era are in part due to the reporting of more distinct languages, but they may also reflect a shift in the political alliances that the speakers being surveyed wish to draw.

Beginning in the mid-1970's, attempts by the Soviet government to shift the majority language of the Georgian SSR became apparent. In 1976, the Georgian minister of education Eduard Shevardnadze was openly promoting Russian in Georgia. He advocated that schools teach history, geography, and other subjects in Russian. These suggestions accompanied instructions from Moscow that all textbooks for higher educational institutions be in Russian, and Georgian dissertations be published and defended in Russian. Outraged, the writer Revaz

[50] http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/gg.html

Dzhaparidze made a forceful speech against the proposed changes at the Eighth Congress of Georgian Writers.

By 1978 the conflict became volatile. The government planned to change part of the constitution that declared Georgian the official language of the republic. Hundreds of students started protesting in Tbilisi, with the crowd estimated to number about 5,000. Shevardnadze addressed them twice, and the second time he acquiesced to pressure, recommending that Georgian be maintained as the official state language of the Republic. The protests proved to be effective, and Georgian was retained. Furthermore, similar proposals for changes in the constitutions of the Armenian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR were abandoned. Georgians did not lose sight of the importance of their language and, in continuation of this nationalist spirit, undertook an offical "Georgian Language Program" in the 1980's, reaffirming the role of Georgian in education, political life, mass media, and print. As of 1989, 94 percent of Georgian children were enrolled in Georgian-language schools (Enokh 1998:134).

2.2 Status of the Caucasian Languages in the Georgian SSR

Beyond Georgian, the other Caucasian languages spoken in the territory of the Georgian SSR had no written form at the time of the Revolution. After the Revolution, literary standards were established for eleven minority languages of the Caucasus; of these only Abkhaz is found in the Georgian SSR (with the remaining spoken in Daghestan; see Chapter 5, section 5). For the other Caucasian languages indigenous to the region (Bats, Laz, Mingrelian and Svan),[51] Georgian is used as a literary language, although for some speakers, Russian continues to be the primary written language.

Abkhaz has a large speaker base; as of the 1979 census, there were 91,000 speakers, living almost exclusively in the Abkhazian ASSR. Abkhaz is divided into two main dialects, Abzhui and Bzyb. The literary language was formed on the basis of Abzhui, which is spoken in Sukhumi, the economic and cultural center of Abkhazia. The Abkhaz literary language has an interesting history. Work on the creation of an Abkhaz written language was begun at the end of the nineteenth century, and took definitive shape in the Soviet era. Nikolai Marr (Chapter 2, section 5.1) took a special interest in Abkhazian, and published a work on its relationship to "Japhetic" in 1912. "Japhetic" (Russian *iafeticheskii*) is a term Marr himself introduced, using it first to refer to his theory of the genetic ties between Caucasian languages and Semitic, and subsequently extending its use to include a number of extinct languages of the Mediterranean basin and Asia, and several living languages in the Pyrenees and Pamir mountain range. Marr traveled repeatedly to the region and published approximately 20 pieces on Abkhaz, which were later deemed to have a number of mistakes in terms of theoretical position when Marr fell out of favor (see Getsadze 1959:235).

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[51]Judeo-Georgian is considered by some not to be a distinct language but rather a dialect of Georgian with heavy lexical borrowing from Hebrew.

An early Abkhaz alphabet was created in 1862 by P. K. Uslar; this alphabet was based on Cyrillic but added Georgian and Latin letters for certain sounds. In the years 1926–1928, alongside Uslar's alphabet, a Latin-based alphabet created by Marr was also used. In 1929 the decision was made to adopt a somewhat different Romanized alphabet (created by N. F. Iakovlev) for Abkhaz; its use continued until the official adoption of the Georgian alphabet in 1938. Georgian-based scripts were developed for Abkhaz along with Osetin (although North Osetin went directly to Cyrillic).

The Georgian-based alphabets were used for both Abkhaz and Osetin until 1954, when they were changed to a Cyrillic-based script. The official reason for the change was that the Georgian-based alphabet was phonetically inconsistent for these two languages, although it is difficult to claim that Cyrillic is any better suited. The Cyrillic adopted for Abkhaz has 40 letters: 26 come directly from Russian Cyrillic; 10 are adapted from Cyrillic, with changes; and the four remaining letters were taken from older alphabets. Even with these additional characters, the Cyrillic alphabet was still inconsistent in its marking of labialization and of the distinction between voiceless aspirates and voiceless ejectives.

Regardless of official claims, the motivation behind the alphabet changes was political and did not involve concern for orthographic consistency, as is clear when the changes are examined in their historico-political context. The Caucasus were the site of much conflict in the Revolution. The Mensheviks occupied Georgia in 1918, and claimed Abkhazia as part of Georgia, a move which set the stage for the tension which was to come over the next few decades. When the Bolsheviks ousted the Mensheviks and seized control in 1921, they established a Soviet Socialist Republic of Abkhazia in March of that year. Its status was officially reduced on December 16, 1921 to that of a "treaty republic," but it continued to function relatively independently within the USSR. Critically, it maintained autonomy from the Georgian Soviet government. This autonomy was lost ten years later, a change that can be linked to Joseph Stalin's rise to power. Abkhazia's status was changed in February 1931 to that of an Autonomous Republic within the Georgian SSR, just under ten years after its establishment as a Soviet Socialist Republic. For over two decades, the Abkhazians found themselves in a weakened position, subject to an increasing Georgianization of their culture. The change to a Georgian-based orthography—at a time when all other languages of the USSR were being shifted to Cyrillic—is part of that campaign. The government systematically destroyed Abkhazian cultural institutions, forbade instruction in Abkhaz as well as the teaching of Abkhaz, and closed all native-language schools in 1944–1953. (The Osetin schools in South Ossetia were also closed for this period.) The use of Georgian replaced Abkhaz (or Osetin) throughout the school system. Population demographics were manipulated in such a way as to change the ethnolinguistic fabric of the region. Other groups—in particular Mingrelians—were being transferred to Abkhazian territory. The shift in demographics is dramatic. In 1886 there were only 3474 Mingrelians and 515 other Georgian speakers in Abkhazia; by the 1979 census, there were 213,322 Georgian speakers in the region. Ethnic

Abkhazians had long been a minority in the region,[52] constituting only 27.8 percent of the population in 1926 (Wixman 1980:129), but they dropped even lower to only 17.1 percent in 1979, with a total of 83,097 people (out of a total population of 486,082). The remainder of the population was made up of Georgians, Mingrelians and other South Caucasians (45 percent) and ethnic Russians, Armenians, Greeks and Estonians. Although there was a softening of the Georginization policy following Stalin's death, the region never fully recovered, and tensions increased again under Brezhnev. Abkhaz-language schools were reopened in the post-Stalin period; in 1981-82 Abkhaz instruction continued through the fourth grade, after which instruction was in Russian. By 1990, it had been extended through the fifth grade. Georgian was offered as a second language; Abkhaz became available (as a second-language option) at some point in the 1980's.[53]

Beyond the Abkhaz and Georgian languages, the three remaining South Caucasian languages spoken in the Georgian SSR—Laz. Mingrelian and Svan—were not developed as written languages. As mentioned above, Soviet linguists treated Laz and Mingrelian as one single language, Zan.[54] Linguistically, they are closely related, and share some common innovations, but are not mutually intelligible. Furthermore, speakers do not have a shared sense of ethnic identity but see one another as belonging to different groups. Thus the differences between the two are more language-like than dialect-like. Neither Laz nor Mingrelian has a codified written form, but Mingrelian is sometimes written using Georgian script (Klimov 2001b:53). With over 400,000 speakers, Mingrelian is the larger of the two groups, Mingrelian is spoken in the western part of the Georgian SSR and in the Abkhazian ASSR, in a territory extending from the Black Sea to the Tskhenistsqali River, meeting Svan in the North and Laz in the South. Mingrelians are bilingual in Mingrelian and Georgian; those living in the Abkhazian ASSR are bilingual in Abkhaz and Mingrelian. Many do not see themselves as having a separate ethnic identity and consider themselves Georgian (Harris 1991); this may result from decades of Soviet census-taking which equated them with ethnic Georgians. Despite official claims that Mingrelians were fully bilingual in Georgian, there is some evidence that this may not have been the case. A daily Mingrelian newspaper (*q'azaxisỳi gazeti* 'Peasant's Paper') was published from March 1930 to late December 1935, written in Mingrelian using the Georgian alphabet (with two additional characters). A subsequent newspaper (*k'omunari* 'Man of the Commune') was then published in half Mingrelian and half Georgian from January 1936 to late July 1938, and only at that point was the use of Mingrelian completely abandoned in favor of Georgian (Hewitt 1990:134).

Unlike Mingrelian, the majority of Laz speakers do not live in Georgia but in modern-day Turkey. There is, however, one Laz community located on the Black

[52] The Abkhazian population suffered serious losses in conflict with the Russians in the nineteenth century; at the beginning of that century they numbered 321,000, but were reduced to only 58,697 by 1897 (see Cook 2001).

[53] See Hewitt (1990:137); Otyrba (1994). Unfortunately many of the details for Abkhaz education are unclear, as is the case elsewhere in the former USSR.

[54] For discussion of attitudes toward Mingrelian in pre-Soviet Georgia, see Hewitt (1990:127–8).

Sea, along the Turkish-Georgian border in what was the Georgian SSR. The Laz spoken in Turkey shows a strong Turkic influence, and Laz speakers there use Turkish as a written language. The Laz speakers in the Georgian SSR use Georgian for a written language and are bilingual. Svan is spoken in the high mountains of Svanetia, in the Mestia and Lentekh regions of the Georgian SSR and in the Abkhazian ASSR. There are an estimated 80,000 speakers of Svan who use Georgian as a written language (Sharadzenidze 2001:66).

One final Caucasian language indigenous to the Georgian SSR is Bats, which is on the Nakh branch of the Nakh-Daghestanian languages. Bats is one of the first Caucasian languages to have had a published grammar, written in German (Schiefner 1859). There are currently no more than 3000 speakers of Bats, all living in the village of Zemo Alvani in northeastern Georgia. Bats speakers are bilingual in Georgian and use Georgian as their written language. Educated parts of the population also speak Russian (Chrelashvili 2001:196). The children of this village are no longer speaking Bats, making it seriously endangered (Holisky and Gagua 1994).

The net effect of Soviet language policy can be seen in the Georgian SSR. Early promises of native language education were never realized for Bats, Mingrelian or Svan. Only Abkhaz was developed into a language with a full range of domains of use, and it was used in the Soviet era in education, at work, and in a variety of political functions. Nonetheless, it functioned alongside Georgian and Russian (Klychev and Chkadua 2001:114). The development of the titular language was, however, unequivocal. The majority of the Republic's population is bilingual in Georgian, and many know Russian as well. This pattern is supported by the data for education: in the Georgian SSSR in the 1965/66 academic year, there was a total of 2959 Georgian schools, 287 Russian, 242 Armenian, 163 Azerbaijani, 39 Abkhaz, 194 Osetin, and 372 mixed schools. Russian was the language of instruction in those 287; elsewhere, it was studied as a secondary subject (Desheriev 1976:173). Georgian clearly held the leading position in this Republic. By the year 1940/41 Russian had ceased the only language of instruction in secondary specialized schools (Desheriev 1976:175). Enrollment in Georgian schools was high: in 1967/68, 266,576 pupils studied in grades 1–4, and 312,794 pupils in grades 5–10. These statistics are reported by the government as evidence of the success of Soviet language planners, who claim to have intensively trained Georgian teachers, and to have published new textbooks and materials to support new Soviet terminology. Yet quite clearly, the strong Georgian commitment to their native language played a critical role. Since the break up of the Soviet Union, Russian has diminished in importance and large numbers of ethnic Russians have emigrated from Georgia (from 1989-1996, an estimated 150,000 out of a total of 347,000 as of 1989, as reported in the last Soviet census). According to official data reported by Eduard Shevardnadze, in 1998 there were 89 Russian schools, 133 Armenian, 155 Azerbaijani, and 4 Osetin outside of the Southern Osetin region, showing a significant decline in the total number of Russian schools since the Soviet era. (See Enokh 1994:144–5 for more discussion.)

3. THE ARMENIAN SSR

Armenia is the smallest and most homogeneous, both ethnically and linguistically, of the three Union Republics in the Caucasus. As of the 1989 census, the total population of the Armenian SSR was approximately 3.3 million, with more than 93 percent of the population constituted by ethnic Armenians. There is also a significant Armenian diaspora population of almost equal or even greater size living in the United States, France, and the Middle East, as well as in other parts of the former Soviet Union. (By 1979, there were an estimated 4 million Armenians outside of the Armenian SSR, and about 3 million residing in the Republic.) The existence of the diaspora, coupled with Armenia's own troubled history with Turkey,[55] has had an impact on Soviet policy in Armenia, at least indirectly, in terms of both Soviet attitudes toward Armenia, as well as initial Armenian attitudes toward the Soviet government.

After the break up of Transcaucasia in 1918 (Chapter 5, section 1.1), the Armenian Republic struggled for several years on its own. Led by the nationalist/socialist Dashnak party, its territory was largely defined as the boundaries of the former tsarist governorship in Erevan. War with Turkey, which abated somewhat during the British occupation of Transcaucasia in the post World War I years, recommenced with the departure of British forces in 1920. By the end of that year, the Dashnak government surrendered to the Soviet Bolsheviks without resistance, presumably seeing Soviet rule as preferable to Turkish rule.

In the early years of Soviet rule in Armenia, the nativization policy (*korenizatsiia*) was in full force (Chapter 2, section 3.3). For this reason, tolerance for very open nationalist sentiments was high in the region, and hand in hand with this, for the nationalist hopes of the Armenian intelligentsia. Armenian nationalism was at least tolerated until the Great Purge of 1936-38, when official policy reversed, and charges of nationalist sentiments were used to explain the purges of party officials and intelligentsia alike. The official language of the Republic was Armenian, which was used in the government and education, dominating all except a handful of minority schools.

The Armenian literary language dates to 406 AD; the alphabet was developed by Mesrop, who is also credited with the development of the Georgian alphabet.[56] Due to centuries of regular linguistic sound change since its creation, Armenian orthography was somewhat at odds with its sound system by the turn of the century. Armenian is divided into two basic dialect groups: Eastern Armenian, spoken in the Armenian SSR, and Western Armenian, originally spoken primarily in the western part of Armenia, in what is Turkish territory, but now spoken by the Armenian diaspora who have fled the area.[57] Distinctions between the two groups are

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[55] For a brief overview of the Armenian history, see Herzig (1990). A more detailed account in provided in Suny(1983, 1993).

[56] See Sanjian (1996) for details. Tumanian (1966:562) dates the creation of the alphabet to 396 AD, noting that that date is disputed.

[57] The Armenian population in this region has been purged as a result of the Turkish Genocide of 1915. Approximately 1.5 million Armenians died, either directly massacred or in forced marches across

particularly strong in terms of phonetics. These two basic groups include some fifty or so separate dialects, many of which are relatively distinct from one another, although a normalizing effect of the literary language has been claimed by Soviet language planners (Tumanian 1973:67).

The first Soviet writing reform occurred in 1922 and was based on two principles: (1) identical sounds should be depicted using the same letter(s); (2) sounds which had been lost in certain positions should not be reflected orthographically. Results included the unification of some symbols, discontinuation of the standardized norm of writing diphthongs which were no longer pronounced, and so on. Certain letters were dropped only to be reinstated in the next orthographic reform (1940) due to inconsistencies and confusion that resulted from their omission. These changes concern primarily the semivowel [j] and the writing of word-initial vowels. A lexical committee (*Komitet po terminologii*) was established to oversee the orthography and transliteration of words newly borrowed into Armenian; it was officially determined that Russian should function as the source language for borrowed terminology (Barsegian 1964).

As elsewhere in the Caucasus, language was a volatile issue in Armenia. Soviet policy makers were forced to abandon their plans to remove a clause guaranteeing Armenian status as the official language in the proposed Constitution of 1978 when protests broke out in Erevan (Suny 1983: 80). Public protest, an unusual event in the Soviet Union, was bolstered by a similar reaction of Georgians to an analogous change in the Georgian constitution. Still, the constitutional victory of Armenian as the official language of the republic did not put to rest general fears about the ever-increasing importance of Russian for the remainder of the Soviet period. A thorough knowledge of Russian was a virtual requirement for white collar jobs, and some parents preferred to send their children to Russian-language schools. A portion of Armenian citizens opted for higher education in Russian universities and technical schools. Yet due to a combination of factors—its well-established literary tradition, high educational and literacy rates, and strong ethnic pride—the net impact of Soviet language policy on the Armenian language was minimal.

4. THE AZERBAIJAN SSR

Azerbaijan is the largest of the three Caucasian republics, and includes within its borders the Nagorno-Karabagh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO) in the west (1,699 square miles or 4,400 sq. km.), a territory which is home to a large Armenian population and has been the source of much overt ethnic tension and fighting since the 1980's. In addition, part of the Azerbaijan SSR is the noncontiguous territory of Nakhichevan Autonomous State (2,124 square miles or 5,500 sq. km.). It is located on the southwest border of the Armenian SSR, situated between Armenia, Iran, and Turkey. Although home to an ethnic Azerbaijani majority, it is separated from the greater part of the Azerbaijani population by territory belonging to the Armenian SSR. Thus its geographic location further adds to the tension. The Azerbaijan SSR

Turkey. The surviving Armenian inhabitants fled in many directions: to eastern Armenia (then under Russian control), the Middle East, and the West.

had a population of roughly 7 million in 1989, with small portions of Russians and Armenians (approximately 6 percent each).

Azerbaijani national identity is a relatively recent formation: before World War I, the people of this territory were alternatively referred to as Turks, Tatars, and Caucasian Muslims. The Azerbaijan SSR borders Iran to the south, and the people living on the other side of the Iranian border share the same Muslim religion and have a sense of one united Azerbaijani identity. North Azerbaijani is spoken on the northern side of the border, and Iranian or South Azerbaijani in Iran. The two varieties differ significantly in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and the lexicon, and loanwords are quite different, reflecting the impact of different contact languages. Each group has difficulty with the written language of the other. Nonetheless, the people see themselves as constituting a single ethnic group. This sense of ethnic identity was recognized by the Soviet government as a potential danger and, with the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Federation in 1936, inhabitants of the emerging Azerbaijan SSR were discouraged from having ties with both the adjacent Caucasian Republics and with their Turkic neighbors in Iran. Any sense of pan-Turkic identity was discouraged by the State. The official name of these people became Azerbaijanis, as opposed to the former Azeri-Turks, and their language was renamed *Azerbaijani,* as opposed to *Azeri Turkic.* At the same time, the nativization campaign proclaimed many of the goals supported by Azerbaijani intelligentsia, such as combating backwardness and illiteracy, promoting education, and developing a literary language based on local speech. Nativization movements were quickly put to a halt during the Great Purges (1936-38). Azerbaijanis, as Soviet citizens elsewhere, felt a tremendous push toward Russian language and culture, and away from their own native customs.

The development of ethnic identity in this region was carried out in conjunction with the development of literary Azerbaijani. The 1926 census listed the Azerbaijani people as Turkic, and until 1929 the Azerbaijani language was written using Arabic script. 1929 saw the shift of Azerbaijani to the Roman alphabet, as was typical throughout the USSR. The Azerbaijani population took the lead among the Turkic-speaking peoples in adopting the Latin alphabet to replace Arabic script. In part, their readiness to change to a Latin alphabet stemmed from the fact that, unlike the Tatars, they had low literacy rates and could have hoped to accelerate education with the change. In October 1923 the Azerbaijan Central Executive Committee passed a resolution which granted equal status to Latin and Arabic scripts; in June 1924, the Latin alphabet was decreed the only official orthography for Azeribaijani language.

In February 1926, the All-Union Turcological Congress was held in Baku. It was attended by 131 delegates, including 31 Azerbaijani, 19 Tatars, 9 Bashkirs and 8 Uzbeks. Coming in the wake of the Azerbaijani decree of 1924, which legislated the use of the Latin alphabet, it is not surprising that the Turcological Congress began with a largely pro-Latin stance. Given that in 1924 a series of articles had appeared in the Turkish press, similarly advocating that the Turkish language be converted to a Latin-based script, it could not have been an unexpected decision. Although two Tatar delegates spoke in favor of adapting the Arabic alphabet, there were no proponents of Cyrillic at this point. The resolution to adopt the Latin "New Alphabet" for the Turkic languages in the USSR was adopted by an overwhelming

majority of the participants at the Baku Conference, and Turkic leaders outside of the Azerbaijan SSR were directed to study the implementation of this change there so that it might provide a model for alphabet reform in Central Asia and the Tatar ASSR.

5. THE NORTH CAUCASUS

The North Caucasus is the territory in the southern part of the Russian SFSR that borders the Azerbaijani and Georgian Union Republics. Its exact borders have not been rigorously defined, but it is generally understood to be the region along the Caucasian mountains, bounded by the Black Sea in the northwest and the Caspian Sea in the southeast. The history of the North Caucasus is as complicated as it is tumultuous; for an overview see Krag and Fuchs (1994); Wixman (1980). Despite strong resistance from the local population, Chechnia, Ingushetia and much of Daghestan were conquered by tsarist Russia in the 1780's. These territories remained part of the Russian empire (although not without conflict) until May 1917, when the North Caucasian mountaineers joined forces with the Terek Cossacks to form a temporary Terek-Daghestan government. These alliances underwent several transformations, and the end of 1919 saw the formation of the North Caucasian Emirate, which included Chechnia, Ossetia, Kabarda and parts of Daghestan. The Emirate was abolished by the Communist Party and, in January 1921, two Autonomous Republics were founded: the Daghestan ASSR and the Autonoumous Soviet Mountain Republic (consisting of Balkar, Chechnia, Kabard, Karakai, Ingushetia and Ossetia). This unity was short-lived. By the middle of the 1920's, the region had been fractured into smaller administrative territories and incorporated in the Russian SFSR.

This fragmentation policy was almost certainly a deliberate attempt to break historic local resistance to Russian rule. Language policies played a key role in dividing native groups, as did policies that defined and often redefined ethnic groups in accordance with the political agenda. In the 1940's Soviet fragmentation policy culminated in a massive forced exile of certain key ethnic groups from the North Caucasus; these deportations left an irrevocable change in the ethnic make-up and attitudes of the region.[58] Several significant groups were strategically targeted: the Balkars, Kalmyks (a Mongolian group, Chapter 5, section 5.5), Karachay and the Chechens and Ingush. The motivations for these deportations were not entirely clear, but they certainly had at least some geostrategic purposes. It would be difficult to overstate the long-term impact of these massive deportations, which have created an indelible mark in the history of these people. They were sent to Central Asia, to the northern part of the Kazakh SSR and to the Kyrgyz SSR, and the Balkars and Karachay were also sent to areas between Dzhambul and the Kyrgyz SSR. The Soviet government coupled the forced migrations with the abolition of the Chechen-Ingush ASSR, the Kabard–Balkar ASSR, and the Kalmyk ASSR, thereby destroying

[58] Groups were deported from other parts of the Soviet Union as well. In particular, Germans were exiled to Siberia and Central Asia (Chapter 3, section 1.3.3).

what political autonomy these groups had. The deportation figures are given in Table 17. Individual numbers for Chechen and Ingush are not available for the total reported deportations, but the total is staggering:

Table 17. Deportations in the North Caucasus[59]

Group	loaded on trains, 1943-44	number deported, 1944-46	number of children	population, 1926 census
Balkar	37,773	32,817	16,386	33,307
Chechen	387,229	N/A	N/A	318,522
Ingush	91,250	N/A	N/A	74,097
Total	478,479	400,478	191,100	392,619
Kalmyk	93,139	81,673	32,997	
Karachay	69,267	60,139	32,557	55,123

The Chechen and Ingush people often intermixed with the native indigenous groups where they were settled, in particular beyond Frunze and in the Petropavlovsk regions. Not only were the deported people themselves irrevocably affected, but the regions to which they were sent also felt the impact of the new influx of non-native people to their territories. At the 20th Party Congress in 1956, the new General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev publicly exposed and denounced the mass deportations of these five ethnic groups. They were fully rehabilitated with their rights as Soviet citizens restored. Despite this eventual rehabilitation of most of these people, their resettlement in their homelands caused further difficulties. For the Chechen, Ingush and Kalmyks, in particular, their return meant moving Avar and Dargwa families to other regions, causing further displacement and resentment.

5.1 Daghestan

The Daghestan ASSR was created in 1920; this is a small territory (19,400 sq. miles/50,300 sq. km.) with a population of 1,890,000 in 1992. The territory is slightly larger than the Soviet Republic of Armenia, but smaller than the Georgian SSR. It provides a prime example of the ethno-linguistic complexity that is found throughout the Caucasus, representing what is an extreme case of language density. Just under 30 languages are spoken in this small territory; ten of these, in addition to Russian, are official literary languages: Azerbaijani, Kumyk, Nogai, Avar, Dargwa, Lezgi, Lak, Tabassaran, Ingush and Chechen, with the latter reestablished in the 1960s. An orthography for Rutul was established in 1992, and a written language is being developed (Alexeev 2001:409). (Rutul is currently taught in early grade school, see section 5.3). With the exception of Azerbaijani and Russian, the

[59] Deportation data taken from Krag and Fuchs (1984:13); census data from *Vsesoiuznaia perepis' naseleniia 1926 goda* (Poliakov et al. 1992).

remaining are “semi-literary” at best, and did not enjoy widespread usage in written form in the Soviet period.

At the time of the formation of the Soviet Union, a variety of different languages were used in different domains in Daghestan. Arabic was the language of both religion and the legal system, while Russian was the language used for trade that took place above a more local level, and for some administration and education. Both Azerbaijani and Kumyk were used to varying degrees for communication between people in the mountains and those in the plains, while Avar and Lezgi were used as languages of wider communication for people within their respective areas. Additionally, a wide variety of indigenous languages were spoken in the home and in the villages, at the most local level. By the end of the Soviet period, this picture had changed radically, with Russian replacing all other languages as the sole language of international and interethnic communication, used for all higher education, trade and economic activities, scientific and technical uses, and wider political and social communication. Although theoretically Soviet citizens had the right to use their native language in administrative and legal matters, this right appears to have been largely a theoretical construct. Russian dominated in all these spheres. Furthermore, the active development of Azerbaijani as a single lingua franca—in addition to Russian—led to the decreased importance of indigenous local languages such as Avar or Kumyk.

5.2 *Linguistic Map of Daghestan*

At the time of Bolshevik Revolution, none of the Caucasian languages spoken in Daghestan had written forms. (There had been some earlier attempts to create alphabets for some of the languages, such as Lak as early as the sixteenth century, but these never became established as written languages.) Table 18 provides an overview of the linguistic diversity of Daghestan, with information on speakers and second language knowledge. Note that the figures in Table 18 pertain only to the number of speakers within Daghestan. In the Soviet era, speaker populations for some languages were found in other parts of the Caucasus, in the Russian SFSR and in the Azerbaijan SSSR. The population figures provided are estimates; there is little reliable data on the speakers of some of these languages. More recent, post-Soviet population estimates can be found in Alekseev et al. (2001); for the most part the figures there coincide with those here, when normal population growth is taken into consideration. The 2001 population estimate for Andi, however, is higher than expected, at more than 20,000, suggesting inaccuracy in either the 1959 data or the 2001 estimate, or both.[60] Of these many languages, only Azerbaijani, Chechen and Russian are not indigenous (or autochthonous, to use Soviet terminology). As clear from the data provided in Table 18, in addition to just sheer numbers of different languages, not only is there a high degree of multilingualism, but there is variation as to which language is used as a second language.

[60] This is in contrast to figures for the other languages, such as Akhvakh, estimated at 6000 (2001) as opposed to 5000 (1959), or Karata or Tindi, which are both estimated at 5000 (2001).

Table 18. Languages Spoken in Daghestan[61]

Language	Speakers in Daghestan	Number of dialects	Second traditional language
Caucasian			
North Caucasian, Northeast group			
Avar {northwestern area of Daghestan highlands}			
Avar	415,387	10, divided into 2 major groups	Kumyk
Andi group {to the west of Avar region}			
Akhvakh	5000 (1959)	2, different	Avar
Andi	9000 (1959)	2, very different	Avar
Bagvalal	4000 (1959)	4, quite different	Avar
Botlikh	3000 (1959)	2, closely related	Avar
Chamalal	4000 (1959)	4, very different	Avar
Ghodoberi	2500 (1959)	2, different	Avar
Karata	5000 (1959)	2, very different; several sub-dialects	Avar
Tindi	5000 (1959)	4, closely related	Avar
Tzez group {south of Andi}			
Bezhta	1500 (1959)	3, quite different	Avar
Dido	7000 (1959)	5, all very different	Avar
Hinukh	200 (1959)	no dialects	Avar, Tsez
Hunzib	600 (1959)	no dialects	Avar
Khvarshi	1000 (1959)	2, very different; subdialects	Avar
Lak-Dargwa group {central region of Daghestan highlands}			
Dargwa	244,352	7, all very different[62]	Kumyk, Azerbaijani
Lak	82,065	5, quite different	Dargwa
Lezgian group {southeastern region of Daghestan highlands}			
Aghul	11,376	4, closely related	Lezgi, Tabassaran, Dargwa

[61] Adapted from Benningsen and Lemercier-Quelquejay (1985), Comrie (1981) and Grimes (2000); data from the 1979 census unless otherwise noted. Sources: for the 1979 census: *Vestnik statistiki* (1980, 7: 45-46); the 1959 data and number of dialects is from *Iazyki narodov,* volume 4 (Bokarev 1967). Note that the figures in Table 18 pertain only to the number of speakers within Daghestan.

[62] Dargwa has significant dialect variation; some dialects of Dargwa (e.g. Kaitag, Kubachi) are classified as distinct languages. The exact position of Dargwa within Nakh-Daghestanian is controversial; it is traditionally classified as forming a single subgroup, together with Lak (Smeets 1994).

Language	Speakers in Daghestan	Number of dialects	Second traditional language
Archi	1000 (1959)	no dialects	Avar, Lak, Dargwa
Lezgi	185,563	3 dialect groups[63]	Azerbaijani
Rutul	11,933	4, closely related	Lezgi
Tabassaran	70,398	2, very different	Lezgi
Tsakhur	4543	no dialects	Azerbaijani, Lezgi
North Central Group			
Chechen	48,934	no dialects	Avar, Kumyk
Turkic			
Azerbaijani	62,769	no dialects	
Kumyk	200,572	3, closely related	Azerbaijani
Nogai	20,823	no dialects	Kumyk
Indo-European			
Judeo-Tat	6803	no dialects	Azerbaijani, Turkic
Russian	189,405	no dialects	

Note that the figures in this table do not take into account use of Russian in the region. The statistics are somewhat unreliable, and a number of sources suggest an over-reporting of knowledge of local indigenous languages, in part due to a symbolic sense of attachment to one's heritage language.

By the time of the break up of the Soviet Union, Daghestan had ten official languages (with written standards). This total includes seven Caucasian languages (Avar, Chechen, Dargwa, Ingush, Lak, Lezgi, Tabassaran), three Turkic (Azerbaijani, Lak, and Nogai), and Russian. Only Azerbaijani and Russian enjoyed full functional use, and Russian alone served as a lingua franca. Furthermore, it was the sole language of instruction in higher education. The development of the literary standards of the Daghestanian indigenous languages and the policies governing their use is discussed in section 5.3.

5.3 Language Planning and Development

As early as the eighteenth century, classical Arabic had become a widely used lingua franca throughout Daghestan. It enjoyed the status of a literary language but, equally importantly, was used for intercultural and intertribal contact throughout the region, creating a strong sense of cultural unity. At the turn of the nineteenth century, a shift to Azerbaijani (or what they called Azeri Turkic) was advocated by a group of Jadid

[63] The three dialect groups are: Kurin (with three dialects); Samur (two dialects), and Kuba. The literary language is based on the Kiuri dialect. Some dialects are reported not to be mutually intelligible.

intellectuals and it gained precedence as both literary language and lingua franca. By the eve of the Bolshevik Revolution, Azerbaijani had gained widespread use among a great variety of different people inhabiting the Caucasus, including some Avars, Dargins, Laks and the Southern Kumyks, as well as many people of Southern Daghestan (Lezgins, Tabassarans, Aghuls, Rutuls and Bakhurs). One effect of the widespread use of Azerbaijani in Daghestan is that it brought to the region a growing sense of pan-Turkic identity, which was emerging at that time as part of the larger pan-Turkic modernist movement in Kazan, Bakhchesarai and Baku. In addition, there were a few attempts to create literary languages for Avar, Dargwa, Lak and Kumyk, all using the Arabic script.

Early on, Soviet language planners were determined to create linguistic and cultural unity through a single lingua franca for the region. Two linguistic options seemed viable at this earlier stage, with the planners choosing between focusing on either the resuscitation of Arabic language and culture, or on the development of a Turkic language, either Azerbaijani or Kumyk. Perhaps surprisingly, the Daghestani Bolshevik leaders opted for Arabic, possibly in an attempt to turn the region away from the unfolding pan-Turkic identity (see Chapter 6), or perhaps to bolster the conservative religious groups who favored Arabic. Regardless of the initial motivation behind this decision, the choice of Arabic did support Islamic tradition in Daghestan, and for that reason alone it is not surprising that Arabic was developed only briefly. It became the official language at the 1917 first All-Mountaineers Congress in Vladikavkaz, but it lost this official status in 1923. In roughly the same period, there were attempts made to develop some of the indigenous languages. A resolution passed in April 1922 made Azerbaijani, Avar, Dargwa and Lak "basic" languages of the region. Kumyk and Lezgi were added to the following year.

This same year, 1923, saw the beginnings of a strong anti-religion movement in Daghestan, emanating from the Party Government. A crucial part of this movement was the campaign against Arabic. Initially, this meant a move toward Azerbaijani, which was declared the sole language of instruction in 1923, a status that continued only briefly, until 1928, when it was replaced by Kumyk in the schools. This may be due to the direct influence of N. Samurskii, a Lezgin national and First Secretary of the Dagestan Regional Committee of the Russian Communist Party. Samurskii believed that languages such as Avar, Dargwa, Kumyk, Lak, and Lezgi were useful only for work in the provinces. In order to advance the Party's agenda, citizens needed to know a "real language of civilization."

In essence, this meant that the Arabic lingua franca was replaced by first one Turkic language and then another. Publication details are telling: in 1923, only two of Daghestan's twelve newspapers were published in a Caucasian language (one each in Dargwa and Lezgi), while nine were in a Turkic language (seven in Kumyk, one in Azerbaijani, and one in Nogai), and one was in Tat. By 1934 the total number had climbed to only three Caucasian newspapers (Avar, Dargwa, and Lezgi), as opposed to ten Turkic newspapers (eight Kumyk, one Azerbaijani, one Nogai) and one Tat. These figures are even more striking if one takes into account the overall population distribution at the time, which shows that a greater percentage of the people were from Caucasian ethnic groups, and not Turkic. The 1926 census cites, for example, a total of 158,769 Avars, 134,529 Lezgi, 108,963 Dargwa, 40,380 Laks

and 31,983 Tabassarans, versus a total of 94,549 Kumyks and 36,274 Nogai. (The total Azerbaijani population of the USSR was large, but resided mainly in the Azerbaijan SSR, not in the Daghestan ASSR. Thus the publication of an Azerbaijani newspaper here is striking.)

In 1928 the status of Kumyk changed yet again when a newly established commission for the development of Daghestani languages put forth a policy of native-tongue instruction in the schools. By 1930 a total of eleven official languages were assigned to the Republic: Azerbaijani, Kumyk, Nogai (all Turkic); Avar, Chechen, Dargin, Lak, Lezgi, Tabassaran (Caucasian); Tat (Iranian), and Russian. While on the one hand this policy appears to support the use of local languages, on the other it is clear that it effectively abolished the use of Arabic or any Turkic language as a lingua franca, and Russian become the language of wider communcation. This situation held, with some minimal variation, throughout the Soviet period. In 1936 Akhvakh was added to the list of official languages, and then omitted, along with Nogai, in 1938. Chechen was removed from the list in 1945 when the Chechens themselves were deported. Nogai was reinstated after World War II, and Chechen in the 1960's.

Written languages were developed somewhat more slowly than this cursory summary suggests, and were subjected to the same alphabet revisions as the rest of the Soviet languages. Among the Caucasian languages of Daghestan, the first written languages to be developed were Avar, Dargwa, Lak, Lezgi, and then Tabassaran. These all initially used Arabic script, with some added characters for sounds not found in Arabic. In 1928 all were converted to Roman script, and then in 1938 to Cyrillic, in accordance with nationwide policy.

One of the more complex situations in terms of language policy involves Avar, spoken by approximately 44,000 in the Azerbaijan SSR and some 415,000 in Daghestan (1989 census). Avar is a Northern Caucasian language; the Avar people were the largest indigenous group in the Daghestan ASSR. The name Avar is itself a relatively recent invention: the traditional term these people used for self-designation—*ma'arulal* 'mountain people'—had no ethnic content. Instead, as with other groups in the Caucasus, the people referred to themselves in terms of their geographic location (as the name *ma'arulal* does suggest). Group affinity was determined by religion and/or identification with a given village or small dialect community. In the case of the Avars, the people had seen themselves as Muslims since the fifteenth century, and at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution they still very much maintained this sense of Muslim identity.

Unlike many of the other indigenous languages of Daghestan, there were early attempts to create a literary form of Avar, with some isolated inscriptions dating back to the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries. The first published book in Avar appeared in 1884; it was printed using an Arabic-based script similar to that used in the earlier inscriptions. Between 1884 and 1917, some 100 books were published in Avar, primarily liturgical in nature. In addition there was a major campaign in the nineteenth century led by P. K. Uslar, a man who may be considered the forerunner of Soviet policymakers, to create an Avar literary language based on Cyrillic script. It was Uslar who had created a Cyrillic-based alphabet for Abkhaz in 1862, and he was outspoken about his own Russification goals. These goals could be seen as

going hand-in-hand with the final conquest of Daghestan in 1859 by Russia. Despite these efforts, none of the attempts to create a literary norm succeeded in a major way, although the very low literacy rate of the region was also a factor here.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the need for some sort of lingua franca emerged in the Northern parts of Daghestan due to its increasing economic importance. This need resulted in the development of what was called *bolmats,* from from the words for 'community' and 'language'; it was not based on a single dialect but rather incorporated a number of features from some of the northern Avar dialects. Bolmats was intended to be a supradialect variety which could serve as a language of wider communication. It was fairly widely used in pre-Soviet times and although it never became established as a standardized norm which cut across dialect differences, it was a variety that was available for further development when Soviet language planners turned to this region. That is, the crucial decision of which dialect to choose as the basis for a literary language had already been made.

The development of Avar follows much the same path as that of the other indigenous languages of the Soviet Union. In 1920 the Arabic alphabet was adopted, in large part as a move of concession to religious and local traditions. Arabic was revoked in 1928, to be replaced by Roman script, which was subsequently replaced by Cyrillic in 1938. Despite official claims of intent for mother tongue instruction, Avar was never really developed for educational purposes. It, along with the other Daghestani literary languages, was used only in the elementary schools.

5.4 Chechen and Ingush[64]

The Chechen and the Ingush peoples live in a territory flanked by multiple languages and cultures, with Russia and the Kumyks to the North, the Georgians and Ossetians to the south across the mountains, Daghestan to the east, and with the Chechen living to the east of the Ingush. Chechen and Ingush, which are two closely related languages, are nonetheless two distinct ethnic groups with distinct languages that are not mutually intelligible. Chechen and Ingush form a single speech community, however, largely due to a high level of passive (and sometimes active) bilingualism among speakers (Nichols 1994a, 1994b). Chechen has a large number of dialects that are mutually intelligible, but intelligibilty may require some effort and training on the part of speakers.[65]

Following the 1979 census (see Table 14, section 1.1), the Chechen are the largest North Caucasian group and the second largest group of Caucasian speakers as a whole, second only to the Georgians. The Chechen population in 1989 was just under one million, at 956,879; the Ingush represent a considerably smaller group, with a population of only 273,438 in 1989. As with other groups in the North Caucasus, the terms Chechen and Ingush are not ethnonyms. Rather, the Chechens

[64] See especially Nichols (1995, 1997) for greater detail on the history and demography of the Chechen and Ingush .

[65] Nichols (1994a:3) points out that it takes a day or so for a speaker of the northern lowlands to understand a speaker of the Kisti dialect of Georgia, for example.

refer to themselves as *Nokhchi* and the Ingush as *Ghalghaaj.* The Chechen-Ingush term for their larger group identity is *vaj-nakh,* or 'our people'.

A literary language for Chechen was created in the Soviet period during the 1920's and 1930's. Until 1925, the Arabic alphabet was used for this written language, and then the Latin alphabet from 1925 to 1938, when the writing system was converted to Cyrillic. Cyrillic was adapted to Chechen with the addition of only one letter, *I*, not found in Russian Cyrillic. Chechen language retention rate is high, at about 98.1 percent in 1989. The development of Ingush followed a similar route. A Latin-based orthography was developed for Ingush in 1920; it was used until the change to Cyrillic 1938. As is true of the Chechen alphabet, it uses only one additional character (also *I*), as well as double characters for Ingush phonemes not found in Russian. The Ingush retention rate is similarly high, at about 97 percent. In addition to the passive Chechen-Ingush bilingualism mentioned above, there is heavy Russian bilingualism as well. An Ingush newspaper, *Serdalo* 'light', has been published since 1923. Chechen was originally taught only in the Chechen national elementary schools, but in recent times has been used in secondary schools and in higher education. It is used in the media (radio, television, and newspapers), in theaters and in wide range of publishing areas.

In 1944 the nationalities themselves were abolished and their lands resettled when the Chechen and Ingush, together with the Karachay, Balkars, Crimean Tatars, and other nationalities were deported en masse to Kazakhstan and Siberia, losing at least one-quarter and perhaps half of their population in transit (see Table 17, section 5). The reason, never clarified, seems to have been Stalin's wish to clear all Muslims from the main invasion routes in a contemplated attack on Turkey. Though "rehabilitated" in 1956 and allowed to return in 1957, they lost land, economic resources, and civil rights. For example, the Prigorodnyi district around Vladikavkaz was given to North Ossetia in 1944, and Ingush homes and lands were given to Ossetians. When the Ingush came back their property was not returned; they were forced to buy their houses and land back from the Ossetians, and the North Ossetian authorities prevented registration and employment of Ingush in the district. In 1973, there was an Ingush uprising resulting specifically from this issue.

The Russian-language schools in this region were different from some of the other models in other Republics due to the high language density of the Northern Caucasus as a whole. They were multi-ethnic, and in any single classroom, a large number of different ethnic groups could be found. Lewis (1973:195) cites the existence of approximately 400 multi-ethnic schools in Daghestan during the academic year 1966–67. His example is a school in the village of Tataiurt in the Babaiurt region with a total of 508 pupils, which included 16 different ethnic groups. Of these, Russians were the largest group (at 113), and Chechens (the indigenous population) the second largest (109), followed by Kumyks (70), and so on. The result was that each class had at least one representative from each group. In villages with more ethnic groups, the diversity in the classroom was even greater. From this standpoint the use of a single language in the school may well have been a practical necessity, yet regardless of any official claims about the implementation of nativization policies, the lingua franca for the schools was consistently Russian. Since 1989, Ingush has been taught in elementary and secondary schools, and in

institutions of higher learning, although Russian continues to be the primary language of instruction. Teachers of the Chechen and Ingush languages and literatures receive training at Chechen State University and at the State Pedagogical Institute in Grozny which opened in 1981.

5.5 Kalmyk

Kalmyk is one of the two Mongolian languages spoken in the former Soviet Union. The second, Buriat, is separated from it geographically and has developed differently in reaction to different historical pressures and different demographics (Chapter 7, section 5.1). The 1989 census cites a total population of 173,821 Kalmyks, with the majority of them (146,316) living in the territory of the Kalmyk ASSR. At this time, approximately 90 different ethnic groups were living in this region; next to the Kalmyks themselves, nearly 38 percent of the population was Russian (121,531), and the rest made up of smaller groups, such as the Dargintsy (13,000), the Chechens (8,000), Kazakhs (6,000) and so on. In addition to the Kalmyk ASSR, some Kalmyks live in parts of Siberia.

Kalmyk had a long-standing literary tradition, using Classical Mongolian as its literary language, written in the Zaia-pandit script. In 1924 written Kalmyk was converted to the Cyrillic alphabet; Soviet language planners state that the impetus behind this change was a general "inadequacy" of traditional Mongolic script to capture certain sound changes that had occurred in Kalmyk. In 1931 literacy was shifted to the Latin alphabet, and then in 1938 converted back to Cyrillic. In 1990 the *Law of Languages in the Kalmyk ASSR* was put into effect; this law made both Russian and Kalmyk official languages of the Autonomous Republic. In the Soviet era, apparently language instruction in Kalmyk was begun only with the implementation of the 1990 law that granted Kalmyk official status.

6. SUMMARY VIEW OF THE CAUCASUS

Soviet language policy in the Caucasus can be viewed differently in terms of its impact on the titular majority languages and on the minority languages. Policies were designed to fragment the region rather than create unity, and in some cases overt statements by Party leaders suggest a deliberate intent to fuel ethnic strife. Even with these measures, the titular languages of the three Caucasian Republics remained very strong throughout the Soviet era. Despite the fact that urbanization was linked to Russification elsewhere in the USSR, in the Caucasus the capital cities maintained a strong non-Russian identity.

Erevan, the capital of the Armenian SSR, was the most mono-ethnic capital city of any of the Union Republics, including Moscow. Ethnic Armenians dominated Erevan, constituting 93 percent of the population in 1959, with an increase in their relative proportions to make up 96.5 percent in 1989. The second largest ethnic group over these thirty years was Russian, dropping from 4.4 percent of the city's population in 1959 to 1.9 percent in 1989. The only major change in the relative position of the top ethnic groups in Erevan comes with regard to the Azerbaijanis,

who ranked third in 1959 at 0.7 percent and dropped to fifth by 1989 (0.1 percent), with Kurds taking third place (0.6 percent). This shift is the direct result of Soviet nationalities policies. Prior to the Revolution, Azerbaijanis had made up 43 percent of the population of Erevan, but approximately 100,000 were deported from the Armenian SSR in 1948 (Dragadze 1990:166–7).

In contrast, the capitals of the Azerbaijani and the Georgian SSR's, Baku and Tbilisi, are both multi-ethnic cities, but the proportion of the titular majorities in each of these increased over the Soviet period. In Baku in 1959, the largest ethnic group was Russians at 34.7 percent, followed by Azerbaijanis at 32.9 percent, and then Armenians at 21.3 percent. By 1989 this picture had changed rather dramatically, with not only Azerbaijanis claiming the majority of the population, but with a marked increase in the relative numbers: Azerbaijanis constituted 61.8 percent of the whole, while Russians only 18 percent and Armenians 12.2 percent. A similar situation holds in Tbilisi: ethnic Georgians made up 48.4 percent of the population in 1959 and 66 percent in 1989, while the relative proportions of the second- and third-ranked groups dropped. Russians decreased from 21.5 percent in 1959 to 12.1 percent in 1989 and Armenians from 18.1 percent in 1959 to 10 percent in 1989. With the exception of the Kurds in Baku, the second and third largest ethnic groups in each of the Caucasian capitals are Russians and another of the major Caucasian groups. Ethnic Georgians were only a small part of the population of either of the other capitals.

In terms of Russian language use, all three capital cities had very low assimilation rates. Only 0.4 percent of both Armenians and Georgians, and only 1.9 percent of Azerbaijanis speak Russian as a first language. The statistics for knowledge of Russian as a second language are interesting: in Erevan they rose from 35.5 percent in 1959 to 60.6 in 1989; in Baku they rose from 46 percent in 1959 to 62.9 percent in 1989; but in Tbilisi they dropped from 42 percent in 1959 to 32.7 percent in 1989.

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CHAPTER 6

CENTRAL ASIA

1. OVERVIEW OF CENTRAL ASIA

The Soviet territory commonly referred to as Central Asia was constituted by five Soviet Socialist Republics: Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. All share a strong Muslim tradition and all but the latter (Tajikistan) share a common Turkic background. Prior to the Soviet era, these territories were loosely united in what was called Russian Turkestan; the area was relatively isolated until it became part of the Russian empire in the second half of the nineteenth century. Over the course of Soviet history the territory has been divided in several different ways. In an early effort to unite some of the peoples and territories, the Turkestan Republic was created in 1921, but existed as a single entity for only a few years. In 1924 two Union Republics were created (the Turkmen SSR and the Uzbek SSR), while two autonomous republics (the Kazakh ASSR and the Kyrgyz ASSR) were created and made part of the Russian RSFR. At this point, Tajikistan was an autonomous republic within the Uzbek SSR; its status changed to that of a Union Republic in its own right in 1929; Kazakhstan and Kyrgyz followed suit in 1936. In terms of territory, the Kazakh SSR resulted in being the second largest Union Republic in the Soviet Union, second only to the Russian SFSR. For Soviet policy makers, one of the most significant features of the entirety of Central Asia was its high birth rate. In the thirty years between the 1959 and the 1989 censuses, the population of Central Asia increased from 23 million to 49.4 million, for a growth rate of 114.8 percent. This is compared to an overall average growth of 36.8 percent for the USSR as a whole.

The dominant language family throughout Central Asia is Turkic, with a Turkic language-dialect continuum running across the region. This continuum begins (on Soviet territory) in the Caucasus with Azeri, spoken in Azerbaijan (Chapter 5, section 4), and stretches across modern-day Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan, all of which were individual Soviet Republics.[66] The continuum is such that adjacent dialects are mutually intelligible, but any two groups relatively far apart on the continuum are not. Each former Republic had its own "language," but it is important to bear in mind that these language boundaries are only in part linguistic; to a very large degree they are political. Uzbek has by far the largest number of speakers, with over 16,500,000 in Uzbekistan alone, and 873,000 in Tajikistan, 555,000 in Kyrgyzstan, and slightly smaller populations in the other former Republics (1989 census). Breaking up this Turkic continuum is Tajiki, an Indo-European language (Indo-Iranian), with 3,344,720 speakers in 1991 in Tajikistan, and sizeable populations elsewhere, especially in Uzbekistan (934,000), as well as elsewhere. Uzbek-Tajiki language contact is heavy in Tajikistan and parts

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[66] Note that Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan are the post-Soviet names for Soviet Turkmenia and Kirghizia; see Chapter 6, sections 2 and 5.

of Uzbekistan, and many Tajiks are trilingual, speaking Tajiki, Uzbek and Russian. In addition, the areas of this region are inhabited by minority groups speaking local varieties of Arabic, Farsi, and other indigenous languages. Nearly all the minority languages in this region lack a written form; instead, in most cases they use the majority language of the Republic, and in fewer cases, Russian. Populations are so large in this region that Russification did not proceed on the same scale as in other parts of the USSR, such as Siberia, for example.

Central Asia exemplifies the success of the Soviets' extensive literacy campaign. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, literacy rates were very low for all of Central Asia; they are 99 percent in most regions today. In 1917, some form of Turkic written in Arabic orthography served as the literary language for most of Central Asia. Initially, there were attempts to adapt the Arabic script into a standardized orthography which would better reflect the phonetics of the local language. In 1926 the All-Union Turcological Congress in Baku recommended a shift from Arabic to Latin orthography, although this shift had already been under discussion for several years at this point (Chapter 5, section 4). At the very least, the shift had a direct impact on religious leaders and the intelligentsia, and it was probably specifically intended to lessen their influence and prestige.

The role of language in ethnic identity was quite deliberately manipulated by Soviet language planners. They began a carefully orchestrated policy of individuating the language and dialects of each Republic, making them maximally distinct from one another. With the Soviet division of Central Asia territory, each emerging nationality was seen as needing its own literary language. New languages were often invented where none had previously existed. (At the turn of the century, the majority of Central Asian peoples did not even see themselves as having a greater pan-Turkic identity, let alone an Uzbek, or Kyrgyz identity. Rather, they were more closely identified with smaller groups, such as particular tribes, or dwellers of a certain village or geographic location, similar to the situation for many groups in the Caucasus and Siberia.) At the same time, the creation of new languages was not a goal, in and of itself, of the Soviet government. Rather, the manipulation of language was a means to achieving a larger political agenda, that of creating a Soviet State. Where language planning came to play an important role was in the decision of promoting certain languages (or varieties) at the expense of others. Language was a tool used for a greater purpose.

The tension between governmental policies aimed at fostering and supporting national groups versus those intended to create a larger, Soviet society, were particularly acute in Central Asia. To a large degree, the creation of different Central Asian "identities" was by and large successful, in the sense that peoples of the different Republics came to see themselves as Uzbek or Turkmen or Kyrgyz, and so on. The creation of a Soviet-Russian identity was considerably less successful in this region. This is potentially attributable to basic demographics: the large population sizes of each of the titular majorities meant that they were less susceptible to external influence. Alternatively, one could argue that the strong sense of Muslim identity in the region made the population largely impervious to Soviet dogma. Regardless of the causes, to the extent that language is a measure of identity, the creation of a Russian-based identity failed in the region. Native language retention is

very high for all of the titular majorities of Central Asia, ranging from a "low" of 97.5 percent to above 98 percent for the different languages over time, as summarized in Table 19:

Table 19. Population by Nationality and Language

	Population (thousands)		Native speakers (percentage)		Speakers of 2nd Soviet Language			
					Russian		Other	
Total	1970	1979	1970	1979	1970	1979	1970	1979
Uzbek	9195	12,456	98.6	98.5	14.5	49.3	3.3	2.8
Kazakh	5299	6556	98.0	97.5	41.8	52.3	1.8	2.1
Tajiki	2136	2898	98.5	97.8	15.4	29.6	12.0	10.6
Turkmen	1525	2028	98.9	98.7	15.4	25.4	1.3	1.6
Kyrgyz	1452	1906	98.8	97.9	19.1	29.4	3.3	4.1

Source: Karasik (1992:51)

The lowest level of fluency in the mother-tongue is reported by the Kazakh with what is still a very high rate of 97.5 percent in 1979. Strikingly, all groups show a significant increase in speakers of Russian between the years 1970 and 1979, with the increase among Uzbek speakers (of 35 percent) being the most striking. It is difficult to assess the extent to which this represents an actual increase in the numbers of Russian speakers, due to more effective Russian-language education and governmental policies, and to what extent this is merely a reported increase. Only very small percentages of the titular majorities report any knowledge of a second Soviet language beyond Russian, with the exception of the Tajiks. Here, although the actual figures may not be entirely accurate, it is certainly the case that the Tajiks show a stronger tendency that the other groups to have some knowledge of one of the other languages spoken in this territory.

The Tatars represent yet another Turkic-speaking group of Central Asia. The Tatar ASSR is located outside of Central Asia proper, to the north of the Kazakh SSR, with Kazan as its center (Chapter 3, section 1.3). In Central Asia, in contrast, the Tatars were numerically a much smaller group. In terms of raw numbers, there was a total of 313,114 Tatars in all five Central Asian Republics, or only 1.7 percent of the population of the region. Yet there are significant reasons to consider the Tatars in conjunction with Central Asia. Their significance for the region stems not only from the fact that the Tatars are Turkic, and so part of the larger Turkic identity which stretched across Central Asia. Moreover, the Tatar population wielded great influence in parts of the region, largely because they tended to be more highly educated and more urbanized. They had a significant voice in language policy during the Russian tsarist regime, and this voice carried over into the early years of the Soviet era. By virtue of their higher levels of education, the Tatars initially were very much involved in implementing language and education policies in certain republics, such as the Kazakh SSR.

Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, large numbers of Tatars had been living in Bukhara and Turkestan where they were involved in organizing the Jadid reformed

schools (Chapter 3, section 1.3). During the first ten years of Soviet rule, they continued to occupy the positions of influences which they had held under the tsars, as prominent leaders and education specialists. Yet they engendered suspicion in Moscow, due to their pan-Turkic sentiments, which were expressed relatively openly in Moscow in May 1917 at the First All-Russia Congress of Muslims. Furthermore, the Tatars presented some of the greatest opposition to the language reforms which proposed the use of Latin instead of Arabic script: since they already had quite high literacy rates and high publication rates, a change in alphabets was decidedly undesirable from the Tatar standpoint.

1.1 The Influence of Islam in Central Asia

In order to understand the task which the Soviet government faced in its efforts to transform Central Asians to specifically *Soviet* citizens, it is important to understand the role of religion in the area. For centuries prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, Islam was so ingrained in the culture of Central Asia that it was not just a religion, but a fundamental part of life. Although the Turkic and Muslim populations largely overlapped, they did not entirely coincide, as there were Turks who were not Muslim, and Muslims who were not Turks.

The attitude of the State toward Islam changed from one that was initially anti-religious, with overt oppression, to one that was more atheistic and somewhat less combative. Despite official opposition. Central Asians maintained a strong sense of Muslim identity throughout the Soviet era. In the mid-1980's, even before the late Gorbachev years, when the government became considerably more lax in its attitudes toward religion, there were an estimated 230 functioning mosques in Central Asia. 150 functioning mosques were located in the Uzbek SSR alone. As the controls on religious practices and institutions were relaxed after 1989, there was an immediate resurgence of interest in Islam. Despite the repressive measures undertaken, Soviet policies toward Islam have had little, if any, long-lasting impact in Central Asia. At present in modern Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and Turkmenistan, the predominant religion is Sunni Islam, with varying levels of Russian Orthodoxy in each region (Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001:16–33). This is in contrast to Azerbaijan—the other key Islamic area of the former USSR—where 78 percent of the population is Shiite Muslim

The government so forcefully opposed Islam because it offered an alternative identity, which was strong by its very nature, and united the large population of Central Asia. This interplayed with language policies in several key ways. First, the initial shift from Arabic script to a Latin-based orthography had two immediate effects: (1) it cut off communication with other uses of Arabic script; and (2) it cut off access to the majority of religious literature, including religious pedagogical materials that had been developed in Muslim schools, in particular those of the Jadid movement. Second, language was manipulated in Central Asia to divide people, rather than unite. From a strict linguistic standpoint, had the Soviet government wished to create a lingua franca for the region, it could have chosen a Turkic variety which a large range of people could easily learn, or would have already known.

Instead, it opted to identify many different varieties as distinct languages that were geographically based (and not based in a greater sense of Islam) and then subsequently to create identities formulated on these geolinguistic types.

2. TURKESTAN

The initial years of Soviet rule in Central Asia were witness to a fair amount of turmoil, and the policies affecting language and identity were swept up in this perplexity from early on. This is exemplified in the history of the region of Turkestan. Historically Turkestan, or the "land of the Turks," was an ambiguously defined territory in Central Asia which encompassed territory which was later to be divided into two Union Republics, the Uzbek SSR and Turkmen SSR. Except for the brief period (1921–1924) of its existence as a Union Republic, when its boundaries were clear, the name "Turkestan" has at times been understood to refer not only to Central Asian territory, but also to the northern part of Afghanistan and to the Uyghur Autonomous Region in China. The Russian tsarist government had established itself in the Central Asian part of the region in the nineteenth century, beginning in the early part of that century by expanding its authority beyond the Kazakh Steppe. In the mid-1860's, the tsarist regime extended quite far into the region, occupying first Chiment and then Tashkent. The General–Governorship of Turkestan was established in 1867, with the government administration headquartered in Tashkent. This continued to serve as the center from which the tsars ruled much of Central Asia up to the Soviet takeover.

In April 1917, the Turkestan Committee of the Provisional Government was established, again based in Tashkent. Despite the fact that one of the goals claimed by the Bolshevik revolutionaries was to combat the injustices of the Russian tsarist government toward indigenous peoples, this Provisional Government did little to include those very groups it was supposed to be supporting. The largely Muslim population of the region saw itself being excluded; in fact, of the nine members of the Turkestan Committee, five were ethnic Russians, and the remaining four Muslim members included non-Central Asians. This is indicative of a general tension between the ethnic Russians who ruled the country from Moscow, and the regionally-based Russians who held local power in the various outlying territories. The Turkestan Muslim Central Council responded by declaring its autonomy. Although this autonomous movement was rapidly defeated in February 1918 by Bolshevik troops sent out of Tashkent, it has great significance as the first organized indigenous opposition to the Soviet government. The territory which had been the General–Governorship of Turkestan was reformulated as the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in April 1918. Uzbek and Kyrgyz were declared official languages of Turkestan, to be on an equal footing with Russian in the region.

The political landscape changed again in 1921 with the creation of the Turkestan Soviet Socialist Republic. "Turkic" was proclaimed to be the official language. This measure was largely symbolic, and with few resources allotted to support its implementation, little action was taken to put it into effect. Later that same year, however, the Turkestan Communist Party Executive Bureau recommended that at least one

worker who knew the native language of the region be working at each and every level of government. This recommendation is part of the larger nativization agenda of the central Communist government and, within that framework, is not surprising. But it was exceedingly difficult to put into practice at that time in Turkestan SSR. Estimates of literacy rates of only one to two percent for the region are almost certainly exaggerated, but it is clear that they were in fact very low indeed. This meant that there was an absolute dearth of indigenous workers who were even qualified to work in the government. As a result, a number of Tatars bilingual in Tatar and Russian were assigned these positions, but often they knew the local languages so poorly that even educated Uzbeks could not understand them.

Although the nativization campaign was just beginning at the time of the formation of Turkestan and would reach its full force only later, after the dissolution of this Republic, its impact could already be seen here. In August 1923 the Turkestan Council of People's Commissars issued a mandate that required the exclusive use of the local languages in all of the work of the government administration, and allotted the agencies a period of just three months to put the measure into effect. This mandate, and the time frame allotted to implement it, show how unrealistic the Party's goals were at this time. Then just a few months later, in December of the same year, the Communist Party called for all official documents (administrative, economic and court business) to be issued in Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Turkmen (Tursunov 1966:344, cited in Fierman 1991:170). This was followed by a measure the next year which called for training natives with the necessary skills to serve in the administration, and for training non-natives (especially Russians) in the local languages.

One of the biggest impediments to the advancement of the native workforce was the low level of education in Turkestan. The near complete lack of trained teachers, pedagogical materials and supplies, and school buildings made the problem appear insurmountable. In 1923 the schools were able to serve only 100,000 of the total of 900,000 children of school age in Turkestan. Furthermore, most of those enrolled were of European descent and were not Central Asian children. While 56 percent of all European school age children attended school, only 4 percent of the native children did. In terms of raw numbers, 31,000 native children were enrolled in schools, which does represent a tenfold increase from the pre-revolutionary period. Still, it constitutes only a very small portion of all eligible native children. Although a variety of factors certainly contributed to the low native enrollment, the lack of teachers who spoke the native languages was certainly a major factor. Equally important was the lack of funding to train teachers and to create new pedagogical materials in the local languages. Recruiting native children and teachers to the schools continued to be a challenge for many years. Despite the government's insistence of its commitment to increasing the role of the native people in the workforce, there is little evidence to support the notion that these claims were ever put into action. By March 1924, only nine percent of the workers in the central state institutions came from the native population, and only four percent in the central economic institutions (Tursunov 1966:366, cited in Fierman 1990:173).

As a political entity, the Turkestan ASSR was relatively short-lived. It was dissolved in the latter part of 1924 as were the Bukharan Soviet People's Republic

and the Khorezm Soviet People's Republic. The territory of Central Asia was carved into new political entities which resulted, initially, in the creation of two new separate Union Republics, the Uzbek SSR and the Turkmen SSR, along with an Autonomous Republic within the boundaries of the Uzbek SSR, the Tajik ASSR. In addition, three other Autonomous Republics were created within the Russian SFSR: the Kyrgyz ASSR, the Karakalpak ASSR and the Kazakh ASSR. The bulk of the population of the three founding territories (the Turkestan ASSR, and the Bukharan and Khorezm Republics) were allocated to the newly formed Uzbek Republic: 48.5 percent of the population of Turkestan, 86 percent of the Bukhara population, and 70 percent of the Khorezm population. Subsequently, the entire region of Central Asia was reconfigured into the Uzbek SSR, the Kazakh SSR, the Kyrgyz SSR and the Turkmen SSR.

3. THE UZBEK SSR

One of the legacies of the Soviet government was the creation of an Uzbek nation with a sense of an Uzbek identity. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, Uzbeks had been living under four distinct governments, in Russian Turkestan, the Bukharan Emirate, the Khivan Khanate and Afghanistan. In the early Soviet years, these territories remained fractured, politically divided into the three Republics mentioned above, the Turkestan SSR, the Bukharan Soviet People's Republic and the Khorezm Soviet People's Republic. Uzbeks of all three of these regions were eventually united with the formation of the Uzbek SSR in 1924. Prior to this time, there was still no strong sense of a specifically Uzbek identity with its own unique language, culture and traditions.

This lack of a sense of Uzbek identity stems from the position of the people in a larger pan-Turkic identity; before 1920, Uzbek itself was not considered a distinct language, but rather a Turkic dialect. As part of the Turkic language/dialect continuum, Uzbek itself is closely related to Uyghur and Kazakh. Until 1924, the written language of this region was Chagatai (also a Turkic language). Developed in the late fifteenth century, Chagatai used Arabic script; both its syntax and lexicon show a strong Farsi influence. Chagatai was commonly used throughout all of Central Asia, from the Persian border to the far side of Eastern Turkestan, into what is now China. Uzbek was declared to be the direct descendant of Chagatai and official Soviet records refer to Chagatai as "Old Uzbek." It is important to keep in mind that although it was a lingua franca for much of Central Asia, the use of Chagatai was not widespread among the Uzbeks themselves. Literacy rates were very low in this region, and have been estimated to be as low as 2 percent at the time of the Revolution. The official literacy rate was only 3.8 percent in 1928. Religious schools in the region conducted education in Arabic, not Turkic, but very few students were enrolled. Russian-language schools founded in the 1880's similarly involved only a very small percentage of the population. Very few people in Uzbekistan received any formal education prior to the Soviet conquest.

With this historical background, it is perhaps not surprising that there was little consensus as to what the "Uzbek" language should be, a situation which was

compounded by dialect variation. Uzbek has a large number of different dialects, with many of these reflecting the impact of language contact. For example, the dialects spoken in the northern and western areas of Uzbekistan reflect a strong Turkmen influence, while the dialects spoken near Kyrgyzstan show, not surprisingly, Kyrgyz influence. (The modern literary language is based on the Tashkent dialect.) The language which has had the biggest impact on Uzbek is Tajiki, due to prolonged contact since many regions have mixed Uzbek–Tajik populations. Despite the fact that these are genetically distinct languages (Uzbek is Turkic and Tajiki Indo-Iranian), impact has been profound and has gone in both directions. In terms of phonology, for example, many Uzbek dialects show a combination of common Turkic and Tajiki vocalic systems (Boeschoton 1998:358). At the same time, many Northern Tajiki dialects (on which the Tajiki literary language is based) have borrowed some Uzbek morphemes, and also show an influence on semantics, in particular with regard to tense/mood/aspect (Comrie 1989:177). Thus when language planners turned their attention to Uzbek in the early 1920's, they faced very differing opinions as to how to shape the language. Some, in light of the dominance of a pan-Turkic identity and a single literary heritage, argued for establishing a unified "Turkic" language for all Central Asian speakers. (This attitude is reflected in the declaration of Turkic as the official language of the Turkestan Republic in 1921; see Chapter 6, section 2.) Alternatively, some argued for the creation of a large number of different literary languages, pointing to the often salient dialect differences as impetus for creating multiple written varieties. This debate was resolved with the creation of the Uzbek SSR, which effectively delimited the boundaries of "Uzbek" in the Turkic continuum and those Turkic varieties spoken in the Uzbek SSR became identified as the Uzbek language (and its dialects).

An equally large issue of debate was the alphabet and orthographic conventions. Since the Arab conquest of the ninth century, the Arabic alphabet was used for writing any of the Uzbek vernacular varieties. But the orthography was far from standardized and there was no regular way of representing differences in pronunciation. The result was a rather haphazard and unpredictable writing system. This problem was exacerbated by an essentially phonetic system of "write as you hear," which—given the widespread dialect differences—further increased the chaos. Initial attempts to change the traditional orthography were met with resistance from religious leaders who, in particular, argued its sanctity. Major reforms were advocated at the 1921 Uzbek Language and Orthography Congress in Tashkent. Two of the proposed reforms dealt directly with particulars of the Uzbek phonemic system that were at odds with other Turkic varieties. These are the proposed use of diacritic marks to better represent the Uzbek vowel system, and the elimination of letters which were used exclusively in words borrowed from Arabic and Farsi. Both measures were adopted and widely implemented. A third proposal concerned regularizing the orthography of borrowed words to conform to the rules of Uzbek vowel harmony. This measure was implemented to varying degrees, but vowel harmony in borrowings was not completely standardized. A final measure, involving the elimination of certain Arabic letters which had multiple forms, was never actually taken up.

Arabic reforms came to a halt with the introduction of the Latin alphabet in 1926. Advocates saw the use of Latin orthography as a way of reducing the influence of religious leaders, and further promoted it as facilitating the acquisition of literacy. The 1926 All-Union Turcological Congress in Baku (Chapter 5, section 4), which established a Latin based alphabet for writing Turkic languages, marks the beginning of the orthography shift.

The difficulties faced in the codification of Uzbek are representative of those faced by other Central Asian languages. In the Uzbek SSR, the orthography was introduced without a codified norm; given the vast dialect differences, the result was utter confusion. An official decree was made in 1929 to codify Uzbek spelling—and thus the alphabet as well—based on a group of dialects with vowel harmony; nine vowels letters were retained to signify these different vowels. However, this posed problems for speakers of dialects without vowel harmony; these were primarily urban dwellers, and specifically those people targeted by the nativization program to be educated and enter the workforce.

By end of the 1920's in the Uzbek SSR, there was still much work to be done in the realm of education, although much progress had also been achieved. In 1925, only about one percent of all eligible children were enrolled in the schools in the Republic; by 1928, as many as 30 percent of all eligible children were enrolled in schools in Tashkent, although that figure was much lower in rural areas. There was a very uneven student distribution in terms of grade level, however, with 90 percent of all enrollments in grades 1–5, and a very high dropout rate after the second grade. The ratio of fifth-grade to first-grade students was approximately 1to 2 in Tashkent, but again in the rural areas could be as few as 1 to 40. Beyond the basic issue of recruiting native children into the schools, the question of gender parity loomed large. In 1927, for example, a total of 105,336 children were enrolled in Uzbek schools; girls constituted only 18.7 percent of this total (or 19,737) for the Republic as a whole. This figure is considerably higher for the city of Tashkent (30.4 percent) as opposed to the rural districts (Medlin et al. 1971:94-7).

The government did make a large commitment to publishing textbooks and teacher guides, and a sample survey of seventeen titles shows just how much was published in these early years:

Table 20. Textbook Materials in Uzbek, 1926-1927
Number of Copies, Sample of 17 Titles

type of publication	1926	1927
Uzbek Grammars	42,000	35,000
Children's Primers	15,000	35,000
Teachers' Manuals	4,000	4,000
Mathematics Texts	10,000	18,060
History-Geography	——	18,000
Total, 1926–1927	181,060	

Source: Medlin et al,Table VIII (1971:96)

Still, these numbers are small compared to the total number of students enrolled, although they do represent a significant increase in the numbers of textbooks available. The lack of pedagogical materials was a major hindrance to the rapid development of native-based education throughout the USSR, and the situation in the Uzbek SSR was no different.

Another aspect of the school system was the existence of Muslim schools which were a carryover from pre-Revolutionary days. As of 1927, a total of 250 Muslim schools were still running in the Uzbek SSR, representing a force which Party officials felt required tight control. As surprisingly high as this figure is, it does represent a marked drop from the 6000 Muslim schools in operation prior to the Soviet takeover. This is a reflection of the strong Muslim heritage on the one hand, and the effects of the government's active anti-religious campaign on the other. That the local population was able to maintain such a high number of religious-based schools speaks to the very deep sense of commitment to those religious traditions.

The burden to increase the native staff required more that Uzbeks achieve higher than an elementary school education, which in turn placed pressure on authorities to increase the enrollments of indigenous students in institutions of higher education. At the most prestigious of these, Central Asian State University, the numbers of indigenous students were very low: only 3.5 percent of all students accepted came from indigenous groups in the academic year 1927–28. Responding to governmental pressure, the authorities managed to increase this number rapidly, to 19 percent in 1928–29 and 26 percent in 1929–30. Figures rose even more dramatically for the less prestigious post-secondary technical and training institutes, which had lower admissions requirements. In 1930–31, a total of 39.5 percent of all students accepted were indigenous, and in 1931–32 this number leaped to 51.4 percent. These numbers reflect the desire of local officials to respond to the demands of the nativization policy established by the Central government in Moscow. But one can question the effectiveness of these initiatives, as the dropout rate was exceedingly high, ranging from 30 to 40 percent in these technical institutions. It is equally unclear that the increased numbers of students reflected an improvement in education. In a statement in February 1933, the Chairman of the Uzbek SSR Council of People's Commissars, Fäizullä Khojäev, openly admitted that some of the indigenous students who had been accepted to technical schools were nearly "illiterate" (*Pravda Vostoka,* February 28, 1933). Thus to a certain extent the measures had failed to increase the educational level of indigenous people but rather simply accepted unqualified students for "training."

A major shift in policy was noticeable beginning in 1934, as the Soviet government began backing away from the goals of the nativization campaign. Native-tongue instruction did continue in the Uzbek SSR, especially in the primary grades, but also in certain specialized fields in higher education. Yet at the same time the Communist leaders no longer enforced the dogma that the nationalities should be promoted on the basis of ethnicity (as opposed to other qualifications). This resulted in a de-emphasis on recruiting indigenous peoples for governmental positions, a principle which had been fundamental to the nativization campaign. A further consequence was that the authorities felt permitted to recruit from the available non-native pools (i.e. Russians) to fill administrative positions, and the

percentage of governmental posts occupied by native Uzbeks dropped sharply. While there are pockets of exceptions, as a whole native language rights ceased to be a governmental priority, and some of the gains of the prior decade were quickly lost. The movement away from prioritizing the use of the native languages was accompanied by another shift in the politics of language, toward the use of Russian. This point was unequivocally made in a speech in 1933 by Orinbay Äshorov, a Central Asian Bureau member, who advocated not only that non-natives in the government learn the local language(s), but also placed a new emphasis on the importance for the local people to know Russian to help them understand Marxist–Leninist fundamentals and all sciences.

Yet in 1938, at the same time as plans were being made to introduce the Russian language into school curriculum for *all* Uzbek children, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan adopted a resolution "on the preparation of Uzbek language and literature teachers in higher technical institutions." This resolution was intended to address the need for trained native teachers at the secondary level. As Fierman (1991:197) argues, in the latter half of the 1930's, "relative to the lack of attention to promoting the use of Uzbek in government and economic institutions, the Uzbek language fared well in elementary education." Progress was seen in terms of textbooks, teachers, and the number of students enrolled.[67] The number of teachers in the primary and seven-year schools increased by nearly 50 percent in the span of only four years, from 13,975 (1933–34) to 20,910 (1937–38). The increase in the number of students in grades 5–7 over the same time period is even more impressive, from 26,500 to 233,500.[68] To a certain extent the progress in education occurred independently of shifts in ideology either toward or away from the nativization policies. Clearly, a primary goal of the Soviet government was to advance the country in terms of technology and industry; such advancement was key to the Soviet Union's ultimate success with the rest of the world. In order to achieve any kind of gains, the government needed a great number of trained workers, and it had become clear that education could most rapidly be achieved in the native tongue.

Concurrent to these improvements in Uzbek primary education, there was also a tremendous push for the native people to learn Russian. Russian came to be seen as the single language of wider communication, and was marketed by the Party leaders as the sole international language. In 1938, the study of Russian was made compulsory for all students of all nationalities in the country. In the Uzbek SSR, this was legislated in two separate but related resolutions, jointly approved in succession (on April 3 and April 4, 1938) by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan and the Council of People's Commissars. These resolutions mandated that Russian language begin in all non-Russian schools as of the first of September

[67] While this is true for primary and the partial secondary schools (i.e. schools through grade seven), these problems continued to plague higher education right through the years of the war. Reports from this time period consistently complain about the lack of Uzbek textbooks and teachers. In April 1936 the Council of Nationalities of the USSR Central Executive Committee adopted a resolution to supply textbooks to Central Asian State University, but there is no evidence that this actually happened at any time before the outbreak of World War II.

[68] Data here from Kadyrov (1974:67–8), cited in Fierman (1991:197).

of that same year. Despite the demands made on the schools, the resources necessary to enact these resolutions were not yet in place. A general lack of trained teachers meant that an intensive training program for some 2400 teachers was implemented. Not surprisingly, these teachers were still inadequately trained at the beginning of the school year, and there were many reports of their lack of command of Russian. In addition, textbooks were in short supply, and the language planners had failed to take into account the kinds of pedagogical materials needed for students across the board. The ultimate goal was to have children acquire Russian as they progressed through the elementary and secondary schools, incrementally, building upon each year's curriculum. But the 1938 resolutions mandated beginning Russian language instruction at all grade levels. Textbooks for students in the higher grades who had no knowledge of Russian simply did not exist and had not been planned for.

A central part of the push toward Russian was the change to a Cyrillic-based alphabet. In the Uzbek SSR, this shift occurred in 1940. As elsewhere in the USSR, the change in orthography was reported as answering the will of the people, although there is little documentation to support this claim. Curiously, the previous year (1939) had seen a proposal for a revision to the Latin-based orthography used for Uzbek. This proposal, apart from some minor spelling changes, consisted of reordering the alphabet to match the order of letters in Cyrillic (A, B, V, G, D, E....; see Fierman 1985:216). Concomitant to the change in orthography was another fundamental change, the elimination of writing the vowel harmony. (Vowel harmony is a characteristic trait of Turkic languages; see Chapter 1, section 2.2.1.) In Uzbek, due to regular language change, the urban dialects tend to not maintain vowel harmony, while the more rural dialects do. In the formation of the Uzbek literary language, this dialect difference posed critical problems that needed immediate resolution in choosing which variant would be adopted as the standard. Although the early solution had been to write words as if the rules of vowel harmony applied, this decision was rescinded with the change to Cyrillic in 1940. The issue of vowel harmony not only applied to the spelling of native Uzbek words but perhaps even more importantly, to the spelling of Russian borrowings. Loanwords from Russian were an important aspect of the "vocabulary development" put in place by Soviet language planners as was the case for other languages in the country as well, including even those languages which were added to the USSR relatively late, such as Estonian (Chapter 3, section 2). By writing in Cyrillic, with the initial vowels intact, the Uzbek forms of these borrowings looked remarkably like the Russian originals.

In the post-Stalin era, the importance which the Central government placed on the acquisition and use of Russian in the Uzbek SSR only increased. This trend continued right up to the perestroika period and the break up of the Soviet Union. The number of schools with intensive Russian programs increased rapidly; in 1980 there were 400 such schools, and just a year later there were 676. Nursery schools for Uzbek children also grew significantly in leaps and bounds: in 1978 there were 211; in 1979 there were 618. By the time of the academic year 1981–82, this number had already increased to 1050, and language planners projected a total of 2212 schools by 1988 (Fierman 1985:231, fn. 70).

At the same time, any gains in Russian language acquisition through the extensive building of educational programs were in many ways offset by the rapid growth of the Uzbek population itself. From 1950 to 1979, the Uzbek part of the total population of the Republic increased from 62.2 percent to 68.7 percent. In 1979, 98.5 percent of all Uzbeks claimed Uzbek as their mother tongue. Even as late as 1989, this percentage had dipped only very slightly, to 98.3 percent, and only 0.7 percent of all Uzbeks reported Russian as their native tongue.

4. CENTRAL ASIA PRIOR TO WORLD WAR II

Kazakh, Kyrgyz and Turkmen are all closely related Turkic languages. At about the time of the break up of the USSR, there were an estimated 6.5 million speakers of Kazakh in Kazakhstan, with an additional 37,000 in Kyrgyzstan, 88,000 in Turkmenistan, and 808,000 in Uzbekistan, and an overall world-wide estimate of 8 million speakers. Karakalpak, which some dispute as a dialect of Kazakh, has an estimated 400,000 speakers in Uzbekistan, with some additional speakers in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

4.1 The Kazakh SSR in the Early Years

In Kazakhstan, as in Uzbekistan (Chapter 6, section 3) and other Turkic-speaking parts of Central Asia, Chagatai was the early literary language. The issue of developing a specifically Kazakh written language emerged nearly a century before the Soviet language planners arrived, and during the nineteenth century two opposing views had developed. The one group, largely made up of Kazakh intellectuals, advocated the use of Tatar in the schools and Islamic instruction. The countergroup, which included the Kazakh secular elite and was supported by Russian authorities, increasingly favored the development of a Kazakh written language. By the early half of the nineteenth century, a system of Tatar-Kazakh schools had been established by Tatar missionaries, who hoped to spread Islam in the region. Instruction in these schools was conducted in Tatar (also a Turkic language; see Chapter 6, section 1). In this same time period, schools were founded by the Russian Ministry of Education with an aim to train Kazakhs to enter governmental service. The middle of the nineteenth century saw an increasing number of efforts by the local intelligentsia to write in the vernacular, further fueling the need for developing a literary form of Kazakh. In addition, Russian authorities had become increasingly concerned about the potential influence of Islam on the local population, with Islamic forces viewed as inherently anti-Russian. Accordingly, they advocated a move away from Tatar (and the Arabic alphabet) toward a Kazakh literary language using Cyrillic. The resulting conflict developed into an opposition of secular versus religious education, as well as a discussion of Arabic versus Cyrillic, or Tatar versus Kazakh.

These beginnings led to a heightened politicization of language issues, which had become closely associated with issues of Kazakh identity and nationalism by the

end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century. In May 1876 the Ministry of Education developed a policy for Kazakh-language secular instruction in the primary grades using a modified Cyrillic orthographic system. The Ministry authorized the use of this new Kazakh writing system in a series of textbooks and primers, and advocated the use of Kazakh—not Tatar—in all newspapers. This language policy was part of a larger Kazakh nationalist movement, which was, in part, anti-Tatar in nature. In 1892, Tatars were banned from teaching in the schools.

Kazakh is divided into three basic dialect groups, with only minor differences between the dialects. As part of the Turkic language–dialect continuum, it is closely related to the other Turkic languages of Central Asia, and some scholars disagree with the standard classification that distinguishes Kazakh and Karakalpak as two separate languages. The Northern dialect was chosen as the basis of the literary language. Due to its geographic position, its speakers have had less contact with Arabic and Farsi speakers, and more with Russian. This has resulted in more Russian loanwords, and fewer Arabic and Farsi, than in the other dialects.

Despite the work of the previous fifty years, the Kazakh written language was still under development at the beginning of the Soviet era. In the 1920's and 1930's, Soviet language reformers (e.g. Musaev 1969) characterized the state of written Kazakh as failing to have attained the level of a codified norm, arguing that the language showed a mixture of literary and colloquial Kazakh and Tatar, along with an inconsistent use of terminology. These standard accounts triumph the positive influence of Russian, especially on the lexicon, by supplying a steady flow of loanwords and through the extensive use of caiques, in particular phraseological calques. Furthermore, it is argued that Russian had a major impact on Kazakh syntax. Syntactic changes include some changes in the use of grammatical cases (e.g. the instrumental replacing the native use of dative–allative, or the locative replacing the elative, where Russian would use prepositional/locative with a preposition). In addition, it is argued that translations from Russian introduced a new level of syntactic complexity and subordination.

The overall development of the Kazakh literary language in the Soviet period follows the same general lines of Uzbek and the other titular languages in Central Asia. Here, as elsewhere, one of the primary goals of the new government was to raise literacy levels as rapidly as possible; the literacy rate as of 1919 was officially only 2 percent; by the time of the 1926 census, it had increased to 22.5 percent. That same census reported that 12 percent of all Kazakh school-age children were enrolled in schools of some sort. At this point, Kazakh was still written in Arabic script, but pressure to switch to Latin orthography had been growing since 1923. When the All-Union Turcological Conference was convened in Baku in 1926, the pressures had grown in conjunction with the nationwide movement toward Romanization, and the use of the Latin alphabet was mandated by 1927 (see also (Chapter 5, section 4).

This move met with political backlash. The switch away from Arabic meant that all previous literature was inaccessible to the newly literate population, a measure which ran directly counter to the goals of the Kazakh intelligentsia to provide historical continuity. The desire for historical continuity was in turn used against this group by the Soviet leadership, arguing that "historical continuity" was in fact a thin

guise for nationalist, anti-Soviet sentiments. Some key Kazakh personnel were removed from educational administration. This led to a need to find their replacements, and the government introduced a system of incentives, offering salary increases from 10 to 15 percent for Europeans who completed a Kazakh language course (Khasanov 1979). Even so, these administrative positions were generally held by bilingual Kazakhs.

By the end of the 1930's, the push for alphabet reform was clear in Kazakhstan as elsewhere in the USSR, and the change to a Cyrillic-based script was officially ratified in November 1940. Minor changes to the alphabet (including the reordering of some letters, and some changes in transcription) were introduced in 1952 as the result of a conference held in Alma-Ata. A number of linguistic descriptions of Kazakh were published in the 1950's, ranging in topic from overall descriptive grammars to more specialized studies of parts of speech, morphology and syntax. For Soviet language planners, the key issue in Kazakh language development involved work on the lexicon and the publication of Russian-Kazakh bilingual dictionaries.

Intense debates about the status of the Kazakh language began in the 1980's, sparked by public protests. National unrest began in December 1986 at the appointment of an ethnic Russian (Gennadii Kolbin) to the post of First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan. Language was a particularly volatile issue: as of 1989, a noteworthy 60.4 percent of Kazakhs declared knowledge of Russian as a second language, a figure which was markedly higher than for the rest of the Central Asian titular nationalities (see Table 24, section 5 of this chapter). The Party reacted to the December 1986 protests, just months later in March 1987, by issuing decrees on the development of both Kazakh and Russian in the Republic; these decrees, however, consisted of the usual party rhetoric about bilingualism, and the need to increase class hours. Real changes were seen in September 1989 with ratification of the language law of the Kazakh SSR. This law made Kazakh the official language, and confirmed Russian as the language of interethnic communication. In April 1990 an onomastic commission was established to research and restore Kazakh toponyms and place names. The new Constitution of the Kazakhstan Republic, ratified on January 28, 1993, guarantees the right to education in Kazakh or Russian, explicitly specifying this right at all educational levels. Moreover, Article 4 of the new Constitution states that during the "transition period" people will have access to learn Kazakh, free of cost and unimpeded, and that during this time both Kazakh and Russian will function in the work place. Unfortunately, the Constitution does not specify how it will be determined that this transition period has ended, or what will happen thereafter.

While it is difficult to assess the overall impact of the Kazakh language legislation, it certainly has had some effect. In the Ministry of Education, for example, 47 percent of employees were not Kazakh[69] in 1987; this figure was reduced to 20 percent in 1992. At the same time, the Russian-speaking population has voiced its difficulties in learning Kazakh: classes are unavailable, and much-needed textbooks, dictionaries and reference grammars are not being published. In

[69]Translated from *spetsialisty-nekazakhy* 'specialists-non-Kazakhs'; see Savin (2001:107).

this the language reform is ironically reminiscent of the early Soviet literacy movement, when precisely these kinds of issues impeded that language campaign as well.

4.2 The Development of Tajiki and the Tajik SSR

Tajiki is the sole Indo-European language among the titular languages of Central Asia. It is part of the Southwest Iranian subgroup of Indo-Iranian, along with Farsi, (Muslim) Tat of Azerbaijan,[70] and several languages spoken in Iran (Chapter 1, section 2). It is by far the largest of all Iranian languages in the Soviet Union in terms of speakers. Tajiki is very closely related to the Farsi spoken in Iran and Afghanistan, so closely related that some consider it to be a dialect of Farsi. There are, however, major lexical differences between them, as the Tajiki lexicon shows a much greater Turkic influence, due to the heavy contact between the Tajiks on the one hand, and the Uzbeks and Kyrgyz on the other. Modern Tajiki is divided into two basic dialect groups, the northwestern and southwestern dialect groups. The standard literary language is based on the northwestern dialects, which are those most heavily influenced by Uzbek. The Soviet era saw a major influx of Russian loanwords into Tajiki, particularly in the areas of politics, culture and technology.

Throughout their history, the Tajiks have had extensive contact with the many peoples of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan and India. It is important to keep in mind that the Uzbeks and Tajiks had been long settled in common territory long before the arrival of the Russian regime in the middle of the nineteenth century. In areas of heavy contact, the local variety of Tajiki shows a particularly strong Turkic influence. A Tajiki literary language was originally founded in the ninth century, at a time when Bukhara and Samarkand were the centers of a nascent Tajik nationhood. This literary language did not, however, acquire widespread use. Instead, Classical Persian was used as a written language, and was the principal governmental language. The educated few had some knowledge of Classical Persian poetry. The use of Classical Persian as a literary language for Tajiki speakers persisted until the Soviet era. Literacy rates were very low, however, with less than three percent of the total population of Tajikistan claiming literacy in any language as last as 1926.

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Tajiks established a semi-independent state, maintained under the influence of Uzbekistan. Its independence did not endure long, and the territory was soon annexed by the Russian empire. In the latter part of that same century, a group of literate Bukharans proposed a new educational system for both Uzbek and Tajik children. They enjoyed the support of the local Russian administrators, but the proposal was vehemently opposed by the Muslim clerics. Their proposal was modeled on the Jadid schools founded by the

[70] The term 'Tat' is sometimes used to refer to a number of different languages. Following the terminology in Grimes (2000), Tat is the Southwestern Iranian language spoken in areas where Azerbaijani is or historically was the dominant language. There are an estimated 30,000 Tat speakers in Azerbaijan, and a substantially smaller number in Iran (8000). Both groups of speakers are reported to use Azerbaijani as a written langugage. It is sometimes confused with Takestani, Northwest Iranian, spoken by a larger group (200,000 or so) in Iran.

Tatars in Kazakhstan in terms of both curriculum and methodology. Despite the protests of local conservatives, the program did have an impact on Tajik teachers and poets. By the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, both groups had moved away from Classical Persian and begun using a written style based more on colloquial language use

The political status of the Tajik region changed several times in the early Soviet years. In 1918, Tajikistan was incorporated into what was then the Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republic (Chapter 6, section 2). In 1924, a separate Tajikistan ASSR was created within the boundaries of the newly formed Uzbek SSR. It acquired the status of Union Republic in 1929, at which point Tajiki became the national language of the Republic. Throughout the 1920's and the 1930's, Russian and Tajik scholars standardized the language and orthography; the key part of the reforms was the decision to base literary Tajiki on the dialects spoken in the Northwestern regions, near Samarkand and Bukhara. Tajiki underwent the same alphabet changes as the other languages in Central Asia: in 1927 the decision was made to cease using Arabic script in favor of the modified Latin alphabet, and then in 1940, to change to a Cyrillic-based orthography.

As elsewhere, special programs were instituted to increase literacy and overall levels of education. By the end of 1927, a total of 127 schools had been established in the Republic with the specified intent of combating illiteracy and training potential workers; these were part of the more extensive program of the so-called *Likbez schools,* from *Likvidatsiia bezgramatnosti* 'liquidation of illiteracy' (see Chapter 2, section 4). Their number had increased to 4,069 by the academic year 1932–33, and they enrolled over 140,000 students, of whom 25,314 were women. The program was at least officially successful, and by 1939 the official literacy rate had increased to 71.7 percent, a figure which—although almost certainly inflated—represents a remarkable gain. The Lenin Tajik State University was opened in 1948, and even up to the end of the Soviet period it continued to be the only university in the Republic. Instruction there was conducted in both Tajiki and Russian. Radio and television were broadcast in Tajiki in both the Tajik SSR and the Uzbek SSR.

Still, the Republic lagged behind other parts of the country in terms of literacy and education, in particular for women. For the 1986–87 academic year, the proportion of women enrolled in higher education was only 42 percent, while the national average was 56 percent. Among the Central Asian Republics, only the Turkmen SSR had a comparable rate (44 percent), with the remaining Republics showing a much higher proportion of women in higher education. In this same year, only 28 women in the Republic held the degree of doctor of science, the highest academic degree available in the Soviet Union.

The Tajik SSR had the highest population growth rate in the USSR in the period 1979–1989, with a rate of 43 percent, as opposed to the national average of only 9.3 percent. (The second highest was the Uzbek SSR, at 29 percent for this ten-year period.) Because ethnic Russians living in the Republic had a significantly lower growth rate, the proportion of Tajiks to Russians increased. Yet the bulk of this growth was in rural areas, and the urban areas—which were the administrative and education centers—showed a lower growth rate. As a result, by the late 1980's, the view of the role of Tajiki in society was quite similar to that in other Republics

outside of Central Asia, with many tearful that it had lost ground to Russian. There was in fact a justifiable claim to the Tajik misgivings, as Russian functioned as the sole administrative language and the primary language of education. Although one could obtain an elementary school education conducted primarily in Tajiki, a Russian-language education was necessary for work in the government. Well-founded fears that the spheres of usage for Tajiki were becoming ever more limited led to the February 1989 recommendation of the Tajik Supreme Soviet that the Republic establish a *Law on Language* similar to the one advanced by Estonians in the Estonian SSR (see section 2, this chapter). The substance of the draft law was the recommendation that Tajiki become the official language of the Republic. In July 1989, this was ratified by the Supreme Soviet. One of the changes it legislated was the renaming of the language itself, altered in the press to *the Tajiki (Farsi) language.* The school curriculum was changed to increase the amount of classroom time devoted to the study of Tajiki language and literature, and to include the study of Classical Persian texts. The increase in Tajiki instruction is found even in the Russian-language schools, which changed to require Tajiki instruction beginning at age seven, from first through eleventh grade.

4.3 The Kyrgyz SSR and the Turkmen SSR

The development of language policy in the Kyrgyz SSR and the Turkmen SSR proceeded in much the same way as in the rest of Central Asia, with the move from an Arabic script to a Latin-based orthography for both Kirghiz and Turkmen after the 1926 All-Union Turcological Congress of Baku, and then the adoption of Cyrillic for both languages in 1938. Both Republics are on a par with the rest of Central Asia in terms of family size, with the Turkmen SSR on the high end with the average size 5.5 people, and the Kyrgyz SSR on the low end for the region, with 4.6 people. These figures can be compared to the average for the other Central Asian Republics, with the highest being the Tajik SSR at 5.7, then the Uzbek SSR at 5.5, and the Kazakh SSR at 4.1, as opposed to the national average of only 3.5, and the average family in the Russian SFSR at 3.3. Yet there are some developments particular to each of these Republics which warrant separate discussion.

The Turkmen SSR was created in October 1924. In 1928, the government began a campaign against religion in the Republic, presumably with the goal of eliminating Islam completely, judging by the thoroughness of the campaign. The number of functioning mosques was reduced from 500 in 1917 to just four in 1979. This is not discussed in the Party literature, which emphasizes that in its early years of the Republic's existence, the government focused its attention on the struggle against illiteracy among the most diverse layers of society (Bokarev and Desheriev 1959:132). The State did in fact create a system of compulsory education which replaced the traditional religious schools, and the leap in literacy is dramatic, even if the official statistics are inflated. The official literacy rate went from 2.3 percent in 1926 to 99 percent in 1979, although Bohr (1990) speculates that this latter figure includes a large number of people whose claim to "literacy" consisted only of the ability to sign their names and spell a few words. Still, literacy clearly improved, and

such changes could not not be faced with opposition. In the years 1930–1935, the Turkmen intelligentsia was very vocal and openly critical of the Soviet regime, demanding political autonomy and a return to the use of Chagatai, or to Anatolian Turkish, and abandonment of the Turkmen language. The adoption of Cyrillic officially came as the result of a *Resolution of the First Linguistic Congress on Questions of Orthography of the Turkmen Literary Language* (May 19–23, 1936) in Ashkhabad. The resolution to move to a Cyrillic-based script was described as naturally stemming from the decision not to represent phonemic vowel length orthographically. A Second Linguistic Congress of the Turkmen SSR was subsequently held (in 1954) to discuss unresolved issues of orthography, punctuation and terminology, but no such dramatic changes resulted from this conference.

The advances promised by the Bolshevik Revolution were slow to come to the Turkmen SSR. It differed from most of the Soviet Union in that it remained largely rural, with only 45.3 percent of its population living in urban centers as late as 1989. It was one of the poorest Union Republics in terms of per capita income, and had the highest infant mortality rate and the lowest life expectancy in the Soviet Union. Even at the end of the Soviet era, the Turkmen SSR was characterized as “more of a tribal confederation than a modern nation” (Bohr 1990:228–9). Tribal loyalties were greater here than in any other Muslim region, and were so great as to prevent the development of either a cohesive Turkmen identity or a unified Turkmen state.

In 1924 the Kyrgyz Autonomous Region was created; its status was changed in 1926 to an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, and in 1936 it was established as a Soviet Socialist Republic. Even prior to this time, advances had been made in education and the establishment of a literary language. In the 1920’s the first Kirghiz-language schools were opened, and by 1923 there were 251 Kirghiz schools, out of a total of 327 schools in the region. The first textbooks published, and the Kirghiz newspaper *Erkin too* (‘Free mountains’) appeared in 1924. The Kirghiz people had a strong tradition of epic poetry which provided the basis for establishing a truly national literature. In this Kirghiz literature differs from that of many other ethnic groups, whose “national” literature resulted from a push by Soviet language planners and was not a true representation of their own culture, but rather direct translations of Russian classics, or at least the translation of form and style. The best known of the Kirghiz epics, the *Manas,* is not only a cornerstone of Kirghiz literature, but a symbol of ethnic pride. When the *Manas* met with criticism in the 1950’s as part of a general campaign against epics, the local opposition was considerable. The *Manas* became the cornerstone of a nationalist movement promoting Kirghiz language instruction and heralding the Kirghiz historical and cultural heritage (see Landau and Kellner-Heinkele 2001:28).

Publications in both the Kyrgyz SSR and the Turkmen SSR increased dramatically. In 1913, no books were published in either language. By 1957, over 400 titles were published in Kirghiz and 392 in Turkmen. An impressive number of book titles were published throughout the Soviet era, although these figures dipped slightly over time—for Kirghiz, down to 382 in 1966 and then up to 484 total titles in 1980, and for Turkmen down to 307 titles in 1966 and just slightly increased to 313 in 1980.

4.4 The Success of Literacy

By the time of the 1939 census, the effects of the literacy campaign could be seen. The census provides data according to general location, urban versus rural, and gender differences within these two categories. Data in the census are given in terms of ethnicity, not in terms of ethnic groups within a single Union Republic. This is potentially misleading since, for example, sizable groups of differing ethnicities lived in each of the Central Asian Republics. For example, in 1936, 65 percent of the population of the Uzbek SSR was Uzbek; in the same year in the Tajik SSR, 59.6 percent of the population was Tajik, and a full 23.8 percent Uzbek. Yet these figures do present an overall picture of literacy throughout the region. The official literacy estimates of Soviet language planners for the territory were probably low, as they cited literacy at only 2 percent in some parts of Central Asia. By the same token the figures of the 1939 census are almost certainly inflated, as officials were responding to pressure from the Central government in Moscow to increase education levels rapidly. Nonetheless, they do show a fair amount of progress was made in achieving some level of education for all of Central Asia. The data for residents aged 9 years and above are given in Table 21:

Table 21. Literacy rates for the Central Asian Union Republics, 1926 versus 1939

	Kazakh		Kyrgyz		Tajik		Turkmen		Uzbek	
	1926	1939	1926	1939	1926	1939	1926	1939	1926	1939
Urban										
male	66.7	90.3	47.0	86.0	26.8	86.0	70.5	85.5	45.5	85.0
female	46.4	73.6	27.7	73.6	5.7	74.0	49.5	74.0	25.3	73.9
total	56.6	82.4	38.0	80.2	17.5	80.5	61.4	80.0	36.0	79.6
Rural										
male	29.3	83.2	18.5	74.3	3.5	75.7	6.7	66.6	5.1	70.0
female	9.1	63.3	4.6	60.5	0.3	63.3	1.1	53.4	1.0	57.6
total	19.5	73.8	11.9	67.5	2.0	69.7	4.1	60.3	3.2	64.1

Source: Poliakov (1992:46–7)

The figures in Table 21 provide not only evidence of a rapid increase in literacy, but also significant distinctions in literacy rates between urban and rural populations, and between males and females across the board. To summarize, the urban areas have higher rates of literacy, both in 1926 and in 1939, and males are more likely to be literate than females. In each Republic, in both rural and urban areas, the difference between male and female literacy is greater than 10 percent, and in the extreme case (rural Kazakh SSR), it is 20 percent. In the rural areas of all Central Asian Republics, the literacy rates for females in 1926 were exceedingly low, with the Tajik SSR at the bottom with 0.3 percent. The Kazakh SSR, the most "Russianized" of all five Republics, consistently shows the highest literacy rates for each category (except for urban females in both years, and urban males in 1926 only, where the Turkmen SSR is slightly ahead). The figures can be compared to the

average literacy rates for the USSR as a whole during the same time period: an urban average of 67.6 percent in 1926, and 83.9 percent in 1939, as opposed to the rural average, beginning at 45.2 percent (1926) and rising to 76.7 percent (1939). By 1939, the Kazakh SSR had come closest to this national average, but all of Central Asia lagged behind the rest of the country for both time periods. Yet the differences were greater in 1926, as seen by the rural lows of several of the Union Republics (2.0 percent in the Tajik SSR or 3.2 percent in the Uzbek SSR), as opposed to the national average of 45.2 percent for rural areas. (Literacy rates were somewhat higher in urban areas, making the average for each Republic, and the USSR as a whole, higher; Table 22.)

Further evidence that the literacy campaign had achieved some measure of success is provided by the official data on literacy rates by generation. Predictably, the youngest group shows the highest level of literacy:

Table 22. Literacy Rates by Age, 1926 and 1939

Republic	Ages 9–49		Ages 50 and older		All ages	
	1926	1939	1926	1939	1926	1939
Kazakh SSR	25.0	83.5	11.5	31.4	22.8	76.3
Kyrgyz SSR	16.5	79.8	7.2	22.1	15.1	70.0
Tajik SSR	3.8	82.8	2.7	12.1	3.7	71.7
Turkmen SSR	14.0	77.7	4.7	12.5	12.5	67.2
Uzbek SSR	11.7	78.8	5.4	15.1	10.6	67.8
USSR, total	56.6	89.9	24.5	40.8	51.1	81.2

Source: Poliakov (1992:41–2)

The Kazakh SSR consistently showed higher literacy rates for all ages in both time periods, in large part thanks to the influences of Russian and Tatars living in the Republic, who had established educational traditions prior to the Revolution. The Tajik SSR shows the most marked increase in literacy, in particular for the younger group, which was transformed from having the lowest rate to having the second highest in the region. Although even the youngest groups in all Central Asian Republics continue to lag behind the national averages in 1939, they were certainly much closer in 1939, than in 1926.

5. CENTRAL ASIA AFTER STALIN

Despite the differences in each Union Republic, the language policies of the post-Stalin era brought relatively similar results in each part of Central Asia. The work of the early years had focused on rapidly increasing literacy rates and overall levels of education, in particular in order to place native workers in governmental administrative positions. The differences in the local particulars meant some differences in these early years. But by the late 1950's, the literary languages were in place, the orthographies (which had gone through several transformations) had been officially settled, and the language policy, emanating from a strong central

government, was relatively uniform. Of course there continued to be varied responses, not only from one Republic to the next, but also from different sectors within an individual Republic. For example, as mentioned in section 4.1, the Kazakh SSR was more influenced by Russian than any other Central Asian Republic. As another example, the size of the Uzbek population, coupled with its rapid growth, caused some level of alarm in Moscow.

In the post-Stalin era, the push to increase and improve Russian-language instruction was felt throughout Central Asia as it was elsewhere in the USSR. A series of conferences were held to bolster Russian, beginning in October 1975 with a conference in Tashkent on Russian language instruction, convened by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. A second all-union conference was subsequently held in May 1979, again in Tashkent, with the self-explanatory title: "The Russian Language—The Language of Friendship and Cooperation of the Peoples of the USSR." These activities were furthered by frequent reports in the press about the importance of Russian, and discussions of how knowledge of Russian was not at odds with a Kazakh identity.

In distinction to the Uzbek SSR, where attempts at Russification mostly failed, these measures met with some success in the Kazakh SSR. While the retention of the heritage language as first tongue was higher here than for some other peoples of the USSR, Kazakhs have the lowest heritage language retention rate of any titular Central Asian group (see Chapter 1, Table 2). Even as early as 1955, the Kazakh SSR had the highest percentage of students enrolled in Russian-language schools for all of Central Asia, as summarized in Table 23:

Table 23. Summary of Language Use in the Schools in Central Asia (1955-56)[71]

Republic	N° of schools	% of all schools	Instruction in: Russian	Other	% of students Russian	Other
Kazakh SSR	8,728	94%	3,758	4,970	66	34
Kyrgyz SSR	1,700	99%	324	1,376	49	51
Tajik SSR	2,542	100%	43	2,499	16	84
Turkmen SSR	1,128	95%	81	1,047	21	79
Uzbek SSR	5,396	99%	298	5,098	20	80

The Kazakh SSR leads the Central Asian Republics in terms of students in Russian-language schools (at 66 percent), although Russians constituted less than 50 percent of the population at this time (42.7 percent according to the 1959 census). Still, the Kazakhs accounted for only 30 percent of the total population of the Republic in 1959, although 77.2 percent of all Kazakhs did live in their titular Republic. The education statistics for this time suggest that Russian was the preferred language of instruction for both Russian and non-Russian nationalities. Note that the Kyrgyz SSR shows a similar pattern, with a significant proportion of pupils (at 49 percent)

[71] Figures here include primary, seven-year, and secondary schools in Central Asia. Column two indicates the number of schools reporting language of instruction. Statistics based on Medlin et al. (1971:98), Table 22, taken from *Kul'tstroi* (1956:186–7).

enrolled in Russian schools, although ethnic Russians constituted only 30.2 percent of the population (and ethnic Kyrgyz 40.5 percent).

Beyond the use of language in the educational system, the overall impact of the Russian language on Central Asia can be assessed in terms of a number of other diagnostics. First and foremost is the use of Russian as a first or second language; language usage can be determined on the basis of census data and by considering the language of media: the kinds and numbers of publications in Russian and the native languages, the number and hours of television and radio broadcasts, and so on. As with other census data, the figures here are derived from self-reports, and speakers can underreport as well as over-report their use of Russian (Chapter 1, section 4.2). The 1989 census yields rather surprising results, showing a decrease in acknowledgement of Russian as a second language for three of the five Central Asian Union Republics, as outlined in Table 24:

Table 24. Fluency in Russian as a Second Language, 1989

People	Total	Percentage, total population
Kazakh	4,916,763	60.4
Kyrgyz	890,201	35.2
Tajik	1,165,916	27.7
Turkmen	756,558	27.7
Uzbek	3,980,736	23.8

Source: Karasik (1992:457–60)

If these figures are compared to those for 1970 and 1979 (Table 19, Chapter 6, section 1), it is clear that there was an increase of Russian language use for Kazakhs (up from 52.3 percent in 1979) and Kyrgyz (29.4 percent, 1979), while all other groups actually report a decrease in Russian knowledge. The most dramatic change here is reported by the Uzbeks, with 49.3 percent in 1979, and only 23.8 percent just ten years later. These numbers almost certainly reflect a political reaction to Russian, rather than a bona fide decrease in its use. This is not to suggest that the 1979 census data were necessarily any more accurate, but rather that it was deemed acceptable, and perhaps even desirable, to report the use of Russian as a second language in the Uzbek SSR at that time. By 1989 this attitude had shifted rather dramatically. In other words, the census self-reported information from the Soviet census can serve as an indicator of attitudes toward language use.

6. LANGUAGE REFORM

Language retention rates were generally higher in Central Asia than in other parts of the USSR. Nonetheless, the peoples of Central Asia shared the same concerns as their compatriots in other Republics about the growing use of Russian at the expense of the autochthonous languages. They joined suit with other Union Republics in issuing language laws, beginning in 1989. In fact, Central Asia was preceded only

by the Baltic States in this regard. The first Republic from Central Asia to formulate a language law was the Tajik SSR. Its language law was passed on July 22, 1989 and was the fourth such law from any of the Soviet Republics, preceded only by the laws in the three Baltic States. Shortly thereafter, first the Kazakh SSR, then the Kyrgyz SSR, and then the Uzbek SSR each adopted language laws on September 22, 23 and October 21, respectively. The Turkmen SSR was the last of the Central Asian Republics, passing its law on May 24, 1990.[72]

While each of these laws promotes the use of heritage and autochthonous languages in its boundaries, it is not the case that the position of Russian is ignored. Both the Turkmen law (Article 3) and the Kazakh law (Article 5) declare the state to be interested in the development of Russian bilingualism, and Article 2 of the Kazakh law explicitly states that knowledge of Russian is "in the best interests" of its citizens. The Tajik law (Article 2) asserts the free use of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication within the Tajik territory. Still, the language laws of both the Kyrgyz and the Tajik SSR's do not make any legal guarantees for the study of Russian. At the same time, the language laws are fairly clear in requiring knowledge of the titular and state language and in demanding its acquisition and use by all employees of state organs and institutions, as well as employees in other institutions who interact with service to the public. Here, as elsewhere in the Soviet Union, specific deadlines were imposed for learning the state language: by January 1, 1996 by the Turkmen SSR (or a period of just over 5.5. years was allotted), or a period of eight years was given by the Uzbek SSR. The Kyrgyz SSR and the Tajik SSR did not set a deadline.[73]

[72] It was, in fact, the last of any Union Republic to adopt a language law, as the Caucasian Republics did not on the grounds that their own constitutions had—since the 1920's—defined the position of their titular languages as state languages.

[73] For a thorough discussion of the aftermath of Soviet policy in Central Asia and Azerbaijan, see Landau and Kellner-Heinkele (2001).

CHAPTER 7

THE NORTH

1. LANGUAGES OF THE NORTH

The term "languages of the North" is used to unite a substantial number of languages that are not all genetically related; rather, their unity comes through geographic distribution. It is common to distinguish between the "large" languages of the North (those with populations of over 40,000) and the "small" languages of the North (those with less than 40,000). They are found among peoples inhabiting the tundra and taiga regions of the USSR, with the boundaries of this Northern territory defined as the Pacific ocean in the southeast, the Taimir peninsula in the north, the Kol'skii peninsula in the west and the cape of Denezh in the east. In the mid-Soviet era, the combined total population of the smaller languages of the North equaled approximately 130,000 speakers according to a standard Soviet source (Skorik 1969). This group of smaller languages includes the following languages and language families: Samoyedic family (Nenets, Enets, Nganasan and Selkup); Finno-Ugric (Khanty, Mansi, and Saami); Tungusic (Even, Evenki, Negidal, Nanai, Ul'ch, Orok, Udihe, and Oroch); Chukotko-Kamchatkan (Chukchi, Koryak, Alutor, Kerek, Itelmen); and Aleut (Eskimo and Aleut). In addition, Gilyak and Yukaghir are both isolates. Ket is an isolate from a modern standpoint: its sister languages, Arin and Assan were last attested in the eighteenth centuries and the remaining known related language, Kott, was last spoken in the mid-nineteenth century. In terms of population size, Nenets and Evenki are the largest of this group, with 34,000 and 30,000, respectively, according to the 1989 census. Some ethnic groups, such as Orok and Enets, numbered only 200 or so at that time. The number of speakers for each of these languages is considerably smaller, and most—if not all—groups are characterized by rapid language shift to either Russian or one of the "larger" languages of the North, such as Yakut. Thus, for example, according to the 1994 mini-census, out of 1000 Gilyak, only 7 people report speaking their heritage language at home; the remaining 993 state that they speak Russian. (The total ethnic population of Gilyak in 1994 was officially only 6400, leading to a calculation of approximately 45 speakers of Gilyak at most.) The numbers for Ket are nearly as alarming, with 42 out of 1000 reporting speaking Ket in the home.

Skorik appears to equate the small languages with the languages of the North, but in fact other languages are spoken in Siberia. On the basis of geographic distribution, several "large" languages are considered here: Altai (a Turkic language, with an ethnic population of 70,777 in 1989), Buriat (a Mongolic language, with an ethnic population of 421,380 in 1989), Tuvin (a Turkic language with a population of 308,600 in the USSR), and Yakut (a Turkic language, with an ethnic population of 381,922 in 1989). These are representative of the history and development of the "large" languages of the North and suffice to illustrate their position. Other languages, such as Khakas, could be included for a fuller picture.

Differences between the large and small languages of the North extend beyond differences in speaker population size. At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, the large languages had literary forms and literary traditions and, quite crucially, had ties with other speakers of related languages. That is to say that their ethnic ties extended beyond the immediate clan or tribe to a much larger, pan-Turkic or pan-Mongolic identity. The situation was quite different for the smaller languages, all of which had no written form at the turn of the century. Social organization was markedly different as well, with most groups still organized in clans and living nomadic lifestyles. Thus the Soviet language planners, in their efforts to create a "Soviet" state, were confronted with almost diametrically opposed social problems with these two groups of languages.

As the Soviet planners clearly knew, indigenous self-identity was directly affected by language policy. One of the goals of the government was to rid the North of the clan system, which dominated native relationships and identities. The lack of a commonly accepted ethnonym for many groups had initially created confusion, but it provided the Soviets with an opportunity to invent identities where previously none had been perceived. Although the ultimate goal was the creation of a Soviet nation, a supracultural group constituted by Soviet people (Chapter 2, section 2), what happened instead was that the clan system was replaced by an awareness of identity drawn along ethnolinguistic lines. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution the Evenki people identified themselves with individual clans, such as the Puyagir or Butami. Although some groups did use place names (e.g. river names such as the Amur) to identify themselves, this clan marker was the primary means of identification. The Gilyak provide an illustrative example. Based on his own fieldwork conducted in the 1890's, Shternberg provides a rather full account of how the clan system was organized. Unlike many other clan systems, for the Gilyak the clan name derives primarily from place names. Shternberg's example was the different clans living in Kol' who had names which were derived from the place names of the homes of their ancestors, such as Tyvli-fing (inhabitants of Tyvli); Mekhre-fing (for those who had once lived in Mekhre); and Nenkhai-fing (those who live in Nenkhai), and so on. By the time of Shternberg's own fieldwork at the turn of the century, so many generations had passed that these clan members had lost any sense of connection with the ancestral homelands from which their clan names were derived (Shternberg 1999:172), nor did they have a sense of a larger Gilyak identity. Instead, the latter was created for them through Soviet policy.

2. THE LITERACY CAMPAIGN IN THE NORTH

Nowhere was this problem of literacy more acute than in the case of the languages of the North. Siberia is inhabited by a large number of linguistically and ethnically diverse populations, traditionally divided into "large" (i.e. numerous) and "small" (or minority) peoples. It is a vast territory (constituting 57 percent of the total territory of the USSR) with a sparsely distributed population (only 5.7 inhabitants per square mile in 1979; in northern and far eastern regions, that figure is much lower). At the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, many of these peoples were still

nomads and had societies organized around clan systems. Many indigenous groups lacked self-appellations, and people identified themselves with a clan group rather than a linguistic or ethnic group. With the exception of a very few languages (e.g. Yakut), the indigenous languages lacked written forms. The Siberian indigenous populations were almost exclusively illiterate, again with the exception of some individuals belonging to larger groups of people. One of the first tasks of the literacy movement in Siberian territory was basic language description, and then the creation of alphabets and literary norms.

Changes brought about by the Revolution did not reach the northernmost parts of Siberia until the early 1920's. At that time, there was a lack of even the most basic information about the numbers and distribution of minority peoples. By the 1920's, however, the government in Moscow was gaining some stability and had more time and resources to support the development of Siberia. Initial attempts to create local governmental councils (or Soviets) failed, due to the combination of limited resources and the sheer size of the Siberian territory: such centers could be located some 1000 miles apart from one another and were in no position to govern the vast expanses for which they were supposedly accountable.

A more concerted effort to bring the Soviet message to Siberia was begun in 1924 with the establishment of the Committee of the North (or, officially, the Committee for Assistance to the Peoples of the Outlying Districts of the North). Its goal was to provide aid in the development of the small peoples of the North. Its membership included not only Communist Party officials, but also key ethnographers with real expertise in Siberia. This latter group included ethnographers whose work continues to be influential today, such as V. G. Bogoraz and L. Ia. Shternberg, who spent extensive time in the field, living with a number of different groups of indigenous people and who, in addition, trained cadres of graduate students who continued their work.[74] While these Committee members viewed their own goals as supporting and maintaining local cultures, the Committee of the North had very little actual power and was unable to influence Soviet policy makers. This latter group saw its primary goal to be establishing Soviet rule, to "draw all the natives into socialist construction" and to encourage them to develop within the new political and economic framework of the country (Gurvich 1971:18, quoted in Forsyth 1992:245). The goals of these two groups—the Committee of the North and the actual policy makers—were thus in many senses diametrically opposed.

The remote areas of Siberia were truly undeveloped in any sense, and the Committee of the North set about establishing a number of "cultural bases" in them. The bases typically included a medical center, a veterinary station, a store and a school. Because virtually all of the small languages lacked a written form and had never been used in any kind of formal educational program, these first schools were all conducted entirely in Russian. In order for education in any of the native languages to take place, a variety of resources needed to be developed. The

[74] Bogoraz is probably best known for his work with the Chukchi, although he also studied, along with Shternberg, the Even, Nanai and Negidal. Shternberg wrote what is still considered to be the most comprehensive account of the Gilyak.

languages themselves needed written forms, which required not just the development of an appropriate alphabet, but also a grammatical description. Pedagogical materials, textbooks and dictionaries all needed first to be written, and then to be published. In addition, trained and literate personnel, such as administrators and as teachers, were needed to staff the schools.

To address this issue, a number of so-called northern departments were created in universities in such key Siberian cities as Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk, where they continue to exist to this day. The program was expanded in 1925 when a group of students from differing northern nationalities were sent to Leningrad State University, where the Institute of Peoples of the North was later established. (It was to come to replace the Committee of the North, which was eventually disbanded in 1935, by which point the Committee's basic principles of safeguarding native lifestyle had come to be at odds with the larger agenda of the Soviet leadership for Siberian development.) This program continued, and in 1948 the Northern Department of the Herzen Pedagogical Institute was founded. It was thus that Leningrad became the center of studies of the peoples of the North.

Viewing the native people as primitive and backwards, education was one of the highest priorities for the Committee of the North. In these early years instruction was conducted solely in Russian, but the plan was that eventually all primary education would be conducted in the indigenous languages. In order to fulfill this vision, textbooks had to be written in each of these languages, and a whole cadre of native teachers were to be trained. Eventually, these "small peoples" officially included 27 linguistic-ethnic groups (Khanty, Mansi, Nenets, Enets, Nganasan, Saami, Selkup, Ket, Evenki, Even, Negidal, Dolgan, Nanai, Ul'ch, Udihe, Oroch, Orok, Gilyak, Chukchi, Koryak, Itelmen, Yukaghir, Chuvantsy, Eskimo, Aleut, Tofalar and Tuvin).

Initially the goal was to create a literary language for each of these, and to establish native schools with full instruction for each individual language. Despite the high ambitions of the Committee of the North, many of their key goals were never achieved. First, creating literary languages was far from trivial. Widespread dialect variation coupled with very disperse populations made this a difficult task. Many of the languages were—at best—under-described, and linguists who had been sent to establish literary norms had to begin with the most basic kind of linguistic description. The significance of dialect differences in regions like Siberia cannot be overstated. The populations of speakers were generally disperse. They often had minimal contact with speakers of other dialects, such that the language/dialect distinction was often blurred, and speakers of different "dialects" of the same "language" might find one another's speech incomprehensible. At the same time, many had heavy contact with speakers of other languages and so were at least partially bi- or multi-lingual, using at least one other language in trade or other kinds of contact situations. Both nomadic and sedentary tribes alike had been actively engaged in trade for centuries, which meant a fair number of lexical borrowings had entered the dialects where contact took place. Sorting out the native versus non-native lexical and even syntactic structures was not a trivial task. Nonetheless, literary languages were created in the early 1930's, and textbooks and dictionaries were published in these languages. As elsewhere in the USSR, the initial alphabets

were Latin-based, using what was called the Unified Northern Alphabet (section 3.3, this chapter).

Even once pedagogical materials had been developed, budgetary constraints meant that they were not always accessible. The sheer size of the Siberian territory further contributed to the dilemma: transportation and delivery systems did not work well, and among the many supplies subject to the well-known Siberian transportation problems were textbooks and other pedagogical materials. Some took over a year to arrive, some never arrived at all.

Education in the native language was hampered by the fact that it was often Russian officials who decided what a person's native language was. This stems in part from multilingualism: many of the indigenous people spoke more than one language, to varying degrees of fluency, and the question of which language was their "first" or "native" language did not seem relevant to them. In part, this also stems from limitations on the resources (financial and human) to teach the languages, which accordingly determined how many languages could be taught. Decisions were made to pool resources by classifying certain languages together for pedagogical purposes. That is, languages would be grouped according to linguistic similarity, and then a "base" language could be selected. In this way, nine "base" languages emerged: Evenki, Nanai, Ul'ch, Nivkh, Chukchi, and four isolates: Eskimo, Itelmen, Aleut and Ainu. This meant that speakers of some languages (e.g. Negidal) were to be educated in a different, albeit similar, language (Evenki for Negidal). But in many cases this plan did not hold, and some Evenki (a Tungus language) were taught in Yakut (a Turkic language). These two groups were in contact in parts of Siberia, and some of the Evenki had some functional knowledge of Yakut, although it is unclear that many ever had a full command of Yakut. From a synchronic point of view, the two languages are very different, and belong to different language families (Turkic and Tungus), although both families belong to the Altaic group. A slightly different example is provided by Ul'ch, which was treated by the Soviets as a variety of Nanai, and so Ul'ch education was conducted in Nanai, although these too are distinct languages. The situation was even further complicated by the renaming process undertaken by the Soviets, so that some groups which had not seen themselves as forming a "nation" were now classified together, such that a sense of group identity was artificially created in situations where there had been none. Other groups were entirely renamed, such as the *Gilyak* who were now called the *Nivkh,* or the *Lamut* who became renamed as the *Even.* On one level, this renaming process was a superficial change, in that it did not involve changing the membership of these particular ethnic groups; rather, they were simply relabeled. Yet on another, more fundamental level, this is symbolic of the State's power to determine a group's identity—as well as any rights or privileges that accompanied that identity as a "nation."

Another key difficulty facing the Northern schools was the dearth of trained teachers. There were virtually no native people who were qualified to teach, in addition to a near absence of even Russian teachers who were willing to live and work in the difficult Siberian conditions. The government took drastic measures to entice Russians to the North. Salaries ranging from 20 to 50 percent above the norm were offered to teach in what were considered to be hardship conditions.

Meanwhile, training indigenous people as future teachers was begun in full force. In 1926, the first group of Northerners from the lower Amur region was enrolled in a teacher-training program at Leningrad State University. The total number of indigenous teachers enrolled in this program had increased to 200 by 1928, and just two years later, the Institute of the Peoples of the North was established as a separate entity. The program continued until the break-up of the Soviet Union. By 1960, a hundred students were admitted to the program annually; this group of one hundred consisted of five representatives of each of the main Northern ethnic groups. These students generally entered at the equivalent of the tenth grade in secondary school and followed a six-year course of study. The first three years were devoted to academic coursework, and the next two to practical, professional training. This was, roughly, the normal program for other students as well. The Northern students were expected to spend an additional, sixth year in Leningrad, to train themselves further in issues of bilingual education and teaching in a minority language, in addition to perfecting their own proficiency in Russian. The shift in emphasis away from native tongue instruction to Russian-based teaching was quite apparent by the mid-1960's, as evidenced not only by the sixth year of study for the teacher-trainees in Leningrad, but also by the increased emphasis on bolstering Russian-language programs in the North. Pupils were enrolled in summer classes to improve their command of Russian and to enable teachers to hone their own (Russian) teaching skills. The explicit goal of the teacher training had become to use Russian as the primary medium of communication even in the lower grades (Galazov 1965:49, cited in Lewis 1973:187).

Despite the apparent progress in training indigenous teachers, at least 60 percent of the teachers in Siberia were not native. Siberians were underrepresented even after World War II. For example, in 1947 only several native Evenki teachers were employed in all of the nineteen Evenki schools, representing just a slight increase in native staff since 1935, when there had been just two Evenki teachers. One of the key problems in this time period was finding qualified people to send for training in Leningrad. Moreover, the attrition rate for native students in Leningrad was very high, due to a combination of factors, including poor living conditions, cultural differences which made adapting to city life difficult, illness and general homesickness. Thus although the programs continued in full force in Leningrad, the teachers in the North were, by and large, ethnic Russians.

This multitude of problems—the lack of trained teachers, lack of pedagogical materials, misclassification of languages and speakers, as well as basic needs such as school buildings—meant that the overall education program was slow in getting off the ground. Frustrations at the rate of progress were prevalent among the Soviets. These were in part due to the mistaken belief on the part of officials that the Northern languages were "simple" and could easily be learned by Russians. For example, in a letter to the head of the political department of Obdorsk, two lower officials complain about the failure of the Russian workers to learn Nenets, although it has only "600 to 700 everyday words," a statement that reflects a complete misunderstanding of the morphosyntactic complexities of the language (Evgen'ev and Bergavinov 1936:65-67).

It could be said that the Soviets achieved their goals through a combination of perseverance and brute force. The official attitude toward the region is summed up in this statement by I. S. Vdovin (1959:299): “In the years of Soviet power, the peoples of the North—through the brotherly help of the great Russian people—have overcome many centuries of economic, political and cultural backwardness.”

3. “SMALL” LANGUAGES OF THE NORTH

Soviet language planners faced a number of difficulties specific to the small languages of the North, stemming from a number of issues that in large part distinguish the small languages from the large ones. Although their speakers were still largely uneducated, the larger Siberian languages had some sort of written form by the turn of the twentieth century. Crucially, they often had well-established literary traditions for some related group (such as Classical Mongolian in the case of Buriat) and, despite the fact that the literary language and the vernacular had significantly diverged, there was a body of scholarship to draw upon in formulating the new written forms based on local vernaculars. Moreover, although the educated few of the languages where there was a written tradition (such as Buriat and Yakut) constituted only a small percentage of the total population, there was at least an awareness of the role of literacy and education, as well as a certain sense of elitism attached to those who had achieved them.

This was not true of the small languages of the North, which by and large had not been described linguistically and had no written form. In some cases there had been early ethnographic work, often resulting in compiling dictionaries, or contact with missionaries who had attempted some early written language, but the smaller societies remained almost exclusively illiterate. Two important features of their social structure were problematic from the Soviet standpoint: the people were by and large nomadic, and they were still very much organized around a clan system. This meant that they lacked a sense of ethnic identity in Stalin’s sense of a nation (Chapter 2, section 3.2), inasmuch as his definition required that a national group inhabit a common territory and constitute “a stabile community.” This sense of nation was a necessary prerequisite in the progression toward a Soviet nation made up of Soviet peoples. Major changes in traditional lifestyle were seen by the Soviet authorities to be a prerequisite to the success of the new education system. At the time of the October Revolution, the majority of Siberian tribes were not settled but nomadic, retaining traditional lifestyles. Even in 1934, nearly 50 percent of all native people in Siberia were still nomadic, and for some groups—such as the Evens and Nenets—over 90 percent of their people were still nomadic.

3.1 Education and Northern Schools

In understanding the fate of the small languages of the North, it is critical to examine educational policies beyond just the literacy campaign, although this was a crucial element that shaped all of education in the North. In the political climate of the 1920’s and 1930’s, Party officials saw the primary movers of change to be the

younger generations of the proletariat: education would serve to conquer the oppressions of the past and raise the political consciousness of the oppressed. In Siberia, where there had been no tradition of education of any sort, this entailed establishing a system of elementary schools. The year 1925 marks the beginning of a major effort to build a system of "national" schools, devoted to the ethnic groups of the North. Prior to this date, just a handful of native-based schools existed, and these were created only in the early 1920's. Specifically, these are the Evenki school in Erbogachen and the Nenets school in Telviski; both were opened in 1922–23. In addition, a Khanty school had been established in Muligurt and a Nanai school in the village of Sevani. Six new schools were established in 1925. Just two years later, the total had risen to 57 schools, and the government put forward a five-year plan dedicated to educating the nationalities. By the years 1929–30, the total number of schools in Northern territories, excluding the Yakut ASSR and the Buriat-Mongol ASSR, numbered 131. The number of pupils rose from 480 in 1927 to 3000 in 1929–30. This figure represented approximately 20 percent of all school-age children in the North; attendance rates varied from 9 to 69 percent in differing regions (Sergeev 1955:271).

Education at this point was almost exclusively in Russian throughout all schools. Native-language instruction was limited to a handful of places (such as the Selkup school in Yanov stan and the Nenets school in Tel'viski), where the teachers had some knowledge of the local language. The history of the Khanty school is instructive: when its founder, a Russian communist, arrived in the village in 1924, the local population numbered approximately 80 people, with half reported to understand Russian. A school was set up in a yurt, with promises to teach the Khanty "grammar" over the course of the winter. By summer, the adult population of the village had mastered the Russian alphabet (Sergeev 1955:266). Despite the official proclamations of success of this early school, clearly there was no intention at this time of any Khanty-based instruction; Russian literacy was the primary goal.

The earliest schools were built for indigenous groups who were already settled. Once the initial schools were in place, the government turned attention to the children of the smaller groups who continued to be primarily nomadic at this time. One solution was the creation of nomadic or "roaming" schools that brought education out to the children in remote areas. In 1932, 14 percent of Northern children were enrolled in such schools (Sergeev 1955:381). But if staffing and equipping regular schools was problematic for the government, the problems of bringing education out to the tundra and taiga were overwhelming. Faced with the impossibility of nomadic schools, the Soviet officials instituted a boarding school system, compulsory from age seven, which took children from their parents and placed them in residential village schools. Initially this policy met with great resistance and resentment on the part of the indigenous people, who refused to comply, either by openly rebuffing officials, or by simply not sending their children to the schools. A variety of methods were undertaken to persuade parents to enroll the children, ranging from open coercion to gifts of food and clothing, the allure of radios and movies, or the direct intervention of the local native officials, who owed much to the Russian authorities and were in no position to refuse to support them.

The number of boarding schools grew rapidly, from six in 1924, to twelve in 1925, with a marked increase to 70 in 1930 (Sergeev 1955:271).

Not surprisingly, the early Northern schools met with great resistance. In areas where missionary schools had been established prior to the Revolution, they were very unpopular with the indigenous groups. In many places, formal education was simply unheard of, and people were completely unfamiliar with the concept. Parents were particularly skeptical, questioning the value of formal education as well as the policy of forcing children into the boarding school system. History has shown that parental fears—that children would ultimately abandon a traditional lifestyle and refuse to return to the tundra—were well-founded. No other single policy had a greater impact on language vitality in the North than the boarding school system. The Soviet response to nomadic communities was to enforce settlement in Russian-style villages. For many people whose traditional way of life involved herding, such as the reindeer herding of the Evenki and the Nenets, the ability to move with the herds in search of suitable grazing locations in the fragile Siberian environment was essential. The children of these families had customarily traveled with them, and in this way learned their heritage language and culture. These traditional ways and values were completely disrupted by the boarding school system, which separated parents and children for long periods during the year. The language of communication in the boarding schools was Russian, not any indigenous language: children from different tribes and linguistic groups were often housed in the same boarding school. Not only was Russian the sole lingua franca for them, but in most of the schools children were punished for speaking their heritage tongue. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the school staff was primarily Russian. The boarding schools played a key role in the spread of Russian proficiency, in terms of first active bilingualism on the part of the children, and then language shift, as the children received their education almost solely in Russian. The boarding school system also had the almost immediate effect of furthering lowering the prestige of the indigenous languages. Furthermore, village affairs were conducted in Russian, as this was the only language of the local authorities and officials. The end result was compact Russian-language enclaves throughout Siberia, a picture that is still largely true of Siberia today.

3.2 Pedagogical Materials and Teacher Training

The dearth of suitable pedagogical materials for Northern indigenous children was a serious problem for the early schools. Given the overall lack of familiarity of most of these groups with education at all, the development of such materials was a pressing problem. Two books by ethnographers familiar with the Northern peoples appeared in 1927: *Primer for Northern Nationalities* (by V. G. Bogoraz and S. N. Stebnitskii) and *Our North,* a book of readings designed for Northern schoolchildren (Leonov and Ostrovskikh 1927). Written in Russian, the official aim of these texts was to facilitate the acquisition of Russian in particular and education in general, and to familiarize the Northern children with Soviet life and culture. In 1928–29 an Evenki primer and a book of readings were published, and in 1930 the first Khanty

book appeared. But the deficit of pedagogical materials meant that many teachers resorted to writing their own. creating as many carbon copies as possible for use in their schools.

Concrete measures were undertaken to develop pedagogical materials. In the period 1930-1941, textbooks for the first and second grades were published in eleven different languages, and for the third and fourth grades in a few languages. Although Soviet officials were enthusiastic about their overall publication record in the native languages, it is difficult to say that it had much impact on the development of the indigenous languages themselves. For example, in 1938 the Constitution of the USSR and the Constitution of the RSFR were both translated into five native languages: Chukchi, Evenki, Koryak, Nanai and Nenets. While some translations of classical Russian literature (e.g. Chekhov, Pushkin, and Tolstoy) were also published, this can hardly be seen as constituting a native literature.

By the mid 1930's, textbooks and newspapers were published in seven different languages: Chukchi, Eskimo, Even, Evenki, Mansi Nanai, and Nenets. For four others—Gilyak, Khanty, Koryak, Selkup—primers were written. The project then stalled, and work never progressed beyond these initial primers. In some cases, the problems in language development seemed insurmountable, and nothing was achieved. Such problems included a very small speaker base, few if any educated speakers, or vast dialect differences. In addition, many of the people were either nomadic or lived in small villages scattered throughout Siberia, such that it was rare to find a speaker community of more than a few hundred in any one place. From early on, either Russian or one of the "large" Siberian languages, such as Buriat or Yakut, functioned as the written language for the speakers of these languages. Ultimately, the spread of Russian throughout the USSR often meant that it became the sole language of education for many native Siberians.

Understanding the linguistic structures of the Northern languages was a necessary first step to creating first written languages, and then pedagogical materials. Institutional resources were committed to the study of some of the Northern languages. Under the direction of L. V. Shcherba, the Laboratory of Experimental Phonetics at Leningrad State University conducted research on the phonetics of Chukchi, Even, Evenki, Gilyak, Khanty, Koryak, Mansi, and Udihe. This work resulted in a series of publications on their phonetic systems, but more importantly, it was fundamental to the development of an alphabet and codified spelling system for each language.

As early as the mid-1920's, an intense effort began to bring indigenous students from the North to Leningrad to receive training. The first Northern students started in Leningrad in 1925; a total of 19 students from 11 different nationalities became part of the Northern group at Leningrad University, created thanks to the initiative of Lev Shternberg and V. G. Bogoraz. The Institute of the Northern Peoples was eventually formed, after several transformations, from this Northern group; in 1930 it enrolled 195 people, of which 50 were women, with representatives from 19

nationalities.[75] The Institute of Northern Peoples went on to play a critical role in the training of native teachers.

3.3 The Development of Written Languages

The mandate for native-language instruction required more than just a superficial knowledge of the Siberian languages: it demanded a thorough understanding of each language. This led to intensive fieldwork and further linguistic research during the period 1932 to 1941. A team of linguists was sent from Leningrad to document, record and describe the indigenous languages. Key questions in the development of writing systems and alphabets were taken up in January 1932 at the first All-Russian conference on the development of northern languages and writing systems. In the North, as elsewhere, the Latin alphabet was favored over Cyrillic in these initial years on the grounds that it was progressive and represented a change from the history of tsarist oppression and Russification. Soviet language policy makers saw it as preferable to create a single "Northern" alphabet for all languages of the North. The development of this so-called Unified Northern Alphabet (*edinii severnii alfavit*) was undertaken by researchers at the Department of the North at Leningrad Eastern Institute, which had a tradition of teaching some of the northern languages. The resulting Latin-based Unified Northern Alphabet was officially adopted in November 1929 and was further accepted and ratified in 1931. Work on creating written forms of some of the languages was in process, such that as early as 1930, a literary language was created for Khanty. Written languages were created for fourteen Northern languages in the early 1930's (for Chukchi, Even, Evenki, Gilyak, Itelmen, Ket, Koryak, Mansi, Nanai, Nenets, Saami, Selkup, Siberian Yupik, Udihe), although three of these written languages (Itelmen, Ket and Saami) ceased to be developed within the first few years of their existence.

Initially, there was the hope that the Unified Northern Alphabet could provide a bridge between Siberian indigenous peoples and those living abroad, such as the Manchu in China, the Saami in Finland, and the Aleuts in the United States. Such hopes were short-lived. Following the general trend of the rest of the country, its replacement by Cyrillic was well underway only a few years later, beginning in 1937. Shortly thereafter, new Cyrillic-based alphabets were ratified for thirteen of the Northern languages: Khanty and Mansi (Finno-Ugric); Nenets and Selkup (Samoyedic): Even, Evenki, Nanai and Udihe (Tungus); Aleut, Chukchi, Gilyak, Ket and Koryak (Paleosiberian). (Work on developing Itelmen and Saami had already effectively ceased by this time, to be followed by Ket; work on all three was not resumed until the 1980's.) By the 1940's, the conversion to Cyrillic was complete for the Siberian languages as it was with the other languages of the USSR, making previous published materials obsolete.

The original Soviet plan, the creation of a literary language for each of the languages of the North, proved to be overwhelming. Party rhetoric quickly shifted.

[75] Sergeev (1955) chronicles this development from the Soviet point of view. An excellent discussion in English is provided by Forsyth (1992).

As early as 1934, Russian-language education was declared to be desirable for Ket and Itelmen children, beginning in the first grade. The rationale was that the majority of these children already knew Russian anyway (Vdovin 1959:292). At the same time the decision was made to implement Russian-language instruction in other schools beginning in the second grade, so that children could study major subjects in Russian by the third grade. Development of Saami, for which a literary language was created in 1933, was abruptly stopped in 1937. Although a Ket alphabet had been created, and a primer published in 1934, no written language was actually created until the end of the 1980's. A Ket primer was first published in 1988 in Krasnojarsk and then in 1991 in Leningrad, and Ket language instruction was begun in the schools. An Itelmen literary language was created in 1932 at which time a primer was published; this primer was used to teach Itelmen in the schools for several years. Itelmen writing and instruction ceased suddenly after the Northern languages had been shifted to Cyrillic-based scripts in the 1940's. The Itelmen primer was published again only in 1988, along with some textbooks and dictionaries, providing the materials for language instruction in the schools.

In the years 1941–1945, all efforts to develop the languages of the North ground to a halt due to the war effort. In October 1941 the Institute of Peoples of the North was closed, and research did not recommence until several years later. After 1944, the Department of the North, a part of the Eastern Faculty of Leningrad State University, was opened and became the Faculty of Peoples of the North in 1948. In the same year, the Gertsen Institute opened a Department of Peoples of the North; this served as the basis of its Faculty of Peoples of the North that opened in 1953, which served teachers of Paleosiberian, Tungus and Samoyedic languages. In 1956 it was incorporated into the Faculty of Language and Literature of the Gertsen Pedagogical Institute. In general by this time the division of labor between the Gertsen Institute and Leningrad State University was such that the teaching and practice of the languages of the North was delegated to the Gertsen. Research on the languages themselves was done at the Leningrad branch of the Academy of Sciences, as well as at Leningrad State University. In the 1950's, this research focused on comparative diachronic work, contrastive synchronic grammars, and dialect variation.

The relative importance attached to the languages of the North was reflected in the academic work of the time. This is illustrated by the 1947 conference held at Leningrad State University on issues of the Far North, with papers ranging from language, literature, and ethnography to economic development. At this particular conference, a full 27 of the 65 papers presented were devoted to research on the languages of the North. Research was further supported by the Academy of Sciences. In 1945 the Cabinet of Northern Languages was created in the Institute of Language and Thought of the Academy of Sciences USSR. It served as the foundation for the Sector for Languages of the Peoples of the North, created in 1950 as part of the Institute of Linguistics at the Academy of Sciences. In 1957 this sector divided into two subgroups: the Sector of Paleosiberian languages which, interestingly, studied not only the languages grouped together as Paleosiberian (Chapter 1, section 2.5), but also Samoyedic and Tungus. In the late 1950's, the

Institute funded approximately twenty expeditions into the field to study these languages.

The 1950's saw a marked change in language policy in the North, in particular for these smaller languages. At this point, there was a dramatic shift away from any attempt from native language instruction in the schools, and use of any language other than Russian was punished. Parents were discouraged from using their heritage tongue at home. These attitudes were enhanced by the general trends toward Russification that had long been present in the villages and cities, in large part due to the fact that few ethnic Russians occupying government or other administrative posts had ever learned any of the indigenous languages. The net result is rapid language shift for all the small languages of the North (Chapter 7, section 5).

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

As discussed in Chapter 7, section 2, Soviet language planners selected a number of languages for further development; these languages were all slated to receive a written language and codified literary norm. Population size may well have been the single most influential factor in selection. At the same time, the so-called "larger" languages initially received far less attention than the "smaller" languages. While this can in part be explained by the fact that these larger languages had a somewhat better-established written tradition than the smaller ones, that advantage was only very slight. The vast majority of *all* Siberian speakers were illiterate at the time of the Revolution. By strengthening the smaller languages, Soviet planners may have aimed to fortify groups which that otherwise be encompassed by the larger languages, but this policy potentially had the net effect of weakening the larger groups.

4.1 Samoyedic: Nenets and Samoyedic, Enets and Nganasan

Missionaries in the nineteenth century had attempted to create syllabaries for two of the Samoyedic languages, Nenets and Selkup. Their work focused on the translation of religious materials and a few legal documents. Due to their small size and geographic isolation, both Enets and Nganasan were almost entirely overlooked in this process. A lack of linguistic training meant that the missionaries had great difficulties in accurately recording the complicated phonological systems of the Samoyedic languages, and the materials developed by the missionaries were virtually unusable. The first major ethnographic and linguistic work with these groups was conducted in the mid-1800's by M. A. Castrén of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Castrén 1854, 1855). His work provided the initial basis for the study of these languages which began in the Soviet period as part of the literacy campaign. As a result of the intensive linguistic fieldwork conducted in the first decades of the Soviet era, primers were published in Nenets and Selkup in the early 1930's. Although Enets and Nganasan were both subsequently studied, no literary languages were developed. By the middle of the 1950's, a small number of bilingual Nenets–Russian dictionaries had been published, ranging from short dictionaries of only

2000 entries to a “complete” dictionary published in 1948 with 15,000 entries. In addition, pedagogical dictionaries had been printed, included a Russian-Nenets dictionary of approximately 7000 words in length and a Nenets-Russian dictionary of 4500 words.

The fate of Selkup is somewhat different. Selkup is now the only surviving language in the southern branch of Samoyedic. It is difficult to estimate how many Selkup speakers there were at the beginning of the Soviet era. The 1926 census gives a population of only 1630 people, but a fair number of Selkup were identified as Khanty in this census; by 1959 the figure jumps to 3768. This latter figure is more in line with later data: the 1989 census put the population of ethnic Selkups at 3621, with a fluency rate of 47.6 percent. This figure is undoubtedly high, given that at the same time 93.2 percent of all Selkup claimed to use Russian as a first or second language. Regardless of which figure one accepts, the speaker base was undoubtedly quite small. Nonetheless, Selkup was one of the languages slated for development

As is true of many other Siberian groups, the Selkup had had contact with missionaries who attempted to introduce written forms of the language. In 1879 an alphabet and three liturgical books were published, based on the Ob dialect,[76] with a number of mistakes. A different religious volume was published in 1900 using a closely related dialect. These attempts to establish a literary language did not meet with success, and the Selkup remained essentially illiterate. In the early 1930’s a Selkup alphabet was developed, based on Latin script, and schoolchildren began receiving their education entirely in Selkup. This achievement was short-lived, and the reformed writing system that was created after the change to Cyrillic was mandated in the late 1930’s was unsuccessful. In the 1950’s Selkup education and creation of literary texts came to a halt. The next attempt to institute Selkup literacy came in the early 1980’s, at a time when the sociolinguistic situation had radically changed (Chapter 8, section 3), as Selkup children were no longer entering the schools with a knowledge of the language. At present, the northern dialect (Taz) is taught through the fourth grade.

4.2 Tungus Languages

Literary languages were initially developed for four of the eight Tungus languages spoken in Siberia. The four languages with a greater number of speakers (Even, Evenki, Nanai and Udihe) were all developed in the 1930’s, with some variation in the paths of development; only the first three have a written form today, although the extent to which even these are actually used is questionable. Speakers of the remaining languages were directed toward using one of the other languages for which a written form had been developed. So, for example, no written form of Ul’ch was created, and instead children were instructed in Nanai. In the early Soviet

[76] The Ob dialect group is one of what were five dialect groups of Selkup; one group has been entirely lost. Currently, the majority of Selkup speakers represent the Taz dialect (from the Northern group), with a 90 percent fluency rate; as for the Ob dialect (Southern group), only 30 percent are speakers, and only 10 percent have fluency. Chapter 8, section 3 discusses the role of demographic shifts in Selkup language vitality.

period, Udihe was to serve as a written language for Oroch, which was considered to be a dialect of Udihe in the 1930's. The same is true for Negidal, viewed as an Evenki dialect at this time.

Study of the linguistic structure of the Tungus languages began in the century prior to the Revolution, where again the ethnographer and linguist M. A. Castrén showed himself to be a leader, publishing a *Concise Grammar of Tungus* in 1856. This grammar, along with his doctoral dissertation of 1850 (Helsinki), devoted to the use of the personal affixes in Altaic, served as the foundation for future Tungus studies.[77] Toward the end of the century, other ethnographers had become interested in the Tungus languages; Bogoraz and Shternberg studied Even, Nanai and Negidal. The problem of ethnonyms is particularly acute for the Tungus people, as many have been identified by other names. For example, the people now regularly called *Even* were formerly *Lamut*; the *Evenki* were often referred to as the *Tungus*; and the *Nanai* as *Gol'di.*

Standardized languages were created for Even, Evenki, Nanai and Udihe, beginning in the late 1920's. In the early 1930's an Udihe alphabet was created, a number of textbooks were published, and Udihe instruction was begun in the elementary schools. In 1936 a Concise Udihe-Russian dictionary was published which included a brief reference grammar. Nonetheless, Udihe instruction was abandoned in the 1940's and has not been reinstated. At present, Udihe is seriously endangered: the 1989 census reports a population of only 1902, with a 24 percent fluency rate. Sociolinguistic surveys have indicated that the younger and middle generations do not know Udihe at all, even if they entered school without any knowledge of Russian. The Russification process has been so intense as to replace Udiheentirely.

The fate of Even, Evenki and Nanai is somewhat more positive, and these languages each have a larger speaker base and higher retention rates, although each is also seriously threatened. All three received literary languages in the 1930's, with alphabets created on the basis of the Unified Northern Alphabet, and all were subject to the change to Cyrillic at the end of that same decade. Nanai already had a small written heritage at this time. A half-century prior to the Revolution, missionaries created a Cyrillic-based alphabet for Nanai, and used it not only to translate religious materials, but also to record some Nanai folklore. In regions with relatively dense Nanai populations, Nanai instruction is conducted through the fourth grade. Nanai teachers are trained in St. Petersburg at the Gertsen Institute and at the Pedagogical Institute in Khabarovsk. These apparent successes in the educational program are only successes relative to the failure of other programs such as Udihe. Nanai use is decreasing at an alarming rate: in 1989 only 48.5 percent of the population (11,877) claimed fluency, as opposed to 86 percent in 1959 (of a population of 8026).

One of the major challenges facing both Evenki and Even native-tongue literacy is extensive dialect variation. Historically nomadic, the total population of each group is dispersed over much of Siberia, with relatively small groups living without much contact with one another, but often with extensive contact with speakers of

[77]Manchu occupies a different position in Tungus and Altaic studies. Although genetically a Tungus language, it was most often studied in the USSR by Sinologists, as a language spoken in China.

other languages (such as Nanai or Ul'ch in the Khabarovsk region, or Yakut in the area of the Yakut ASSR). The dialect differences that have resulted are significant, with divergences not only in the lexicon and pronunciation, but also in morphosyntax. For Evenki the situation is acute. A literary language was developed in 1931 based on the Nep dialect; this then changed in 1936 when the dialect base was shifted to the Poligus dialect. While the two dialects are both from the Southern group and are closely related, they are still, in fact, different dialects. More crucially, the Poligus dialect was originally chosen by virtue of being more centrally located in the territory of the Evenki Autonomous District, and by having a relatively large speaker base. At the present, however, the larger numbers of speakers are located further east, and the Poligus dialect itself is becoming extinct. The differences between the eastern and southern dialects are sufficient to create some learning difficulties for children. More importantly, the Evenki literary language continues to be an artificial norm that is not used outside of textbooks. The Even literary language faces analogous difficulties with the dialects. Like Evenki, literary Even is also an artificial language which has not achieved any real currency with the native population. Both Evenki and Even used Latin-based alphabets for the years 1931–1936, when the switch to Cyrillic occurred. In 1958 three additional Cyrillic characters were introduced to the Even orthography. Evenki has the largest number of speakers of any Siberian Tungus language and is taught in a number of schools through the eighth grade as a secondary subject (see also Table 26). It is also taught in several institutions of higher education, not only in St. Petersburg but also in Khabarovsk, Ulan-Ude and Yakutsk. In Yakutsk in 1991 an Even department was created in the Institute of Problems of Small Nationalities of the North (of the Russian Academy of Sciences).

The remaining Tungus languages spoken in Siberia (Negidal, Oroch, Orok and Ul'ch) are very seriously endangered. As of the 1989 census, only Ul'ch had more than 200 speakers, and Orok had less than 100. All speakers of all four of these languages were elderly at the time of the 1989 census. Moreover, the official statistics were almost certainly inflated, and so the future prospects for these languages are not good. Estimates for Orok, for example, put the total number of actual speakers closer to 20 (Ozolinia 1994:44). Even at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution, the ethnic populations of each of these groups was relatively small, a factor that in part influenced the decision not to develop written languages for them. Negidal children were initially instructed in Evenki, Oroch children in Udihe, and Ul'ch children in Nanai. Yet speakers of these languages have not shifted toward speaking another one of the other Tungus languages. While there has been some shift to Buriat or Yakut, in particular in cases of intermarriage, Russian has by and large become the primary language for these people.

4.3 Paleosiberian Languages

The Paleosiberian languages are comprised of a set of languages that are not genetically related, making this an unusual grouping from a linguistic standpoint. The usual name for this group in Soviet linguistics is *Paleoasiatic,* or less

commonly, *Ancient Siberian* or *Ancient Asiatic*. These labels stem from the hypothesis that the modern Paleosiberian languages could be traced to ancient Siberian ancestors who had once inhabited Eurasia. This hypothesis was prevalent in the nineteenth century and was shared by many Soviet linguists. They believed that these ancestors had, in part, been assimilated to the immigrating Turks and Mongols, and in part had been pushed into Northern America. Those remaining in Siberia in the modern day represent only isolated groups of the original ancestry. Skorik (1968b:233) calculated a total population of all Paleosiberian peoples at under 27,000, with the largest group represented by the Chukchi at approximately 12,000, and the smallest by the Kereks, at less than 100 total population.

Of the five Chukotko-Kamchatkan languages (Itelmen, Chukchi, Alutor, Kerek and Koryak), only the Chukchi literary language has been able to attain any kind of lasting significance. Bogoraz was the one who decided to focus his attention on Chukchi, publishing a number of collections of Chukchi folklore and other texts at the turn of the century, as well as his own phonetic and structural analyses of the language. Although Bogoraz did study Itelmen and Koryak as well, he devoted significantly less attention to them, and here showed more attention to Itelmen than Koryak. Bogoraz continued his work after the Revolution, sending his students to Chukotko and Kamchatka. Under his direction, practical alphabets were created for Chukchi, Itelmen and Koryak, and the first primers were published in 1932. Two years later a volume on the linguistic description of the Paleosiberian languages was published, with chapters on each of these three languages. The section on Chukchi represented an abbreviated version of work previously published by Bogoraz, while the Itelmen and Koryak chapters were new material.

A written form of Chukchi (commonly called Chukot by Soviet scholars) was developed in the 1930's. It is used in elementary grades and has some publishing record. A written form was developed for its sister language Koryak in the same time frame but currently has little to no use. It was used in the elementary schools until the 1950's when it was discontinued; since then Koryak children have received their education in Russian only. No written language was developed for Kerek, which is extinct (or very nearly so: in 1991, only three remaining speakers were reported). As early as the beginning of the 20th century, they had very nearly been completely assimilated to the Chukchi. Population counts vary, but the best estimates of fieldworkers in the period from the 1960's onward put the number of speakers at approximately 100. Even these speakers were reportedly bilingual in Kerek and Chukchi, and Chukchi was used as the written language for Kerek (Skorik 1968:310).

Itelmen is currently seriously endangered, with no known speakers under 50 years of age. Itelmen had no written form before the Soviet era; the first alphabet (Latin-based) was created in 1932. Children were educated using this alphabet for several years, until the mandated change to Cyrillic took place and Itelmen literacy was abandoned. A second Itelmen primer was not published until 1988. At this point, a small bilingual dictionary (Russian–Itelmen and Itelmen–Russian) was published for use in the schools, as well as a second-grade textbook. The modern Itelmen Cyrillic alphabet was ratified by the Ministry of Education in 1988. Yet given the rapid rate of language shift of Itelmen, coupled with the fact that it had not

been taught for nearly fifty years, it was reintroduced as a foreign language for pupils and teachers alike. It is currently taught through the fourth grade, with pedagogical materials based on the southern dialect.

Three languages in the Yupik subgroup of the Eskimo-Aleut language family are spoken in Siberia: Central Siberian Yupik, Naukan Yupik and Sirenik Yupik. While these languages are generally referred to in the West as varieties of *Yupik,* following their own ethnonym (transliterated from Cyrillic as *iupik,* with the plural form *iupigyt*), all varieties are still called *Eskimo* in Soviet and most modern Russian linguist discussions. Sirenik Yupik was previously classified as a dialect, not a distinct language, and has few if any speakers; Menovshchikov (1968:366) reports that it had almost completely disappeared at that point; Vakhtin (1994:73) reports only four elderly speakers still surviving. All forms of Siberian Yupik are seriously endangered. The total Yupik population in the USSR in 1989 was only 1700 people; only an estimated 250 had fluent command of any form of Yupik at that point. A Yupik written language was developed in 1932 using a form of the Latin alphabet based on the Unified Northern Alphabet (Chapter 7, section 3.3). This continued until 1937, when the orthography was converted to Cyrillic. The main insufficiency in the current Cyrillic version of the orthography is the lack of marking of long vowels, which are phonemic in Yupik. Intensive work was undertaken in the 1930's to develop a literary language and as well as accompanying pedagogical materials for elementary school use.

Yupik presents an illustrative example of the interplay of social, educational, and linguistic factors in language vitality. The Yupik traditionally lived in multi-lingual settings; the same is true today. The "Yupik" village of Sirenik is case in point. Of its population of 700 people, 290 are Yupik, 220 are Russian, and 190 Chukchi (Bulatova et al. 1997:19). Schools in Yupik areas have been completely Russified, and children no longer learn the language at home. Cultural change has furthered language loss. The Yupik were traditionally sea fishers, a trade which was virtually banned in the 1970's and early 1980's, effectively ending their primary hold on their own culture.

4.4 Finno-Ugric Languages: Khanty and Mansi

Of the two Finno-Ugric languages spoken in Siberia, Khanty is the larger, with a population of 22,521 in 1989, as opposed to Mansi with 8474. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, the Khanty were called first *ostiak* and then *iugra,* names borrowed into Russian from Komi. The name Khanty is derived from one of the two ethnonyms used by this group. Khanty dialects are so diverse that the Khanty are united more by a sense of common culture and ethnicity than by linguistic features. These dialects are classified into two groups, an Eastern and Western, but the differences between some of the dialects are so great that mutual intelligibility is not viable. The variety in the dialects means some disagreement in terms of classification, with some scholars identifying three basic dialect groups of Northern, Southern and

Eastern (Khelimskii 1994; Mozharskii 1959) while others (Comrie 1981) advocate two groups, an Eastern and Western. I follow Comrie's classification here.[78]

The Khanty and Mansi people used symbols of their own (*tamgi*) to record possessions and to register their hunting successes; these symbols were etched into poles or tree bark. Otherwise, they did not use any writing system. In the second half of the eighteenth century, Russian Orthodox missionaries first created alphabets for Khanty. The first alphabet was based on the Obdor dialect (western group); this was initially used in several primers and translations of religious materials, such as the Gospel of Matthew. The first edition, published in 1868, used a Latin-based script, but the second edition (1880) used Cyrillic. The strong dialect differences in Khanty are exemplified in the Egorov primer, published in 1897-1898 in the Obdor dialect (Western Khanty) and then *translated* and published in the Vakh-Vasyugan dialect (Eastern Khanty) in 1903.

The Soviets took up Khanty literacy in a more concerted effort and created a literary language using the Latin alphabet in 1930. As elsewhere, this shifted to a Cyrillic-based alphabet at the end of the 1930's. The dialect distinctions proved to be an insurmountable problem in language planning. The early efforts at creating a literary standard aimed at deriving a norm from what had historically been the literary language, the Obdor dialect, along with a few features from other dialects. A primer based on this variant was published in 1930-1931, which was subsequently translated. As a result, four different dialects are used for publishing both pedagogy and literature: Kazym, Shuryshkar (Western) and Surgut and Vakh (Eastern). Of these, Kazym is the most widely used. In actuality, no literary norm has been achieved, and although the publication of pedagogical materials intensified in the 1980's, these still show neither a consistent orthographic system nor grammatical codification.

Having significantly fewer speakers, Mansi literacy has proceeded differently than Khanty literacy. The Latin alphabet was introduced in 1931 and the language was converted to Cyrillic in 1938. A Russian–Mansi dictionary of 10,800 words was published in 1954. In 1980 the orthography for Mansi was reformed, primarily to include diacritics for marking long vowels. For the majority of Mansi, Russian has become the main language of communication: 94.4 percent of the population reported use of Russian as a first or second language, and another one percent reported using another Siberian language (such as Komi or Siberian Tatar), such that less than 5 percent of the Mansi are monolingual in the heritage language.

5. THE "LARGE" MINORITIES

Among the great variety of languages native to Siberia, four can be considered "large" in the Soviet sense: Altai, Buriat, Tuvin, and Yakuts. They differ from the small languages in a number of critical ways, not the least of which is population size. The larger numbers of each of these four meant that the groups had, potentially,

[78]Even Mozharskii (1959), who supports the traditional (Soviet) tripartite distinction, argues that more research might result in a different classification, and further points to a natural division into two "massive" groups of Eastern and Western.

more political prestige, both with respect to the Russian population and to the other local indigenous groups. As we have seen, a multitude of languages were spoken across Siberia, and Siberians were usually bi- or multilingual, or at least functionally so. Until the early twentieth century, these larger languages functioned as regional languages of interethnic communication. In the region of Yakutia, for example, even the local Russian population of some 25,000 is reported to have learned Yakut (Robbek 1998:114). Assimilation of the smaller indigenous groups went in the direction of the large one, so that in the case of intermarriages, the children acquired the language of the parent from the larger group, not the smaller one. In essence, a three-tiered class system emerged from the so-called classless Soviet social system, with Russians at the top, the "large" minority population in the middle, and the "small" minorities at the bottom. Equally important, however, is the fact that these ethnic groups had ties with other groups outside of their immediate language, and outside of Siberia.

5.1 Buriat

Buriat is one of the so-called "large" languages of the North, a minority with a relatively large population; the 1989 census puts the population at 421,380 people. According to the census data, 363,620 people (or approximately 86.3 percent of the ethnic Buriat population) consider Buriat to be their native language, and 57,192 see themselves as first-speakers of Russian. The Buriats are of Mongolian descent, a people who settled the area around Lake Baikal in south-east Siberia in the medieval period. In heavy contact with Evenki (Tungusic) and Turkic tribes, these languages had an impact on Buriat. Until 1958 the people were officially called "Buriat-Mongols," in keeping with the name of the Soviet republic, the Buriat-Mongol ASSR (1923-1956). (The official language name, Buriat, was also adopted in 1956.) Together with the Kalmyks, who inhabit the area around the Caspian sea and territory in the northern Caucasus (Chapter 5, section 5.5), they constitute the two Mongolian groups of the USRR.

Demands for native-language instruction had come in the nineteenth century from the Buriat community itself. Long before the October Revolution, thanks to Speranskii's legislation of 1822,[79] there were two educational opportunities available to Buriat children. One was attending Russian schools, and the other involved the development of native language schools. A number of these did in fact operate, using the written language available at that time, Classical Mongolian written in vertical script. By the end of the century, a total of 600 Buriat children (mostly boys) attended Russian schools. At this point the Buriat community had a literacy rate of only 8.4 percent, but this rate took into account Russian literacy only. By 1905, there were a number of demands for schools in (Classical) Mongolian.

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[79] In 1822 the statesman M. M. Speranskii instituted special reform legislation, "Regulations for the administration of the natives," to revise the system tor taxing Siberian natives. The intent of the reform was to remove the inequities in the tsarist methods for exacting tribute from them, but the net result was an increased tax burden.

Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, there was no unified Buriat literary language. The Buriats living in the east used Classical Mongolian from the end of the seventeenth century, while the more western Buriats used Russian. (These western dialects show a greater Russian influence to this day.) Classical Mongolian differs rather significantly from colloquial spoken Buriat, especially in terms of the lexicon and grammar. Development of the Buriat literary language during the Soviet period can be divided into three basic periods: (1) the initial period of standardization, during the 1920's; (2) the orientation period of the 1930's-1940's, when attempts were made to formulate a literary standard on the basis of more local Buriat dialects (as opposed to Classical Mongolian); and (3) the final period of completing the formulation of the literary languages (1950's-1980's).

During this second period, Buriat orthography shifted from a Uyghur-Mongolic script to Romanized characters in 1931, and then to Cyrillic in 1939. In addition to the shifts in orthography, the dialect basis of the standardized language changed as well. The literary language was initially based on Khalkha, which is the basis of the literary language of the Mongolian spoken in Mongolia; Khalkha Mongolian is the largest language of the Mongolian People's Republic, with over two million speakers; it is written in Cyrillic and serves as the national language there today. In contrast, there were less than two thousand speakers of Khalkha in the USSR in 1959. Khalka differs significantly from the majority of Mongolian languages and dialects spoken in the Buriat ASSR.[80] The decision to base the literary language on a variety used by the much larger population of speakers in Mongolia was at least in part a political move to create a single, unified Mongolian literary language for both groups of speakers.

The Buriat written language was again revised in 1939 on the basis of the Khori dialect, which is the main dialed of the Buriat living in the then Buriat-Mongol ASSR. In the early 1930's the literary language was quickly accepted and played a significant role in the education of the Buriat people, who were largely monolingual at that time. By the latter half of that decade, however, policy changed, and words of Old Mongolian origin, as well as newly coined terms based on Mongolian roots, were purged on the grounds that they were "ideologically dangerous." They were replaced by Russian terminology, which undercut the prestige of literary Buriat as a whole. Despite the hopes of the language planners that the Buriat people would embrace this new literary language, it failed to achieve acceptance. Instead, it became a written form used primarily by Eastern Buriats.

The decades from 1950 to 1980 saw some growth of Buriat-Russian bilingual dictionaries, prescriptive grammars, orthographic guides, and pedagogical materials. These have all served to fix the codified norm as a living and viable standard language. Even so, there has been a serious decline in the percentage of ethnic Buriats who speak their heritage language as their first language, and a marked

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[80]Both Khalkha and Buriat differ significantly from the Mongolian spoken in China, called Inner or Peripheral Mongolian (Grimes 2000) or Oirat (Comrie 1981). Population statistics are somewhat unclear, as the Chinese government includes Buriat and some other Mongolian varieties, as well as Tuvin (Turkic) under its Mongolian official nationality. The Kalmyk, an Oirat group, separated from them in the seventeenth century and migrated into Russia, eventually settling in the Volga region; see Chapter 5, section 5.5.

decrease in the spheres of language usage. A major transition in the relative status of Russian and Buriat began during World War II and further developed in the post-war era. Russian became the language of official business and higher education. The domains of Russian use spread, such that it became the language for radio broadcasts, television, films, literature and most periodicals, as well as the basic form of communication at work and in public places. Language shift was identified as prevalent as early as 1969 (Bertagaev 1969:375), with not only the younger generation, but also middle-aged and elderly Buriats using Russian, not their mother tongue, in the overwhelming majority of circumstances. One result of this early language shift is a decrease in the numbers of Buriats who have first-language knowledge of their heritage tongue; the language retention rale was only 86.3 percent in 1989 (Chapter 1, Table 3). In the 1970's, all Buriat schools were transformed into Russian-language schools. This change occurred even in those regions where only ethnic Buriats were living, where the children had no knowledge of any other language. Accompanying this fundamental shift in educational policy was a decline in publications in Buriat, as well as in radio and television broadcasts.

By the mid-1980's, the Buriat language had been reinstated in all schools, although in many it was taught as a second language, and not used as the primary language of instruction. Compulsory Buriat language instruction was begun in conjunction with the 1992 law "On the languages of the peoples of Buriatiia," which mandates Buriat instruction in all schools where Buriat children study, regardless of their numbers. The entire Buriat Republic has only 163 national schools; the majority of these have a mixed student body that is only partially made up of ethnic Buriats. There are some schools whose student population consists only of Russians. Within the school system itself, full Buriat language instruction (i.e. total immersion) occurs only from the first through fourth grades; from the fifth grade on, it is taught as a supplementary subject. There are a few Buriat language periodicals, such as the newspaper *Buriad unen* and the journal *Baigal,* each of which has a remarkably small circulation (5000-6000 for the paper and only 2000-3000 for the journal), considering the numbers of Buriat speakers. Weekly television broadcasts in Buriat total approximately six hours, and radio broadcasts only four to five.

5.2 Yakut

Yakut is a Turkic language belonging to the Uighur-Oguz branch of Turkic. It is spoken primarily by the inhabitants of modern-day Sakha, and also by ethnic Yakuts in the Krasnojar and Khabarovsk Territories, and in the Magadan, Irkutsk and Amur Regions. It is also spoken by a relatively high number of non-Yakut peoples, in particular by Evenkis, Evens, Yukaghirs and some Russians, for a total speaker population of approximately 392,000. The Yakut language was given official status as a state language in 1926 in the Constitution of Yakut ASSR (Article 20). This official status, which was subsequently lost, was reinstated in the 1992 Constitution. The Yakut ASSR was formed in February 1922, but its Constitution, written in 1926, was not ratified until 1936, a delay that reflected Moscow's displeasure with the strong national character of the Autonomous Republic. This "strong" Yakut

character was quite apparent in its school system. By 1922, instruction in all schools in the Yakut ASSR where the Yakut population was a majority was conducted in the Yakut language. This differs markedly from most regions in the North, where—despite official rhetoric—instruction was always predominantly in Russian.

Yakut literacy dates to the early nineteenth century.[81] In fact, the first book in Yakut was published in 1812; according to one source, there were some 128 books published in Yakut before the Bolshevik Revolution. Several different orthographies were in use simultaneously: Cyrillic-based script formulated by the missionaries; an academic transcription used by scholars; and a third system, also based on Cyrillic, but with diacritics. The academic transcription was used for the publication of scientific publications, while the missionary script was used for books with religious or pedagogical content.

Cyrillic-based orthographies were used for Yakut well into the Soviet era, although beginning in February 1917 a more phonetically-based orthography was used. This early use of the Latin-based orthography furthered a sense of ethnic identity and pride among the Yakut, and this script was used in all schools in the Yakut ASSR. In distinction to other Siberian territories, education was quickly and effectively established in the Yakut ASSR. Already in the 1920's, Yakut was the language of instruction in elementary schools and into the middle schools. A pedagogical institute was created in the city of Yakutsk in 1934, to be followed by the inception of the Scientific Research Institute of Language and Culture. This was later (in 1947) to become affiliated with the Soviet Academy of Sciences, renamed as the Institute of Language, Literature and History. In 1956 a university was opened in Yakutsk.

This phonetic alphabet, with some modifications, was in place until the Latin-based Unified Northern Alphabet was introduced in 1930. It was used until 1940 with the change to a modified version of Cyrillic that includes seven additional letters to represent Yakut phonemes not found in Russian. This system was in use until the 1950's when work began on modifying the script. After a discussion period reported to last five years, the new orthographic conventions were published in 1955 in Yakutsk, in a bilingual format, called Rules of Yakut Orthography (*Pravila iakutskoi orfografii*). The following year a new and more comprehensive dictionary was published by the Yakutsk Institute of Language, Literature and History.

The strong local commitment to education in the national language was mirrored by the publishing record of the Yakut ASSR. A Yakut publishing house was established in 1926; the subsequent publication of the first five Yakut books in the Soviet era (by the writer P. A. Sleptsov) were seen as the beginning of a Yakut Soviet literature. Yakut publishing grew rapidly; in 1941 a total of 132 book titles were published, with a total number of approximately one million copies. In that same year a total of 14 newspapers were published: one for the entire Yakut ASSR and 13 regional papers.

The Yakut people call themselves *sakha*; this ethnonym was introduced as an official name only in 1990, with the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Yakut-

[81] Technically, one could argue that Yakut literacy can be dated back to their forefathers, the Kurykans, who used Orkhon runic script in the tenth to eleventh centuries)

Sakha SSR, and was further confirmed in the Constitution of the Republic of Sakha in 1992. The movement toward strengthening and consolidating the Yakut language began in the late 1980's, and has continued since then. Due to the concentrated population and a strong sense of ethnic pride, coupled with a primarily rural population (74.3 percent), the language retention rate for Yakut has been relatively high, at 95.1 percent in 1989. At the same time, the Yakut territory continues to be the home for a number of the smaller indigenous minorities of Siberia. As of 1989, a significant percentage of these groups considered Yakut, not their heritage language, to be their first tongue, as follows: 11,905 Evenki (or 82.5 percent of the Evenki population in the Yakut ASSR; 4,708 Even (54.3 percent); 198 Yukaghir (28.1 percent); and 35 Chukchi (7.4 percent). Bilingualism in Russian was high for all ethnic groups living in this region: 70 percent Yakut-Sakha; 73 percent Evenki; 68 percent Even; 77 percent Yukaghir; and 92 percent Chukchi. Some of these people are multilingual, with knowledge of their heritage language, and both Russian and Yakut. Yet clearly by 1989 language shift was well underway for the indigenous minorities in the Yakut ASSR, although the Yakut themselves maintained a high degree of fluency in their ethnic language.

5.3 Altai

The Altai people lived primarily in the mountains of the Gorno-Altai Autonomous Region of the Altai territory, which borders on Mongolia and China. Extensive dialect differences make classification of Altai problematic. Following Johanson (1998), Altai is assigned to the South Siberian branch of Northeastern Turkic; Altai Turkic comprises Altai (Oyrot) and such dialects as Tuba, Qumanda, Qu, Teleut and Telengit. That said, some Altai dialects are much closer to Kyrgyz, which Johanson classifies as part of the southern subgroup of Northwestern Turkic. This subgroup includes Kazakh, Karakalpak and Kipchak Uzbek, along with Kyrgyz. In contrast, Grimes (2000) makes a language distinction between two varieties labeled Northern Altai and Southern Altai.[82] This points to the difficulties in genetic classification of the Turkic languages and dialects in general, and of Altai in particular, due to the different origin of the so-called Altai dialects. The official Soviet position was that Altai is the language of the Altai people, the primary inhabitants of the Gorno-Altai Autonomous Region of the Altai Territory, with a population of approximately 50,000 in the 1950's (Baskakov 1959:142). While recognizing some of the difficulties in classifying the Altai dialects,[83] the Soviets distinguished between Northern and Southern varieties.

Like Buriat and Yakut, Altai is one of the handful of Siberian languages that had secular use of a written form prior to the Bolshevik Revolution. A literary language was first created by missionaries in the 1840's, using a Cyrillic-based alphabet. The

[82] The alternate names provided in Grimes (2000) for each of these varieties of Altai are, in fact, names of what are often classified as dialects. Northern Altai is equated with Teleut, and Southern Altai with Oyrot.

[83] For example, Baskakov (1959:142) states that Altai is part of the Eastern branch of Turkic, constituting a subgroup together with Kyrgyz, but that certain dialects are closer to the Uighur subgroup.

Teleut dialect (a Southern Altai dialect according to the Soviet classification system) served as the basis of this written language. As with other languages of the time, it was used primarily for church purposes, but some secular literature has survived, as have some linguistic treatises (Baskakov 1959:143). From the middle to the end of the nineteenth century, a number of Russian scholars had devoted some time to the study of the linguistic structure of Altai, as well as to collecting and analyzing texts of folklore.

This research lay the groundwork for Soviet language planners, who approached the question of Altai from a new viewpoint. The first change came in 1922 with the selection of the Altai dialect as the basis of the new, revised literary language; it was reported to be more central, economically powerful, and more representative of a larger portion of the Altai population (Baskakov 1959:145). The missionary alphabet of the 1840's was revised, with some additional characters, and was used until 1931. At that point, under the influence of the more general Latinization movement, a Roman-based alphabet was developed for Altai. In 1938 it was abandoned in favor of a Cyrillic alphabet, which was somewhat changed from its previous incarnation (at least officially), and a new orthography was adopted. In 1941 the first orthographic Altai dictionary was published.

This history put Altai in a relatively strong position, vis-à-vis many other Siberian languages, for rapid advancement. According to Baskakov (1959:146), one of the unique features of the development of Altai was that it was undertaken not by Soviet academicians, but by native Altai linguists. Native linguists were directly involved in the development of the literary language and were responsible for a number of important linguistic and pedagogical publications. In 1928 the first descriptive grammar was published. Native linguists were heavily involved in the development of textbooks and pedagogical materials, including materials aimed at middle schools on Altai grammar and morphology, published in 1938-1939, and handbooks on teaching methodology. The first complete authoritative grammar was published by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR only in 1940; a number of Altai-Russian bilingual dictionaries were published post-World War II years and later, and the development and standardization of an Altai literary language continued.

At the end of the Soviet period, the total population of ethnic Altais was sizable: 71,600 in 1993, with a language retention rate of 86 percent. All but the oldest generation are now bilingual in Russian, which is the language of urban professional and cultural life. Altai was further developed in the post Soviet period: in the academic year 1992–1993, 66 schools in the Altai Republic used Altai as the primary language of instruction, and in another 77 schools it was studied as a secondary subject from the first through the eleventh grades. An Altai-language newspaper (*Altaidyn Cholmony* 'Star of Altai') is published, as is a children's magazine, in addition to daily radio and television broadcasts.

One of the challenges facing the region is how to address the influence of Russian: more than 66 percent of the Altai population consider themselves bilingual. Another major challenge is the future of the smaller minority languages in the region. The 1993 statute on the status of indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation recognized four of the Altai groups as independent nationalities with full

rights: the Kumandin, Teleut, Tubalar, and the Chelkanets peoples.84 In 1993 the Kumandin group was defined as one of the small minorities of Russia; all four of these languages (or dialects) are cited in Neroznak (1994) as endangered. Technically, each of these groups has the right to education in their native language.

5.4 Tuvin

Tuvin is a Turkic language spoken in the south-central part of Siberia; the Tuvan[85] territory is situated at the juncture of China, Mongolia and Russian Siberia. Its location at this crossroads has had an impact on language development and policy in the region. According to the 1989 census, there were approximately 198,500 Tuvans in the Tuvan ASSR, who accounted for 64.3 percent of the Autonomous Republic's total population of 308,600. An additional 3000 Tuvans live in China and approximately 20,000 in Mongolia. The Soviet Russian presence in Tuva was only firmly established in the 1920's. While the Russian Empire did lay claims to the region in 1914, the Chinese government did not recognize them and instead saw Tuva as a part of Mongolia over which it had control. China renewed its claims to Outer Mongolia in 1918–19 and sent troops to Tuva to protect its interests there. Disagreements over ownership of the Tuvan territory came to a head in 1921. By this time, the Chinese had been ousted from Outer Mongolia and an "independent" People's Provisional Government had been established there through support of the Soviet government. In August 1921 the People's Republic of Tannu-Tuva (*Narodnaia Respublika Tannu-Tuva*) was formed, and in 1926 it was renamed the Tuvin People's Republic (*Tuvinskaia Narodnaia Respublika*). In 1944 the territory was incorporated into the Russian SFSR as an Autonomous Region, and in 1961 it was granted the status of an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Tuvin ASSR.

Mongolian had been the literary language in the Tuvan region due to its historical and religious ties with Mongolia. Prior to the establishment of the People's Republic of Tannu-Tuva, Mongolian had been the written language of the educated and religious elite; its use initially spread in the period 1921–1930. It was studied in the schools, and a Mongolian newspaper (*Unen* 'Truth') was published in the 1920's. By the beginning of the 1930's, an estimated 1.5 percent of the population was literate in Mongolian. At this point, there was a total of seven elementary schools, with 450 pupils and 13 teachers.

On June 28, 1930, the Tuvin national language was officially founded, using the New Turkic Alphabet. (The shift to Cyrillic was ratified on July 8, 1941, using a version of Cyrillic that is only slightly modified from the Russian variant.) The

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[84] See *Federatsiia* 68 (1993) for the law on the rights of indigenous minorities in the Russian Federation (*Osnov zakonodatel'stva RF o pravovom statuse korennykh malochislennykh narodov*). Teleut, Tobalar and Kumandin were historically considered to be dialects of Altai; Grimes (2000) cites only Teleut as an Altai dialect and does not include the other three. Following Neroznak (1994), all four belong to the Khakas branch of Altai.

[85] The spelling of that language name and territory is confusing. *Tuvin* refers to the language and *Tuva* or *Tuvan* to the region. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, *Tuva* has been spelled as *Tyva.*

newspaper *Unen* was renamed in Tuvin (*Shyn*) and the Mongolian designations of administrative territories were similarly replaced by Tuvin names. The official commitment to establishing Tuvin, not Mongolian, as the literary language was accompanied by a rapid growth in the schools. By 1944, a total of 125 schools were in operation, servicing 60 percent of all school-age children; more than 50 book titles were published, and the Tuvin newspapers had an estimated circulation of 30,000. Radio broadcasts were begun in 1936, with approximately 75 percent of the air time in Tuvin, and the remaining 25-30 percent in Russian. Television broadcasts began in 1966, with half of the broadcast time in Tuvin, and half in Russian.

The people of the Tuvin ASSR shared many of the experiences of Soviet peoples in other parts of the USSR in terms of the development of their literary language and the encroachment of Russian, yet language shift has not been so marked as in some other regions. This is in part because a very high percentage of the Tuvin population lived in the Tuvin ASSR throughout the Soviet era, and ethnic Tuvins constituted just under 65 percent of the population there. Despite an trend toward urbanization, the population remained primarily rural (68 percent in 1989), and in rural settings an estimated 99 percent of the people used only Tuvin in all communications. In contrast, in the cities only 9 percent reported using only Tuvin at all times, while 16 percent reported using only Russian. (The remaining group used both Tuvin and Russian.) Although the language retention rate for Tuvin is very high (98.5 percent, among the highest in the Russian SFSR), a full 58 percent of the ethnic population reported fluency in Russian in 1989. (By the late Soviet period, Mongolian–Tuvin bilingualism was mostly limited to border regions.) In an attempt to more firmly establish Tuvin as the official language of the Autonomous Republic, Article 22 of the *Language Law in the Tuvin ASSR* required that Tuvin be the language of instruction for all subjects in all national elementary schools by the year 2001. It should be added that the Tuvan region is also home to a seriously endangered minority language, Todzhin (or Tuvin-Todzhin) which is closely related to Tuvin and sometimes classifed as a Tuvin dialect. Todzhin is being ousted by Tuvin, whose use is well-established in the schools and by the native population. In recent years, language shift has accelerated.

6. LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

At the end of the Soviet era, there were approximately 170,000 people in the North from minority groups; about 50 percent of them considered their ethnic language to be their primary, first language (from the 1989 Soviet census). Historically the region has been marked by widespread bilingualism, and trilingualism was not uncommon among the many minorities. Multilingualism is still found today. For example, some Evenki living in Sakha (Yakutia) and the Amur Basin speak Yakut, Russian and Evenki. Similarly, many of those living in Buriatia, speak either Buriat, Russian and Evenki. The 1960's to the 1980's saw a massive influx of Russians into the region, motivated by industrial development. This immigration had a dramatic impact on Siberian demographics and affected the North far more than it did other Soviet territories. In 1979, Russians made up only 52 percent of the total Soviet

population, but 86 percent of the Siberian population. One result of this immigration is a dramatic increase of mixed marriages, with the indigenous language almost always giving way to Russian. Mixed marriages between different indigenous groups are also frequent, and in these cases the minority language is lost to the majority language. Thus, for example, an Even or Evenki who marries a Yakut will almost certainly raise the children to speak Yakut (or Russian).

Language shift for the Siberian indigenous languages has been rapid, usually occurring from one generation to the next and skipping an intermediate stage of bilingualism. Table 25 shows the language retention rate for the small Siberian languages in 1959 and 1989:

Table 25. Language Loss, 1959–1989
Percentage of Native People Who Speak Mother Tongue

	1959		1989	
language	population	ethnic language = first language	population	ethnic language = first language
Aleut	421	22%	700	27%
Chukchi	11,727	94%	15,000	70%
Dolgan	NA	NA	6900	82%
Enets	NA	NA	200	45%
Even	9121	81%	17,000	44%
Evenki	24,710	56%	30,000	30%
Gilyak	3717	76%	4700	23%
Itelmen	1109	36%	2500	20%
Ket	1019	77%	1100	48%
Khanty	19,410	77%	23,000	61%
Koryak	NA	NA	9200	53%
Mansi	6287	91%	8500	37%
Nanai	8026	86%	12,000	44%
Negidal	NA	NA	600	28%
Nenets	23,007	85%	35,000	77%
Nganasan	748	93%	1300	83%
Oroch	782	68%	900	19%
Orok	NA	NA	200	45%
Saami	1792	70%	1900	42%
Yukaghir	442	54%	1100	33%
Yupik	1118	84%	1700	52%

Source: Bulatova et al. (1997:9)

In every instance cited here, there has been a decline in the proportion of the population that speaks its heritage language as a first language. In many cases, the decline is dramatic, as with the Nanai, who went from a retention rate of 86 percent in 1959 to only 44 percent in 1989. A substantial number of languages (Gilyak, Itelmen, Negidal, Oroch) have extremely low retention rates. When the total size of

the population is taken into account, the net result is a very small number of native speakers for a given language. Thus both Negidal and Oroch, for example, each had in the neighborhood of 170 speakers in 1989. It is important to bear in mind that the remaining speakers of each of these tend to be elderly, as many—if not all of these languages—are not being transmitted to children. (Possible exceptions include Dolgan and Nenets, and Evenki in some villages.) Ultimately this will result in an even greater and more sudden decrease in the total number of speakers for most of the languages listed in Table 25.

Vakhtin (2001:162–181) classifies the Northern minority languages into six groups according to generational knowledge and use; his schematic provides an insightful view into the actual vitality of these languages. The information available to him dates primarily from the 1980's, before the break-up of the Soviet Union. Since that time, a general loss of funding has made it impossible for most linguists in the Russian Federation to do fieldwork in the North, so that more recent data have simply not been collected. Vakhtin divides speaker generations into four approximate categories: the oldest group (age 50 and over); the middle generation (35-50 years old); the younger group (20-35 years old); and children (younger than 20). Language vitality can then be determined according to which segments of the population still have fluent knowledge of the target language and actively use it. Thus the first category contains languages which are still viable and have a full range of functions. They are used by speakers of all generations. There are only two languages in this group, Nenets and Dolgan. In the second category are those languages which are used more or less fluently by the older and middle generations. The younger group and the children know the language and understand it fluently, but rarely speak it. This group consists of Chukchi, Even, Khanty, and Nganasan. In the third group the oldest generation uses the language fluently; the middle generation uses it but less fluently; and the younger two generations do not use the language for all intents and purposes. This group includes Enets, Ket, Koryak, Nanai, Oroch, Orok, Selkup, and Ulch. In the fourth group the oldest generation uses their heritage language among themselves and when speaking to their children. The middle generation can understand the language when it is addressed to them; the younger generations do not know the language. Gilyak, Mansi, Tofalar, Udihe, and Yukaghir are in this group. The fifth group contains two languages, Alutor and Yupik. Only the oldest generation uses these languages; a small part of the middle generation has some comprehension but no active use. Vakhtin places three languages in the sixth group; these three are all on the brink of extinction. Rather than speaking their heritage tongue, the people are Russian-monolingual, or speak a second language such as Yakut, and only isolated individuals have any remaining knowledge of their heritage language. This group includes Aleut, Itelmen, and Kerek. The one remaining language considered, Evenki, is categorized as a special case, because its use varies geographically. The Evenki population is dispersed throughout Siberia: 12 percent live in the Evenki Autonomous District; 42.5 percent in the Republic of Sakha; 13 percent in the Khabarovsk Territory; and the remaining 33 percent in the Amur, Chita, Irkutsk, Sakhalin, and Tomsk Regions. Language retention rates are high in the Amur Region and Khabarovsk Territory, at 50 percent (Bulatova 1994); in Sakha it ranges from 12–15 percent. Moreover, language

retention and use varies from village to village in these regions, making the actual assessment more difficult.

Of the 25 languages considered by Vakhtin, only two (Dolgan and Nenets) are rated to be relatively strong. The remaining groups show varying degrees of attrition. Even so, Vaktin's analysis is more optimistic than that of Kibrik (1991) who ranks the languages in several stages, from near extinct (Aleut, Kerek, Yugh) on the one end of the scale, to threatened languages (Ket, Nganasan, Oroch, Selkup, Ul'ch) on the other. When one takes into consideration such factors as the size of the speaker population, Kibrik's more pessimistic prognosis seems quite likely.

The education system played a fundamental role in the loss of the indigenous languages. Native-tongue instruction faced the same problems at the end of the Soviet era as it had in the formative years of the literacy campaign: a lack of trained teachers, insufficient pedagogical materials, and often the absence of an accepted written form of the language. This latter problem is surprising, given the early emphasis on linguistic description and the development of a literary standard. Yet in most cases these literary languages failed to be accepted by the very people for whom they were intended, often because Russian already filled that need. In some instances, the literary language that was created suffered from other problems. With Evenki, for example, the literary language was based on a dialect spoken in a region that was geographically central for the Evenki in the 1930's, and was largely comprehensible to many speakers. Yet due to rapid changes in demographics and accelerated language shift, that dialect is virtually extinct, and the majority of Evenki speakers speak dialects that differ enough from the literary "norm" that it is difficult for them to learn. Furthermore, in the case of Evenki as elsewhere, the literary standard was an artificial form of language that simply never became a living language.

Native language instruction is further hindered by what is a relatively new issue that stems from language attrition. In the early Soviet years, educators were faced with classrooms of children who did not speak Russian; this fact alone provided strong motivation for instruction based in the native languages. By the late 1980's, however, the teachers were faced with children who did not know their heritage language; by and large the children entering school already used Russian as a first language. This required a significant change in teaching methodology and materials, for the native language now needs to be taught as a foreign language.

The Soviet years left an indelible imprint on the North and Northern language policy has set a course that may well prove to be irreversible. At present, the minority languages are in a marginalized position in society, finding little usage in education and in government. Table 26 provides a summary of Northern schools where native language instruction was found just after the break up of the Soviet Union. As is clear here, only a handful of schools offered native-based instruction; in most instances, the indigenous languages were taught as secondary subjects, much as foreign languages in other schools, and primary instruction is conducted in Russian. Where a native language is used for primary instruction, it is one of the larger languages (Altai, Buriat or Yakut), with the exception of the few schools teaching early grades in Even and Evenki.

Table 26. Indigenous Languages in the Schools of the Russian Federation 1993-94 Academic Year

Region	Schools	Pupils	Languages of primary instruction (grade level)	Languages studied as secondary subjects (grade level)
Amur Region	5	214		Evenki (1-9)
Buriatia	342	40,924	Buriat (1-4) Evenki (1-9)	Buriat (1-11) Evenki (1-11)
Gornyi Altai	154	18,251	Altai (1-4) Kazakh (1-4)	Altai (1-11) Kazakh (1-11)
Irkutsk Region	115	8,648	Buriat (1-4)	Buriat (1-11) Tofalar (1-4) Evenki (1-9)
Kamchatka Region	23	964		Chukchi (1-9) Even (1-9) Koryak (1-9) Itelmen (1-9)
Krasnoyar Territory	56	2,299		Dolgan (1-4), (1-11) Ket (1-4), (1-11) Evenki (1-11) Nenets (1-9) Nganasan (1-11) Yakut (1-4)
Magadan Region	8	222		Koryak (1-4), (1-9) Even (1-9)
Sakha (Yakutia)	520	73,279	Even (1-4) Yakut (1-11) Evenki (1-4)	Yakut (1-11) Chukchi (1-9) Even (1-11) Evenki (1-11) Yukaghir (1-11)
Sakhalin Region	14			Gilyak (1-9)
Chukchi Autonomous District	32	2,439		Chukchi (1-4), (1-11) Yupik (1-11) Even (1-11)

Adapted from Bulatova et al. (1999:12)

The final years of Communism saw an increase in grass-roots movements for indigenous rights in the North. On March 30-31 1990, the first Congress of Northern Minorities convened and called for a much larger voice in decisions about land-use and industrial projects in the regions occupied by minority groups. The Association of Northern Minorities was established at the Congress; its conception was preceded by the creation of more local-level affiliates (Chapter 8, section 5.2). Together they have called for special measures to be undertaken to teach and preserve their languages and cultures. These are encouraging developments in that they represent the first time that the peoples of the North themselves have taken an active stance about the status of their heritage. That said, prospects for the future are still grim, due to a lack of financial resources, the increasing pressure to use a majority language (Russian in particular, but also Yakut or Buriat), the small population sizes, and the advanced stage of language shift. These factors combined make it difficult to envision that the minority indigenous minority languages of the North can reach a point of stable use.

CHAPTER 8

THE IMPACT OF SOVIET LANGUAGE POLICY

Interpreting the goals of Soviet language policies is problematic, in part because these goals seem to have shifted over time. In addition, at any given moment an official goal did not always coincide with the policy purportedly intended to achieve it. (An example of this is Brezhnev's claim to support the "diversification of national cultures" while explicitly working to create a unified, Soviet superculture.) Two results of Soviet language policy are unambiguous. The first is the success of the literacy campaign. The second is the spread of the use of Russian, as a second language for much of the Soviet population, and as a first language for some. Raising the literacy level of the population was one specific intent of Soviet policies; a marked increase in general literacy was rapidly attained. This is true even if one takes into account a certain amount of inflation in official statistics: at the time of the Bolsheviks Revolution the Soviet population was largely uneducated and illiterate, and by 1991 nearly all people were literate and had at least some basic level of education. The assessment of the broad issue of literacy—issues which encompass the stated goals of the literacy campaign, literacy policies themselves, and their ultimate impact—is relatively straightforward, and even the strongest opponents of Soviet policy recognize this achievement.

The spread of Russian is a more complicated issue. Although language policy had an impact on the acquisition and use of Russian by the non-Russian population. so too did a number of other factors. These include urbanization, industrialization, and changes in the Soviet population (family size, geographic distribution, and growth rates). These factors are analyzed in the next two sections.

1. LANGUAGE SHIFT

If the net effect of the literacy campaign is relatively clear, the more difficult issue to assess is the impact of a deliberate policy of Russification. While many analysts point to extreme attempts to Russify the Soviet population, there is little direct evidence to support this claim in the very earliest Soviet period. Initially native-language instruction was begun in even Ukrainian and Belarusan, languages which ultimately were subjected to some of the most overt Russification policies. Lenin's national policy, while it may not have always been implemented to its fullest, did at least guarantee the right to mother tongue use. This policy is probably best interpreted as a political gesture, as an attempt to reconcile the non-Russian populations to the Soviet regime, it did have some positive impact. Early language planners invested considerable time and resources into the development of many of the Soviet indigenous languages. Large numbers of linguists were sent to the field to create literary languages for the indigenous minorities, and a tremendous amount of resources were spent in creating and publishing dictionaries and pedagogical materials. While many of these attempts met with outright failure, at least some of

the failure was due to the overly ambitious nature of the language policies themselves, as well as a lack of understanding of local conditions. Even toward the end of the Soviet era, when Russification was a well-established policy, linguists continued to be sent to the field to further document and describe the minority languages.

Yet as Weinreich aptly points out, “the Russification of minority languages kept pace with the glorification of the Russian people” (1953:56). Beginning with the post World War II period, there are clear indications that the Soviet government was openly promoting the use of Russian. Certainly policies aimed at Russification began prior to this period. One interesting example is provided by the shifts in official orthographies. The Latin-based script was at least officially explained, in part, as a component in the campaign to disassociate the Soviet government from tsarist Russia and the Russian language. The shift to Cyrillic in the 1930’s can be seen as a shift toward Russian. Clearly, the financial and practical considerations of publishing in both Russian and the native languages using two different alphabets may well have provided purely pragmatic reasons for the shift. At the same time, the official explanation that the Latin-based orthographies were inadequate for representing the various phonemic systems of the native languages was clearly false. Both scripts required supplementary letters and/or diacritics for most of the languages; Russian Cyrillic was best suited to writing Russian. This is underscored by the fact that in recent years there have been proposals to create Latin-based scripts for some of the languages with very complicated phonemic systems (e.g. Abkhaz, Abaz, Bats) precisely to facilitate writing in these languages and thereby promote their vitality (see Hewitt 1999). Pedagogical considerations played a role in the decision to change orthographies as well. One is that for children to learn two alphabets at the same time was confusing, and the other is that the use of Cyrillic to write the native languages quite clearly facilitated acquisition of Russian. Finally, financial concerns came into play: the switch to Cyrillic-based scripts meant one set of printing presses. Initially, however, the change in orthography meant an increase in cost, since all printed materials in the Latin-based scripts instantly became obsolete and needed to be reprinted.

The alphabet shift occurred relatively early in the history of the Soviet Union, at what was the beginning of the shift toward a more focused policy of Russification. This shift is marked by such legislation as the 1938 decree which made the study of Russian obligatory, a mandate which coincided with the shift to Cyrillic-based orthographies (Chapter 2, section 4). In the post World War II era, Russification policies became increasingly overt and aggressive. By the time of the Education Reforms of 1958-59, the situation had radically changed. These “reforms” made native-language instruction optional, not obligatory, and opened the door for monolingual Russian instruction for all children. This marked the beginning of an explicit and unambiguous governmental policy of Russification which only increased over the next several decades. Long before the aggressive Russification policies of the 1970’s, Russian was unambiguously the preferred language of the USSR, at a governmental level and as a lingua franca for different nationalities. The long-term assessment of the impact of Soviet language policies is clear: there has been an increased use of Russian across the board, and often at the expense of the

minority languages. By the late Soviet era, the majority of Soviet citizens claimed bilingualism in Russian, and a significant proportion of people had given up their native languages in favor of Russian as a first language. At the same time, a number of ethnic groups tenaciously held onto their heritage languages. Thus although bilingualism was heavily promoted in the USSR, it was a very unidirectional kind of bilingualism: non-Russian speakers learned Russian, while ethnic Russians did not learn a second language. Over the course of a single decade, reported fluency in Russian increased, as seen in Table 27:

Table 27. Fluency in Russian, by Ethnic Group (percent)[86]

	1970	1979	1989
Armenian	30.1	38.6	47.1
Azerbaijani	16.6	29.5	34.3
Bashkir	53.3	64.9	71.8
Belarusan	49.0	57.0	54.7
Buriat	66.7	71.9	72.1
Chechen	66.7	76.0	74.0
Chuvash	58.4	64.8	65.1
Estonian	29.0	24.2	33.9
Gagauz	63.4	68.0	71.1
Georgian	21.3	26.7	33.1
Ingush	71.2	79.6	80.0
Kabardian	74.4	76.7	77.7
Karakalpak	10.4	45.1	20.6
Kazakh	41.8	52.3	60.4
Kirghiz	19.1	29.4	35.2
Komi	64.8	64.4	62.2
Latvian	45.2	56.7	53.4
Lithuanian	35.9	52.1	37.9
Mari	62.4	69.9	68.8
Moldovan	36.1	47.4	53.8
Nenets	59.6	51.7	61.7
Osetin	58.6	64.9	68.9
Tajik	15.4	29.6	27.7
Tatar	62.5	68.9	70.8
Turkmen	15.4	25.4	27.7
Tuvin	38.9	59.2	59.2
Udmurt	63.3	64.4	61.3
Uyghur	35.6	52.1	58.3
Ukrainian	36.3	49.8	56.2
Uzbek	14.5	49.3	23.8
Yakut	41.7	55.6	64.9

[86]Adapted from *Sotsialogicheskie issledovaniia* (1982/3:11–16); Scherer (1983:273) and *Soiuz* (1990/51:15–16).

Not all languages of the former USSR are represented here, but this Table does provide a relatively clear summary of the shift to Russian. Only a handful of ethnic groups (the Estonians, Komi and Nenets) show a decline in Russian fluency, and that decline is very slight. With other groups, there is an increase. The "smaller" peoples of Daghestan, Siberia and the Far East similarly show an increase in Russian-language fluency (from 41.7 percent in 1970 to 60.3 percent in 1979 for Daghestanian groups, and a slighter rise from 52.3 to 54.0 percent for peoples of the North and the Far East). These figures are derived from self-reporting on fluency, and so do not necessarily reflect actual, measured fluency. They do, however, show what respondents wanted to be the case, or what they felt should be the case. Minimally, these figures reflect the very favorable official attitudes toward acquisition of Russian, and in all likelihood represent an actual increase in Russian fluency by the Soviet population as a whole, in particular for people outside the Caucasus and Central Asia. The ethnic groups which reported an increase in Russian fluency all show a rate of near or over 50 percent by 1979, with the exception of the titular ethnicities of the Caucasus (Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian) and all Central Asian titular groups except the Kyrgyz.

More to the point in terms of understanding the existence of unidirectional bilingualism is the fact that Soviet citizens in general, and Russians in particular, did not study the autochthonous languages of the USSR. Educated Russians often did study English, French or another European language. This unidirectional bilingualism was supported by the State in a variety of ways. By the 1970's, Russian had become the primary—and in many instances the sole—language of education. The use of native languages in the schools was increasingly marginalized, and programs using national languages continuously diminished over time. The early emphasis on developing the national languages as languages of instruction at all levels of education—a goal which was never achieved for most languages—became reduced to the creation of programs which paid at best token attention to the national languages, treating them as secondary, and often inconsequential, subjects of study. Coupled with this was the fact that Russian had always been the language of government and administration, from tsarist Russia onward. Over the course of the Soviet era the role of Russian steadily increased, and during the Brezhnev years was further reinforced. Thus political attitudes provided even greater motivation for language shift. The number of speakers to abandon their heritage language in favor of Russian rose continually throughout the twentieth century, with a rapid increase in the rate of shift beginning in the 1970's

To what extent did language shift result directly from Soviet language policy? Although the Russian-language instruction programs in the native schools were costly to establish and maintain, there has been no research on their overall effectiveness. While it is clear that knowledge of Russian throughout the Soviet population rose dramatically during the Soviet era, it is less clear that this knowledge was attained through the schools rather than as the direct result of the role of Russian in society, as the language of politics, of governmental administration and, in many areas, of prestige. The earlier literacy campaigns, which provided writing systems and did much to educate the populace, also created a sense of national pride among many ethnic groups. Yet these gains were later greatly

diminished, in particular where minority populations are concerned. As language policy developed under Stalin, Khrushchev and Brezhnev, it clearly spread the use of Russian at the expense of native languages, regardless of intentions. In 1994, it was estimated that 63 of the languages of Russia alone were endangered (Neroznak 1994). The situation is particularly bleak for the languages of the North. Of the small languages of the North that were targeted for development in the early Soviet years, *all* are listed in the *Red Book of Languages of the Peoples of Russia* (Neroznak 1994). By the time of the 1994 mini-census, all speakers of the languages of the North were reporting near total use of Russian in school and at the workplace, with the exception of Todhzin (a Tuvin dialect listed separately in the mini-census), where 855 out of a thousand reported using their indigenous language at school.[87] Some groups (e.g. Oroch, Saami) reported using only Russian at home, work and school, and many groups (Gilyak, Itelmen, Mansi, etc.) reported near 100 percent use of Russian even in the home. Overall the figures for the languages of the North show, for every thousand, 601 speaking Russian at home, 758 at school, and 732 at work. These numbers are almost certainly not exact, as serious questions have been raised about the methodology used in the census, and the figures for the North are further skewed by the small sample size, they are still indicative of an overall pattern of massive language shift which is already well underway, and most probably irreversible.

2. SHIFTING DEMOGRAPHICS

There were significant shifts in demographics over the course of the Soviet empire; these changes are tied to the relative impact of the USSR's language policy as well as the way that the policy has been perceived by (former) Soviet citizens. The extent to which any individual group acquired Russian, and maintained or relinquished its heritage language, is directly correlated with population density and size, and with the ratio of Russians to non-Russians living in a given area. Equally significant is whether the population is primarily urban or rural dwelling. The complexity of these factors accurately predicts that for larger populations, living in a variety of settings, the distribution of Russian bilinguals and monolinguals would be uneven, depending on the particulars of a subgroup's demographics. This is in fact the case. These demographic changes, coupled with the Soviet language policy, resulted in a backlash of one sort or another by Russians and non-Russians alike. Russians became increasingly concerned about changes in the Soviet population which meant that they no longer constituted a clear majority in some regions. (This very fact may have been one of the motivating factors behind the intense Russification policies of the Brezhnev era.) The situation has been exacerbated since the break-up of the USSR, with the establishment of independent governments and language laws which favor the titular autochthonous languages and in some cases discriminate against Russians and the Russian language. At the same time, non-Russians have been

[87] Despite this relatively high retention rate, the speaker base is quite small. With an estimated population of only 6000, Todzhin is considered one of the endangered language/dialects of the Russian Federation and is listed in Neroznak (1994).

justifiably alarmed by the increasing Russification of their languages and cultures although the degree of actual (versus perceived) Russification has been dependent upon local-level variables.

Demographics shifts in the USSR stemmed from a complex set of factors, including differences in birthrate and family size, migrations and deportations, and increasing urbanization. First, the birthrate differs significantly among the various nationalities. Prior to World War II, population growth was roughly the same among the different Republics. Since 1940, however, there has been a decline in the birthrate in all of the Soviet Union Republics, with the exception of the Tajik SSR (births per thousand increased from 30.6 in 1940 to 37.5 in 1980), and the Uzbek SSR (from 33.8 births per thousand in 1940 to 33.9 in 1980). At the same time, there has been a decline in the death rate, but that change is much more marked in the Central Asian Republics, where the death rate was reduced by half in most cases. The net result is a decline in population growth in the Baltic[88] and Slavic Republics, and in the Georgian and Armenian Union Republics, and an increase in population growth in Central Asia and the Azerbaijan SSR (i.e. the primarily Turkic-speaking regions). The resulting differences shown in Table 28:

Table 28. Population Growth by Union Republic (Percentage per 1000 Population)

		1940			1980	
Union Republic	Births	Deaths	Growth	Births	Deaths	Growth
USSR	31.2	18.0	13.2	18.2	9.7	8.5
RSFSR	33.0	20.6	12.4	15.9	10.3	5.6
Ukrainian SSR	27.3	14.3	13.0	14.7	10.7	4.0
Belorussian SSR	26.8	13.1	13.7	15.9	9.1	6.8
Moldavian SSR	26.6	16.9	9.7	20.1	9.8	10.3
Latvian SSR	19.3	15.7	3.6	13.6	12.4	1.2
Estonian SSR	16.1	17.0	–0.9	14.9	12.2	2.7
Lithuanian SSR	23.0	13.0	10.0	15.3	10.0	5.3
Georgian SSR	27.4	8.8	18.6	17.7	8.0	9.7
Armenian SSR	41.2	13.8	27.4	22.2	5.5	16.7
Azerbaijan SSR	29.4	14.7	14.7	24.9	6.7	18.2
Kazakh SSR	40.8	21.4	19.4	24.4	7.4	17.0
Kyrgyz SSR	33.0	16.3	16.7	30.4	8.1	22.3
Turkmen SSR	36.9	19.5	17.4	34.4	8.0	26.4
Uzbek SSR	33.8	13.2	20.6	33.9	6.9	27.0
Tajik SSR	30.6	14.1	16.5	37.5	8.3	29.2

Adapted from Simon (1981:49)

[88]The exception here is the Estonian SSR, which had a negative growth rate in 1940 due to World War II. It experienced a subsequent increase in population, but this was an increase relative to the war-time decrease.

There are two exceptions to the overall population growth patterns. One is in the Estonian SSR, which had a negative growth rate in 1940 due to World War II. Despite a decline in the birth rate (from 16.1 per thousand in 1940 to 14.9 in 1980), the accompanying decline in the death rate has more than compensated and there has been an overall increase in the population. Still, that increase is very slight (only 2.7 per thousand), in particular in comparison to the Central Asian Republics, where the average growth rate is well over 20 per thousand. The Kazakh SSR has shown a slight decline in growth rate since 1940; this results from the high percentage of the population made up by ethnic Russians, who have a much lower birth rate. Even with this decline in growth rate, the Kazakh SSR is still in the top six Republics in terms of overall growth. The pattern that clearly emerges is that there is significant population growth in Central Asia and the Azerbaijan SSR, that is, in the primarily Turkic parts of the USSR.

Coupled with the differences in growth rates in the Union Republics was a difference in family size. Again, there was a very uneven distribution across the nation as a whole, with the Central Asian Republics tending to have the largest families, and the Slavic and Baltic Republics the smallest. By 1980, these two groups had not only the lowest birth rates, but also the highest death rates in the USSR. The net result is that the average family size hovered around 3.3 people per family outside of Central Asia and Azerbaijan, while it reached highs of 5.5-5.7 in some places in Central Asia. The absolute highest—5.7 people per family—was found in the Tajik SSR. The Central Asian Republics were further distinguished by having a relatively high percentage of families with seven or more members, again in sharp contrast to the Russian SFSR (see *Vestnik Statistiki* 1980/2:20). The overall shift in relative population sizes of the different nationalities certainly played a role in the increased Soviet efforts to make Russian the sole language of the USRR. But in many cases the titular majorities found themselves in a strengthened position within their Republics. Their perception of their own power was certainly a determing factor in the creation of the language laws of 1989 and 1990, and in subsequent years.[89]

The forced deportations of the Stalinist era had a number of consequences for the ethnolinguistic map of the Soviet Union, and ultimately added to the ethnic tensions of the late Soviet era. These deportations can only be interpreted as a deliberate manipulation of ethnic and racial demographics, functioning as a means of "extracting elements" from the population for political purposes (Holquist 2001). Evidence of this is found from early in the existence of the Soviet state. In a plan submitted to the Central Committee for 1921, the Cheka reported on its intent "to cleanse Samara, Saratov, and Tamov provinces and the Territory of the Volga Germans," so as "to extract all active participants in rebellions from the above-named regions and dispatch them to distant regions" (Holquist 2001:130, citing Naumov and Kosakovskii 1997:359). This policy was to continue for decades. In 1941, for example, approximately one million of the Volga Germans were resettled

[89] The articles in Shlapentokh et al. (1994) discuss the repercussions of post-Soviet population shifts and political changes which resulted in the creation of a new Russian diaspora in the former Soviet Republics.

in Central Asia, primarily in the Kazakh SSR. The deportations were more than an effort to extract a population from a specific region and insert it in another: they were an act of ethnic cleansing. Within a span of just four years (1944–48), 16-18 percent of those exiled to Central Asia died, and a total of 20 percent of the deported Crimean Tatars, Greeks and Bulgarians also died (Payin 1994:31). Even with the high mortality rate, the deportations had a tremendous impact on local demographics and it is impossible to separate the deportations from the nationalities policies, which are inextricably linked to language policy. In the case of the Volga Germans, a new ethno-linguistic group of significant portions was added to the Kazakh SSR (and removed from the Volga region), thereby introducing a sizable speaker population of a new language. Furthermore, this addition increased the total population, and thereby the relative Kazakh portion of that total decreased.

A multitude of ethnic Russians emigrated from the Russian SFSR to other parts of the country during the Soviet period. Moreover, they were unevenly distributed throughout the Republics, and lived primarily in urban regions. In some Union Republics they constituted a significant portion of the overall urban population. They accounted for a disproportionately large part of the educated population, and worked more in bureaucratic and educational positions than, for example, in farming or unskilled labor. This meant that they often played a critical role in the government and administration of a Union Republic, a fact which further fueled anti-Russian and nationalist sentiments. An increase in the relative size of the Russian population was especially pronounced in the Latvian SSR, where the proportion of ethnic Latvians declined to just over half of the total population during Soviet occupation, dropping from 76 percent in 1935 to 52 percent in 1989. A similar decrease occurred in the Estonian SSR, where the Estonian portion of the population was much higher pre-World War II. It decreased from 92 percent in 1934 to 63 percent in 1989. The Lithuanian SSR was the only one of the Baltic States which was able to maintain a relatively stable titular population. In addition, the ethnic Lithuanian population was much larger than the Latvian or Estonian populations in terms of raw numbers: in 1989 the total Lithuanian population in the USSR was 3,067,390, and in the Lithuanian SSR: 2,924,251; the Latvian population was 1,458,986 (USSR) and 1,387,757 (Latvian SSR); and the Estonian population was 1,026,649 (USSR) and 963,281 (Estonian SSR). Thus the Lithuanian population approximately three times larger than the Estonian population in each of their respective titular republics. After August 1991, these Russians found themselves living in newly independent states. Even prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, their positions of relative power in the Republics had shifted, as increasing nativization movements had sought to marginalize the influence of Russians and (re)instate representatives of the titular majority. In particular the adoption of the new language laws had a major impact on the Russian diaspora, requiring them to learn the languages of the new states. Although the institution of these laws was initially met by protests, data from the Center for the Study of Public Opinion (cited in Marchenko 1994:150–1) show that the majority of Russians supported bilingualism, even though they themselves did not know the titular languages. The relative differences in demographics played a role in how the differing groups related to ethnic Russians and the Russian language in the post Soviet era, as seen in the differences in their language laws (section 3.1).

The Central Asian Republics, with the exception of the Kazakh SSR and the Kirghiz SSR, stand in sharp contrast to the Baltics, due to their high birth rate. If the populations in the Baltics felt pressure from immigrating Russians, such pressure was very slight in the Uzbek SSR, which is notable for its very high birth rate and family size. In 1989 ethnic Uzbeks clearly exceeded Russians (14,142,475 as opposed to 1,653,478) and constituted a clear majority in the population of the Republic, at just over 70 percent. Although ethnic Uzbeks had historically held the majority position in their titular Republic, by the end of the Soviet era that position was greatly reinforced: in 1959 Uzbeks outnumbered Russians 4.5 to 1, and by the time of the 1989 census that ratio had grown to over 8.5 to 1. That said, population growth and family size are only two of the many variables that enter into the demographic make-up of each Republic, and even in Central Asia, the situation was very complex. The Kirghiz SSR showed an increase in the rate of population growth over the course of the Soviet era, but nonetheless experienced an overall decline in the overall proportion of ethnic Kirghiz in the Republic, from 66.8 percent in 1926 to 52.4 percent in 1989. The Kazakh SSR also patterns more like the Kirghiz SSR than the Uzbek SSR: in 1989 the Kazakhs only slightly outnumbered ethnic Russians (6,534,616 to 6,277,549, out of a total population of 16,464,464, such that Kazakhs accounted for only about 40 percent of the total population). These population statistics alone account for some of the variation in the Republic language laws and their varying stances toward Russian bilingualism. It is not surprising, for example, that the Kazakh SSR legislated measures for Russian language use and Russian bilingualism; it was in many ways a clear necessity. And for those titular majorities who saw themselves as being in a weakened position with respect to Russians (such as the Kyrgyz or the Kazakhs, for example), that view provided all the more motivation to take action against Russification trends.

If such demographic shifts resulted in alarm among some of the titular majorities in their homelands, they provided cause for panic among the minorities with significantly smaller populations. The Krasno-Selkup Area provides a striking example of the impact that Russian migrations had on local minorities. This is a territory bounded by the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Region to the south and the Krasnoyar Territory to the east. In the 1970's, the ethnic Selkup constituted over half of the population of the region, distributed in several villages. The area is inhabited by a number of indigenous groups, and the Selkups' neighbors are the Khanty to the south, Evenki to the southeast, Ket to the east, and Nenets to the north and west. The total population was only 2382 people in 1972. From the middle of the 1970's, however, there was an influx of non-Selkups into the region, due to intensive geological work which was begun at this time. As a result of this influx, by the mid-1990's, the total population had more than tripled, and the relative proportion of Selkups was reduced to 16.4 percent. By the late 1990's, the Selkup were living primarily in three villages in the region, with a major shift in demographics: they were outnumbered by Russians by more than 3:1, and outnumbered by non-Russians as well. This pattern is indicative of the widespread changes in demographics throughout the country. With a population the size of that of the Selkup, even just a small increase of Russians and others, non-Selkups, could have a significant impact

on social structure. The figures for population shift in the Krasno-Selkup region are summarized in Table 29:

Table 29. Population of Krasno-Selkup Area, 1972 and 1996[90]

	1972		1996	
	number	percent	number	percent
Selkup	1242	52.1	1396	16.4
Russian	774	32.5	5039	59.3
Other	366	15.4	2067	24.3
Total	2382	100.0	8502	100.0

One result of these changes in the population is rapid language shift. Only the oldest generation speaks Selkup, and they speak primarily among themselves. No more than 15 percent of those surveyed said that they speak to their children in Selkup. Despite the fact that Selkup was introduced in the elementary schools in the 1980's, the children are learning it as a foreign language.

A final and critical aspect of Soviet demographic change was an increasing urbanization of the Soviet population as a whole, a natural result of industrialization. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the people inhabiting the lands which were to become Soviet territory were primarily rural. The early years of the Soviet State are marked by a rapid transition to a more industrialized nation, and this industrialization was accompanied by large shifts of the population to the cities. Urbanization had a profound impact on the use of the native languages, as Russian was clearly the preferred language in all professional spheres. As native people moved into the cities, they came in ever greater contact with Russian speakers. This in part stems from the strong tendency for ethnic Russians to settle in urban areas, simply because this is where the jobs were located. This is a very typical pattern throughout cities in the USSR. By the end of the Soviet period, some 25 million Russians lived in non-Russian Republics, accounting for 18 percent of the total population of these regions (Abdulatipov 1994:37). In all Union Republics, the percentage of Russians is higher in urban centers than in rural areas. The Russian presence is the greatest in the Kazakh SSR and the slightest in the Armenian SSR; the Caucasus as a whole show a markedly smaller ratio of Russians to indigenous people. Of all rural areas, the Russian presence is proportionately largest in the Kazakh and Latvian Union Republics, at 20 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively. Russians accounted for less than 2 percent of the rural population in the Georgian SSR and less than 1 percent in the Armenian and Azerbaijan Republics as well as much of Central Asia (the Tajik, Turkmen and Uzbek Republics). These patterns correlate directly with language retention rates, which are higher in rural areas than in urban centers. Moreover, there is a direct connection between the intensity of anti-Russian backlash and the number of Russians living in a given region.

[90] Table 29 is adapted from Kazakevich and Parfënova (2000:271); the 1972 figures are based on Kuznetsova et al. (1980). The data for 1996 were obtained from the Area's administrative offices.

Table 30 provides summary information about the distribution of Russian versus the titular nationalities in all 15 Union Republics. Figures are calculated from the 1989 census and represent percentages of the total urban or total rural population (and not of the Republic's combined total population):

Table 30. Nationalities of urban and rural populations by Republic, 1989 census[91]

Union Republic	Nationality	Population distribution, percent of total	
		urban	rural
Slavic & Moldova			
Russian RSFSR	Russian	85.2	71.5
	titular	——	——
Belorussian SSR	Russian	17.5	5.1
	titular	73.3	86.6
Ukrainian SSR	Russian	29.0	8.2
	titular	65.9	86.4
Moldavian SSR	Russian	24.0	3.4
	titular	46.3	80.3
The Baltics			
Estonian SSR	Russian	39.0	8.5
	titular	51.2	87.4
Latvian SSR	Russian	40.7	17.5
	titular	44.0	71.5
Lithuanian SSR	Russian	12.4	<3.0
	titular	76.4	86.3
The Caucasus			
Armenian SSR	Russian	1.98	0.7
	titular	96.1	87.6
Azerbaijan SSR	Russian	9.79	0.6
	titular	76.7	89.9
Georgian SSR	Russian	9.9	1.9
	titular	67.6	73.3
Central Asia			
Kazakh SSR	Russian	51.3	19.9
	titular	26.7	57.0
Kirghiz SSR	Russian	39.5	10.5
	titular	29.9	66.2
Tajik SSR	Russian	22.0	0.7
	titular	50.5	70.0
Turkmen SSR	Russian	20.3	0.5
	titular	53.8	87.0

[91]Population percentages are based on the total urban or rural population. Urban and rural population totals are provided in *Soiuz* 34:7–8 (August 1990), *Soiuz* 39:1115–16 (September 1990) and *Joint Publication Research Service, Union Political Affairs*, December 4, 1990, pp. 10–16 and February 12, 1991, pp. 57–63, republished in Karasik (1992:430-440).

Union Republic	Nationality	Population distribution, percent of total	
Uzbek SSR	Russian	19.5	0.7
	titular	53.7	83.5

It is important to note that the relative size of the Russian population was significantly larger in the capital cities of these Republics, and smaller in other urban centers, a fact hidden in Table 30. The heavily centralized Soviet system emphasized the role of these capital cities, meaning that they not only wielded more power than other cities but also received greater resources. This was true for Frunze in the Kirghiz SSSR, as well as elsewhere.[92] For example, the Russian portion of the population of Riga (the Latvian SSR) grew from only 7.4 percent in 1935 to 47.3 percent in 1989, which is slightly higher than the overall figure of 40.7 percent Russians in all Latvian cities.

The language of State business was Russian and, in a certain sense, in the USSR all affairs were business of the State. Despite the push of the 1920's to place the nationalities in administrative positions, these were largely occupied by ethnic Russians throughout the duration of the Soviet era. In addition, groups other than ethnic Russians immigrated to cities from all parts of the Soviet Union, and Russian served as the language of inter-ethnic communication for these groups and the local population as well. Thus cities became major centers for Russian-language use, making functional bilingualism in Russian a minimum necessity for the local population. These trends can be illustrated by examining the Kirghiz SSR. In 1989, ethnic Kyrgyz constituted 52.4 percent of the Republic's total population. In the capital city of Frunze (or Bishkek in the post-Soviet era), however, they made up only 23 percent of the population (and just under 30 percent of the urban population for all cities in the Kirghiz SSR). In Frunze, ethnic Russians accounted for a full 56 percent, and Uzbeks another 2 percent. Furthermore, Russian fluency rates among non-Russians in Bishkek were high: 83 percent of the Kyrgyz claimed fluency, and 75 percent of the Uzbeks. This can be contrasted with the population of the Osh Region (total population just under two million), where ethnic Kyrgyz constituted 60 percent of the total, with only 25 percent fluency in Russian; Uzbeks 26 percent of the population, with 36 percent fluency in Russian; and ethnic Russians made up only 6 percent of the population.

3. THE NEW "NATIVIZATION" MOVEMENTS

Early Soviet language policy was formulated on the basis of the nativization policy of the 1920's. Both the nativization campaign and its language component originated with the Central government, and were executed from above, using a top-down approach to decision making and implementation was characteristic of the Soviet era. A new and different kind of "nativization" took place in the late Soviet era, a nativization that is characterized as encompassing numerous related but independent movements affecting the languages and cultures of the non-Russian

[92] Guboglo (1990–91) provides an overview and discussion.

peoples of the USSR. Those involved would not use the term "nativization" to describe the language-related events of the 1980's and 1990's, due to its distinct Soviet connotations. Yet these movements are "native" (or indigenous) in two crucial ways. First, they have focused on developing the native languages and cultures and have been driven—with rare exception—by the people themselves. Thus in contrast to Soviet policies, these more recent policies have proceeded from the bottom up, and are indicative of the intense feelings on the part of the people with regard to their languages. Second, the differing movements all focus on reinstating and developing the use and authority of the native languages. Such endeavors fall into two loosely defined categories. The first encompasses measures which operate at the level of the Union Republic (or some analogous level) and have wide impact; the Republic language laws are prime examples. The second category includes more local-level measures and movements. These often have a greater impact on indigenous minorities and affect the larger population (e.g. the titular majority, or some other larger group) only indirectly, if at all.

3.1 Language Laws

Measures of the first type, those with broad impact, are exemplified in the Republic language laws. These were instituted as a reaction to Soviet language policies and began unfolding throughout the USSR in the late Gorbachev era. The All-Union Language Law was passed by the then Soviet government on April 24, 1990, but more important events had taken place prior to this. In a marked break from previous Soviet policy, the Union Republics had already begun instituting their own language laws, preceding the Central government by over a year. These laws were instated in quick succession, beginning with the Estonian language law (January 18, 1989) and ending with the Turkmen language law, ratified on May 24, 1990, just one month after the All-Union language law was passed).[93] Only four Republics failed to adopt new language laws in this time period: the Russian SFSR and all three Union Republics in the Caucasus (the Armenian SSR, Azerbaijan SSR and the Georgian SSR). The Transcaucasian Republics did not adopt such laws on the grounds that they would be redundant, as the basic principles governing language use had been specified when they ratified their new Constitutions in April 1978. The Russian SFSR did not submit a language law until October 1991, when the Soviet break-up was well underway.

The Republic language laws differ in many particulars.[94] The cornerstone of each Republic language law was the identification of the titular language as the official

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[93] These eleven Republic laws were ratified in quick succession, within months (and sometimes days) of one another. The movement began in the Baltics in 1989 (with the Estonian SSR on January 18; the Lithuanian SSR on January 25; and the Latvian SSR on Mary 5), and then spread in the following order: the Tajik SSR on July 22; the Moldovan SSR on September 1; the Kazakh SSR on September 22; the Kirghiz SSR on September 23; the Uzbek SSR on October 21 and the Ukrainian SSR on October 28; and then, in 1990, the Belorussian SSR on January 26 and the Turkmen SSR on May 24.

[94] For an overview of the Republic language laws, see Pigolkin and Studenikina (1991). Alpatov (1997:135–174) discusses the All-Union language law of 1991 and provides details of the effects of the language law in the Russian Federation after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

state language, thereby guaranteeing its development and use, as well as its primacy in the government and legal system, in education (as the language of instruction), and in the media. The laws also specify that the state language can be used to address the state and governmental administrative offices; most laws also give their citizens the right to use Russian, or another regional language, in these contexts. Furthermore, most of the laws required knowledge of the state language and Russian for employees in state offices and organizations.

The majority of the language laws defined the status of Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication, a term that is sufficiently vague that its exact interpretation was left quite open. Russian was the sole language given this status in five of the language laws (for the Belorussian, Kazakh, Kirghiz, Tajik and Uzbek Union Republics), and in two others (the laws of the Moldovan and Turkmen Union Republics) both Russian and the state language were defined as the languages of inter-ethnic communication. In this respect the laws of the Latvian and Ukrainian Union Republics could be called the most liberal, in that they granted Russian, the state language, and other widely used languages this same status. The Lithuanian language law, in contrast, defines Russian as a "language of correspondence," for use with the other Republics and administrative organizations within the Soviet Union, but does not recognize its role in inter-ethnic communication. Similarly the Estonian language law recognizes Russian as serving for "all-Union communication" and simply notes that, after Estonian, it is the language used most frequently as a first language. Neither the Estonian nor the Lithuanian language laws grant Russian any kind of special or official status.

One of the fundamental pieces of the language laws was that almost all of them specified a timeframe for the transition from Russian to the newly declared State language, and all but the Kirghiz and Tajik laws provided specific deadlines. The deadlines varied from three to eight years from the date when the law comes into forces.[95] The Kirghiz SSR provided a grace period of use of Russian in official documentation, allowing for a transition period to adapt to the Kyrgyz materials. Here, as elsewhere, the deadlines were completely unrealistic. This was recognized at different points in different Republics, but occurred as early as summer 1991 in the Kirghiz SSR, and was officially pushed back in April 1993 until the year 2000.

The fact that eleven Republics passed language laws in such a short period of time is itself indicative of the widespread public belief in the need to counteract the effects of Soviet Russification. Language was seen to lie at the heart of identity, and reinstating the rights of the titular languages was viewed as a critical step toward reestablishing ethnic identity. The direction of the language legislation—that ten Republic language laws were ratified prior to the passing of the All-Union language law—represented an unusual disruption of the status quo in the USSR, and was symptomatic of coming changes in the political structure.

The Central government responded after the main wave of events by issuing the "Law on the languages of the peoples of the USSR" on April 24, 1990. The law was

[95] Specifically: 3 years (the Latvian and Lithuanian SSR's); 3–5 years (Belorussian and Ukrainian SSR's); 4 years (Estonian SSR); 5 years (Moldovan SSR), and 8 years (Uzbek SSR). The law of the Turkmen SSR set a specific date, January 1, 1996. See Pigolkin and Studenikina (1991:59).

in some ways redundant and in some reactionary, and it represented a futile attempt to regain control of language legislation in the Republics. For the first time Russian was declared to be the official language of the Soviet Union and the language used for inter-ethnic communication (Article 4, para. 2). At the same time it declared the right for the Union and Autonomous Republics to determine the legal status of the languages spoken within their territories, including the right to establish them as state languages. This was a right which all Union Republics, save the Russian SFSR, had already claimed.

The Russian SFSR was in fact the last Republic to act on language legislation. On October 25, 1991, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR ratified the "Law of the languages of the peoples of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic." This law again ratified Russian as the official state language, and left the status of other languages to the discretion of the individual republics. This law was re-ratified with only minor changes in 1993 by the Russian Federation.[96] At the same time, a political reconfiguration of the territories remaining in the Russian Federation resulted in the creation of a new set of republics; many of these were formed from the earlier Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republics, as in the Chuvash Republic or the Republic of Tatarstan (as opposed to the Chuvash ASSR and the Tatar ASSR).[97] Of the 21 Republics in the Russian Federation at the end of the twentieth century, 15 had instituted language laws to place at least their titular language on an equal official footing with Russian. Three of these (in the Chuvash, Tuvan and Kalmyk Republics) were instated before the downfall of the Soviet state, with the Chuvash law in October 1990, the Tuvan law in December 1990 and the Kalmyk law in January 1991. The existence of such language laws is often justified within the laws themselves. For example, the preamble to the Buriatia law states that language is the spiritual basis of existence of any ethnic group,[98] and that the preservation and development of the group is, first and foremost, tied to the preservation of its language. In addition to the Republic language laws, the Constitutions of these Republics include language-specific articles. In most cases the laws grant official status to the titular language and Russian. The situation is more complicated in Daghestan where no single group can claim a clear linguistic majority, and so the Constitution declares all written languages of Daghestan to be state languages without actually naming them. At present, a number of languages have some sort of official status in the Russian Federation at varying levels. First, Russian is the official state language for the country. The state languages of the Republics are: Adyge, Altai, Balkar, Bashkir, Buriat, Chuvash, Erzya, Ingush, Kabardian-Circassian, Kalmyk, Karachay, Khakass, Komi-Zyrian, High and Low Mari, Moksha, Osetin, Russian, Tatar, Tuvin, Udmurt, and Yakut. In Daghestan the functioning written languages are: Avar, Dargwa, Kumyk, Lak, Lezgi, Nogai, and

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[96] The texts of the language laws of the Russian Federation can be found in the appendix to Neroznak (2002).

[97] In addition to a number of changes in names (e.g. the Republic of Sakha versus the former Yakut ASSR), there have, of course, been more substantive changes in many regions.

[98] 'Ethnic group' is translated from the Russian *natsia,* the term used in the current laws instead of *natsional'nost'* with its now inevitable Soviet connotations.

Tabassaran; their status is guaranteed by the Constitution of Daghestan. Beyond this extensive list, the remaining titular languages of Republics in the Russian Federation are Chechen, Karelian, and Komi-Permyak.[99]

The current language policies are in some ways reminiscent of the early years of the Soviet Union, when citizens were guaranteed education in their native languages were guaranteed. Yet there are significant differences: whereas in the 192()'s and 1930's language policy was dictated by a centralized government aiming at unified results, now, in the aftermath of the USSR, these policies are currently implemented more by local-level governments, within individual republics, with variation from region to region.

3.2 Local-level reactions

A resurgence of interest language instruction in the schools had been publicly voiced beginning in the 1980's, even before the wave of new language laws. But by this time the sociolinguistic landscape had changed significantly from the beginning of the Soviet era. In those early years, the challenges faced by educators involved teaching non-native Russian children with little or no knowledge of Russian. By the end of the 198()'s, many of these children of most smaller indigenous minorities had first-language knowledge of Russian, and little to no knowledge of their heritage tongue. Thus native-language instruction could not be an immediate goal; rather, the heritage language needed to be taught from scratch, as a second, foreign language.

In the late 1980's—at about the same time when the titular majorities in the Union Republics began instituting language laws—the minority populations began voicing their concerns about their own languages. Grass-roots kinds of movements included the organization of local level groups to work toward the preservation of their culture. In various parts of the North groups sprung up among the Dolgans, the Itelmen, the Khanty-Mansi, the Ngasanan, the Saami, the Selkups, and the Yupiks. The charter of each of these groups specified the need to study and promote the study of the heritage language. A common thread in all of their declarations is a comment on the dire condition of minority languages and cultures in the North. The groups were created to combat this situation. As a result, in March 1990 the first Congress of Northern Minorities convened and established the larger umbrella organization of the Association of Northern Minorities, whose center is housed in Moscow.

There have been some efforts at minority language revitalization; these endeavors in Siberia have often headed by the Association of Northern Minorities. Written languages which had fallen out of use (e.g. Shor) are being revitalized. New written forms are being created in some cases (e.g. Negidal), but with minimal success. In Daghestan a literary language is being created for Rutul, but the school program is somewhat ahead of the written language. Rutul instruction was introduced with a mandate of August 10, 1991, before the written language had

[99] This inventory is taken from Neroznak (2001:19). sThe texts of the language law of the Russian Federation (in both current and earlier renditions) as well as of the language laws of the Federation's Republics, can be found in the Appendix to Neroznak (2002).

reached the state of a codified norm. A syllabary was published in 1992, but there are continuing problems in alphabet development (see Alekseev 2000). Such endeavors face difficulties due to a general lack of resources, as well as the continuing social and economic prestige of Russian. In many schools the number of classroom hours devoted to minority indigenous language instruction has been cut back sharply, and the overall prognosis for the survival of most minority languages is not promising.

In some cases the Republic language laws have come into conflict with the interests of the local indigenous minorities. An example is provided by Dargwa instruction in Daghestan, instituted in 1990. Dargwa lessons began in the school in the village of Kubachi, beginning in the seventh and eighth grades in 1990–91, and encompassing all but the uppermost grades (ninth–eleventh) in 1992–93. But the parents complained about the Dargwa classes, which they deemed to be an unnecessary burden for their children: because their first language is Urbug (alternatively called Kubachin), they had to learn Dargwa as a foreign language. In particular the parents spoke out against that fact that the Dargwa classes had been introduced at the expense of Russian-language classes (Alekseev and Perekhval'skaia 2000). As a result of these complaints, Dargwa hours have been reduced, and Russian instruction increased. Thus ironically, in some cases the spread of Russian does occur at the direct request of the people, as the Soviet government had claimed. At the same time it is important to bear in mind that it was Soviet policy which shaped the need for its citizens to know Russian, by creating a society that was effectively monolingual.

4. CONCLUSION

Regardless of how one evaluates the long-term impact of Russian and the status of the other languages of the USSR with respect to potential endangerment, language shift was a reality. The census data, however inflated, make clear that there was an increase in the use of Russian, in the adoption of Russian as a second language (i.e. an increase in Russian bilingualism) and unequivocal language shift in segments of the population, who relinquished their heritage tongue in favor of Russian. In many ways it is impossible to legislate language use in all domains. But one of the achievements of Soviet language policy was to make Russian—and only Russian—required in all domains, thereby making knowledge of it essential for any member of society. In so doing, the status of Russian was elevated among some groups, inasmuch as it was necessary to be fluent in Russian to participate in the government, to receive higher education and to work in most, if not all, skilled labor positions. The spread of Russian, and even the gains in literacy and education, came at a great cost for the Soviet government, as the ill will which they fostered in the process of achieving these goals ultimately became a critical factor in the downfall of the USSR. One of the most long-lasting legacies of Soviet language policy is the creation of new senses of identity, both ethnic and nationalistic, for many of its citizens. This sense of identity came to play a critical role in the further development of the country, and stood in the way of the creation of a unified "Soviet" culture and

Soviet people without nationalistic or ethnic ties. Instead, this sense of identity helped fuel anti-Russian and anti-Soviet sentiments.

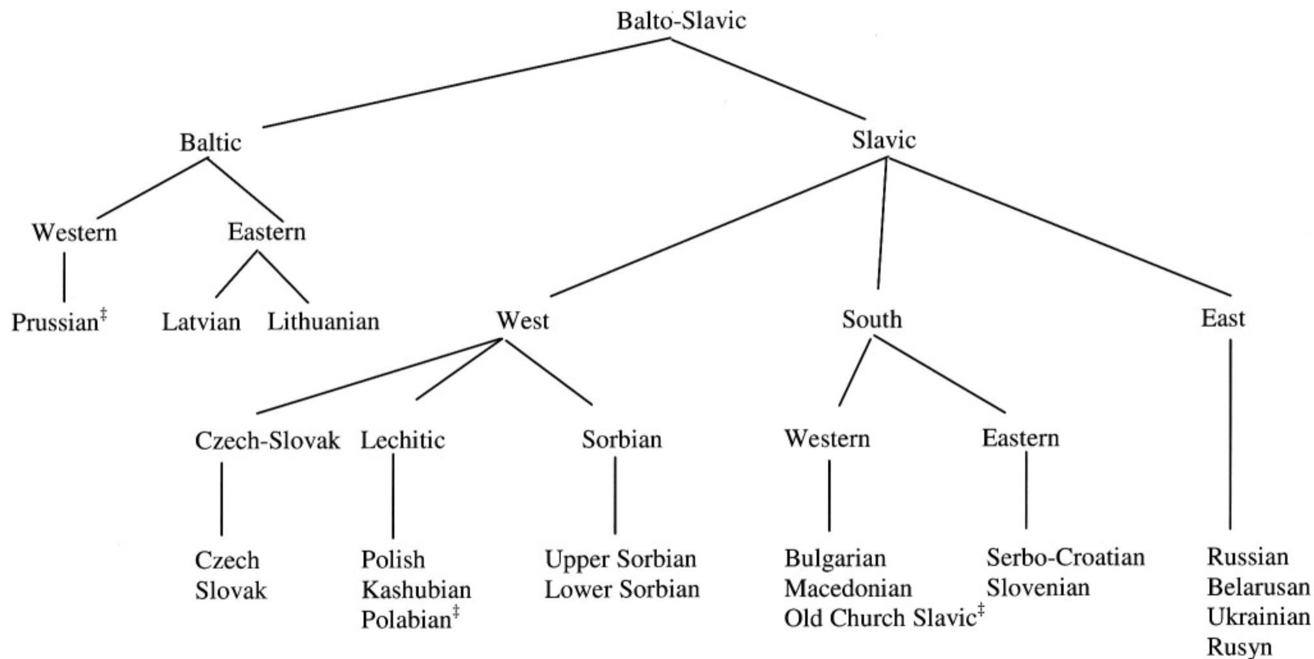
By the time of the break-up of the Soviet Union, it seems safe to say that all representatives of all languages and cultures had significant portions who felt that they were, in a certain sense, under siege, and that their heritage and future were endangered by the threat of Russification. In some instances, the perceived threat was greater than the reality. Despite the increase in Russian bilingualism in Central Asia, the titular populations grew in size and strength over the non-titular languages. This is in contrast to the position of the non-titular minority languages, in particular in the North but also in other parts of the Russian Federation. Speakers in these groups found themselves in a minority position with respect to both the titular majority and Russians, and have had to struggle to maintain a separate identity. One result is a heightened sense of awareness of the importance of language in the preservation and continuation of culture, and of the necessity of using language in a wide variety of functions and domains. The lack of financial resources, however, has made the actual implementation of any real programs difficult.

APPENDIX

This Appendix presents genetic trees for the languages of the former Soviet Union discussed in the present work. Some of these are intended to provide overviews of the entire language group, such as the Balto-Slavic group (I/A) or the Caucasian languages (I/F). The remaining diagrams here give information about those languages represented in the territory of the former USSR only; the related languages not spoken within this territory are omitted. To provide the reader with some idea of how many related languages are spoken outside the USSR, the total number of languages on a given branch is given in parentheses. Classification and language names are based on Grimes (2000). There are a few exceptions. A slightly different classification system is used here for the North Caucasian languages; the name Chukchi is used instead of Chukots, and so on. It should be noted that some of these classifications are not without controversy and other changes could be made. The genetic relations of the various Turkic languages are particularly problematic, due to the migratory history of many Turkic peoples, high language contact, and so on. Johanson (1998) provides a schematic classification of Turkic, recognizing six branches, on the basis of genetic and typological features. His system differs somewhat from the one presented here, although both show six branches. Johanson's classification is comparable in placing Chuvash (representing Bolgar or Bulghar Turkic) on a distinct branch. One key difference, among others, is that he places Khalaj on its own distinct branch as well. Similar difficulties are encountered in classifying the Tungus languages; Whaley et al. (1999), for example, argue for a different schema than is presented in the *Ethnologue.* These issues in genetic classification have little impact on Soviet language policy, however, and are presented here simply to lend the reader some sense of the Soviet languages. Comrie (1981) provides the most comprehensive overview of the linguistic features of the languages of the Soviet Union and a discussion of their genetic relations; more recent studies can be found in the reference section of the present work.

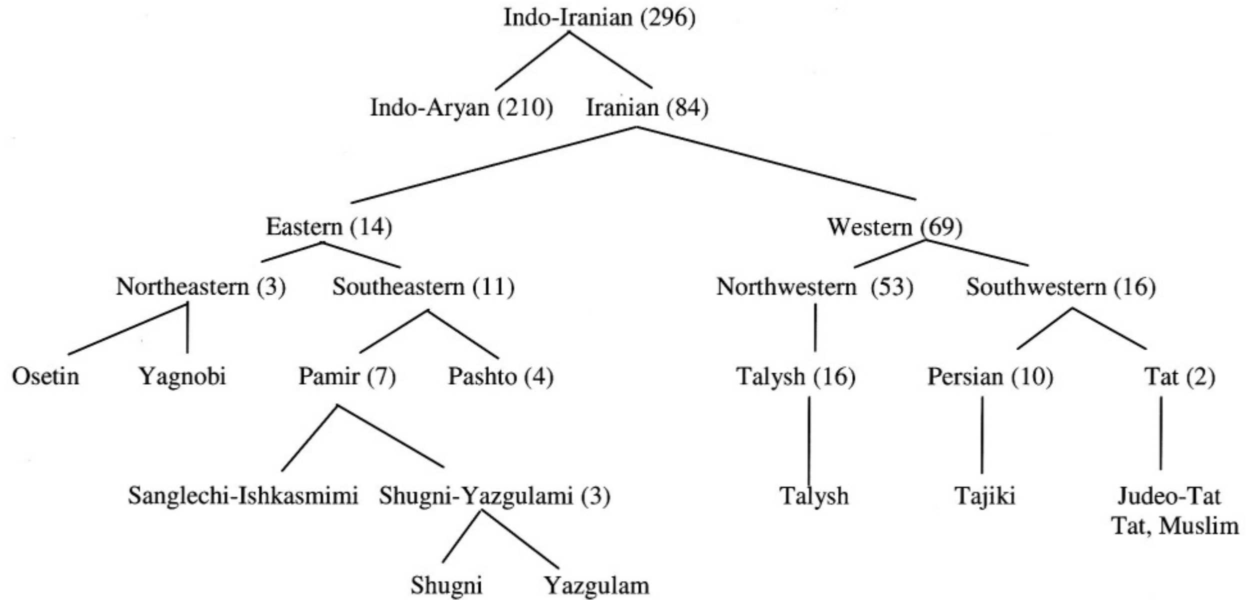
Appendix I/A

Balto-Slavic

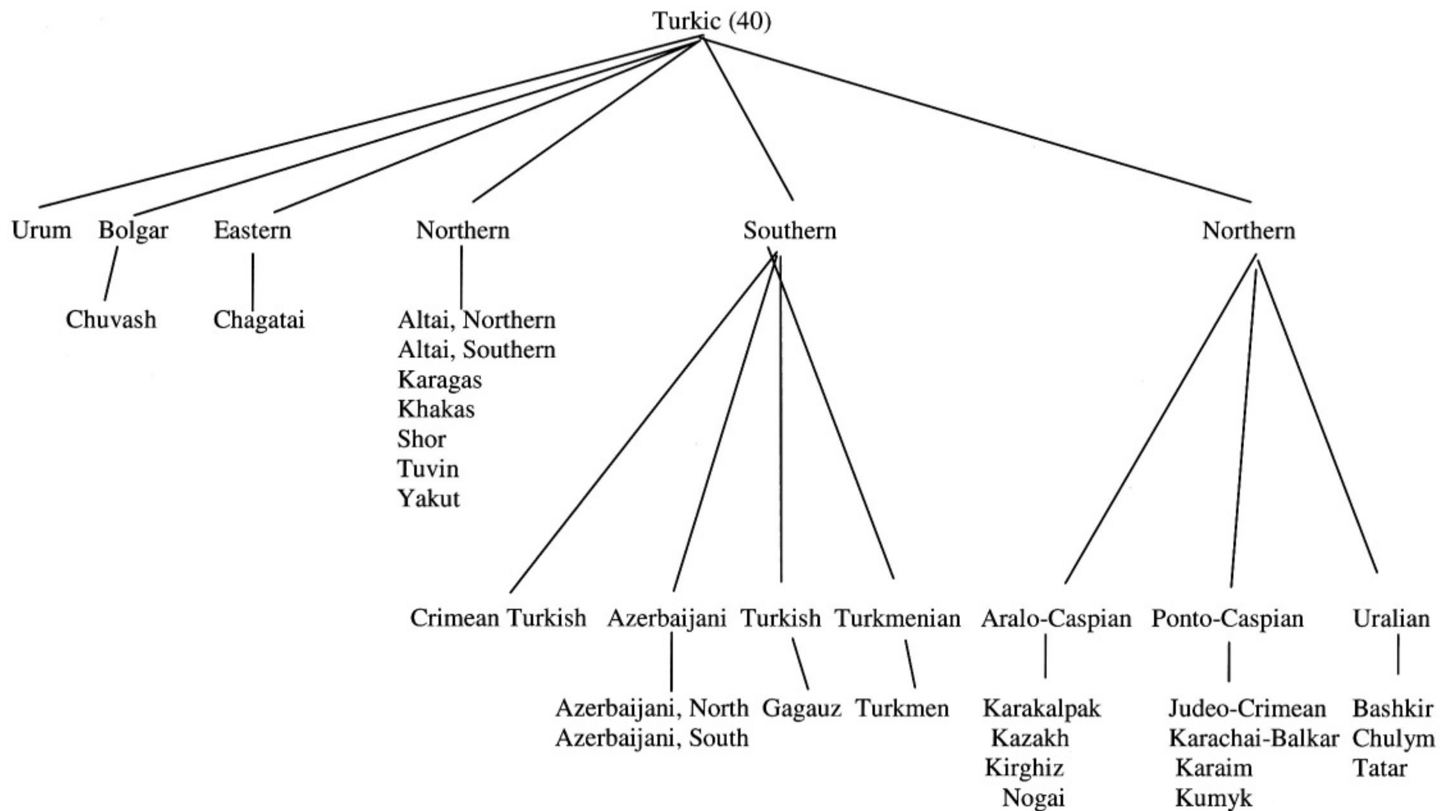


‡extinct

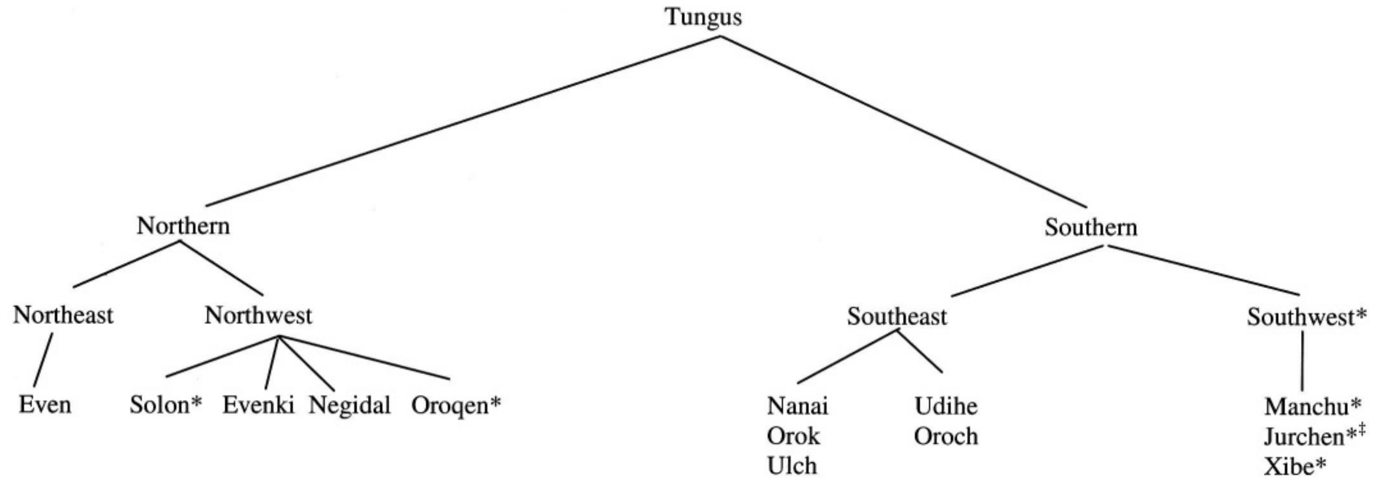
Appendix I/B *Indo-Iranian in the former USSR*



Appendix I/C *Turkic in the former USSR*



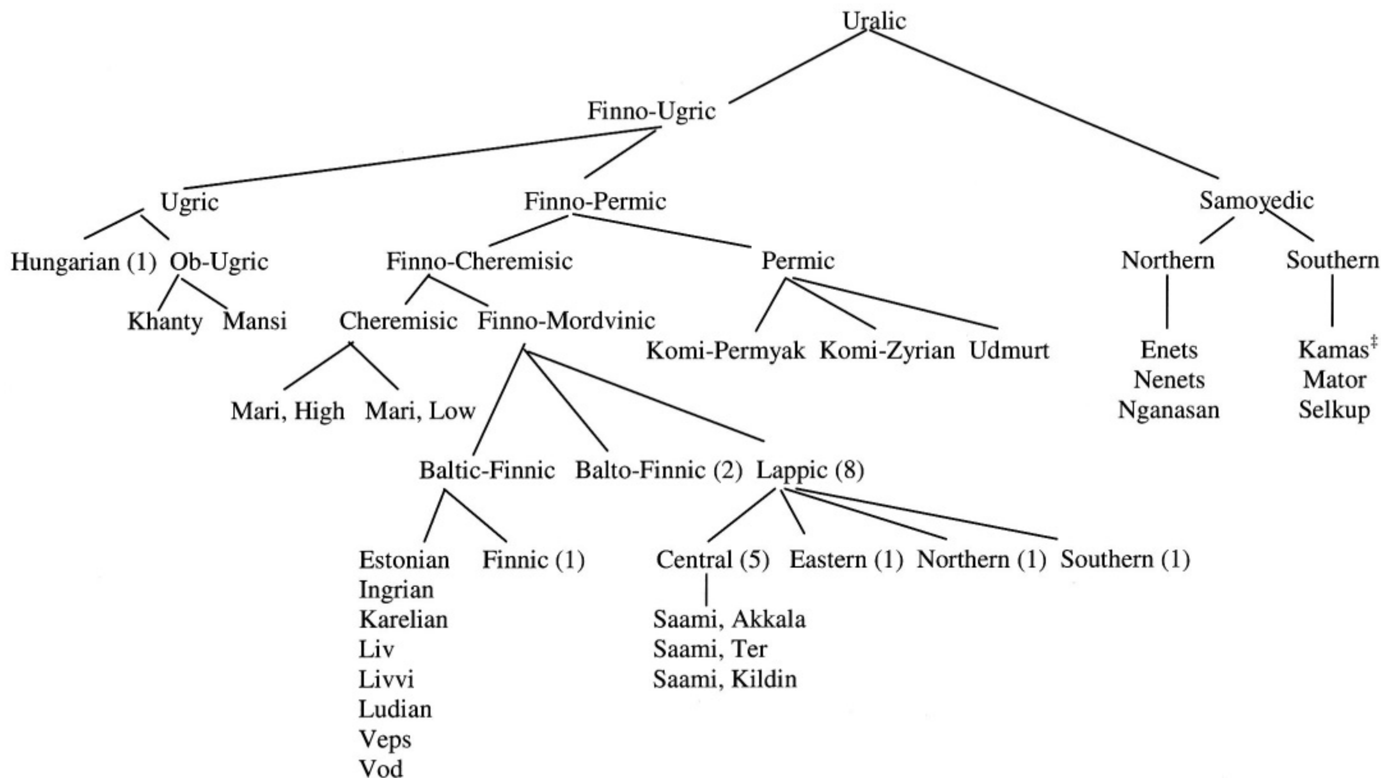
Appendix I/D *Tungus Languages*



*spoken primarily in China
‡extinct

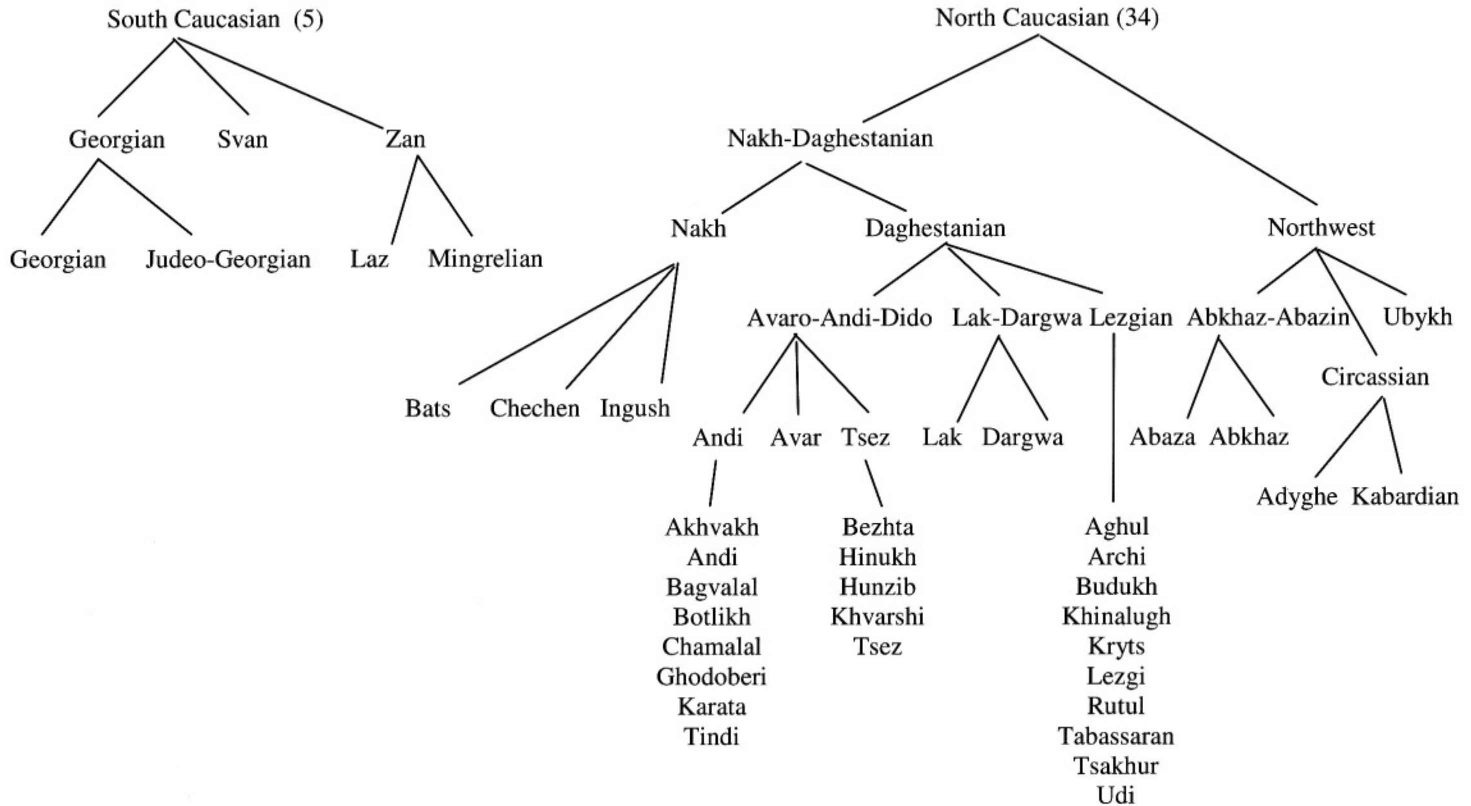
Appendix I/E

Finno-Ugric in the USSR



‡ extinct

Appendix I/F *The Caucasian Languages*



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