An Affirmative Action Empire

The Soviet Union as the Highest Form of Imperialism

RUSSIA'S NEW REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT was the first of the old European multiethnic states to confront the rising tide of nationalism and respond by systematically promoting the national consciousness of its ethnic minorities and by establishing for them many of the characteristic institutional forms of the nation-state.[1] The Bolshevik strategy was to assume leadership over what now appeared to be the inevitable process of decolonization and to carry it out in a manner that would preserve the territorial integrity of the old Russian empire and enable the construction of a new centralized, socialist state. To that end, the Soviet state created not just a dozen large national republics but tens of thousands of national territories scattered across the entire expanse of the Soviet Union. New national elites were trained and promoted to leadership positions in the government, schools, and industrial enterprises of these newly formed territories. In each territory, the national language was declared the official language of government. In dozens of cases, this necessitated the creation of a written language where one did not yet exist. The Soviet state financed the mass production of books, journals, newspapers, movies, operas, museums, folk music ensembles, and other cultural output in the non-Russian languages. Nothing comparable to it had been attempted before, and, with the possible exception of India, no multiethnic state has subsequently matched the scope of Soviet affirmative action.[2]

Why did the Bolsheviks adopt this radical strategy? To answer this question, we must consider both their prerevolutionary analysis of nationalism and their experience with nationalist movements in the years directly following the revolution. When the Bolsheviks seized power in October 1917, they did not yet possess a coherent nationalities policy. They did have a powerful slogan, which they shared with Woodrow Wilson, celebrating the right of nations to self-

determination.[3] This slogan, however, was designed to recruit ethnic support for the revolution, not to provide a model for governing a multiethnic state. While Lenin always took the nationalities question seriously, the unexpected strength of nationalism as a mobilizing force during the revolution and the subsequent civil war nevertheless greatly surprised and disturbed him. The Bolsheviks expected nationalism in Poland and Finland, but the numerous nationalist movements that sprang up across most of the former Russian empire were not expected, and the strength of the Ukrainian one was particularly unnerving.[4] It was this direct confrontation with nationalism that compelled the Bolsheviks to formulate a new nationalities policy.[5]

This process did not occur without contestation. On the one side were the nation-builders, led by Lenin and Stalin; on the other side were the internationalists, led by Georgii Piatakov and Nikolai Bukharin.[6] At the Eighth Party Congress, in March 1919, the two sides clashed over the question of the right of national self-determination. Piatakov argued that "during a sufficiently large and torturous experience in the borderlands, the slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has shown itself in practice, during the social revolution, as a slogan uniting all counter-revolutionary forces."[7] Once the proletariat had seized power, Piatakov maintained, national self-determination became irrelevant: "it's just a diplomatic game, or worse than a game if we take it seriously."[8] Piatakov was supported by Bukharin, who argued that the right to self-determination could be invested only in the proletariat, not in "some fictitious so-called 'national will.' "[9] Class, rather than nationality, they both argued, was the only politically relevant social identity in the postrevolutionary era.

Lenin, who had clashed with Piatakov and others on this issue before, answered this renewed challenge with characteristic vigor.[10] Nationalism had united all counterrevolutionary forces, Lenin readily agreed, but it had also attracted the Bolsheviks' class allies. The Finnish bourgeoisie had successfully "deceived the working masses that the Muscovites (*Moskvaly*), chauvinists, Great Russians want[ed] to oppress the Finns."[11] Arguments such as Piatakov's served to increase that fear and therefore to strengthen national resistance. It was only "thanks to our acknowledgement of [the Finns'] right to self-determination, that the process of [class] differentiation was eased there."[12] Nationalism was fueled by historic distrust: "the working masses of other nations are full of distrust (*nedoverie*) toward Great Russia, as a kulak and oppressor nation."[13] Only the right to self-determination could overcome that distrust, Lenin argued, but Piatakov's policy would instead make the party the heir to tsarist chauvinism: "scratch any Communist and you find a Great Russian chauvinist."[14] Class, Lenin argued, would become the politically dominant social identity only if national identity was given proper respect.

The Congress supported Lenin and retained a qualified right of national self-determination.[15] Of course, the majority of the former Russian empire's nationalities were forced to exercise that right within the confines of the Soviet Union.[16] The period from 1919 to 1923, therefore, was devoted to working out what exactly

non-Russian "national self-determination" could mean in the context of a unitary Soviet state. The resulting policy was based on a diagnosis of nationalism worked out largely by Lenin and Stalin. Lenin had addressed the national question repeatedly from 1912 to 1916, when he formulated and defended the slogan of self-determination, and again from 1919 to 1922, after the alarming success of nationalist movements during the civil war.[17] Stalin was the Bolsheviks' acknowledged "master of the nationalities question": author of the standard prerevolutionary text, *Marxism and the Nationalities Question,* commissar of nationalities from 1917 to 1924, and official spokesman on the national question at party congresses.[18] Lenin and Stalin were in fundamental agreement on both the logical rationale and the essential aspects of this new policy, though they came into conflict in 1922 over important issues of implementation. Their diagnosis of the nationalities problem rested on three premises.

First, nationalism was a uniquely dangerous mobilizing ideology because it had the potential to forge an above-class alliance in pursuit of national goals. Lenin called nationalism a "bourgeois trick,"[19] but recognized that, like the hedgehog's, it was a good one. It worked because it presented legitimate social grievances in a national form. At the Twelfth Party Congress, in 1923, Bukharin, by then a fervid defender of the party's nationalities policy, noted that "when we tax [the non-Russian peasantry] their discontent takes on a national form, is given a national interpretation, which is then exploited by our opponents."[20] Ernest Gellner has parodied this argument as the "wrong-address theory" of nationalism: "Just as extreme Shi'ite Muslims hold that Archangel Gabriel made a mistake, delivering the Message to Mohammed when it was intended for Ali, so Marxists basically like to think that the spirit of history or human consciousness made a terrible boob. The wakening message was intended for *classes,* but by some terrible postal error was delivered to *nations.*"[21]

The Bolsheviks, then, viewed nationalism as a masking ideology. Masking metaphors recur again and again in their discourse about nationality.[22] Stalin was particularly fond of them: "the national flag is sewn on only to deceive the masses, as a popular flag, a convenience for covering up the counter-revolutionary plans of the national bourgeoisie"[23]; "[i]f bourgeois circles attempt to give a national tint to [our] conflicts, then only because it is convenient to hide their battle for power behind a national costume."[24] This interpretation of nationalism as a masking ideology helps explain why the Bolsheviks remained highly suspicious of national self-expression, even after they adopted a policy explicitly designed to encourage it.

Bolshevik internationalists, such as Piatakov, saw this as an argument for attacking nationalism as a counterrevolutionary ideology and nationality itself as a reactionary remnant of the capitalist era. Lenin and Stalin, however, drew the exact opposite conclusion. They reasoned as follows. By granting the forms of nationhood, the Soviet state could split the above-class national alliance for statehood. Class divisions, then, would naturally emerge, which would allow the Soviet government to recruit proletarian and peasant support for their socialist agenda.[25]

Lenin argued that Finnish independence had intensified, not reduced, class conflict and that national self-determination would have the same consequences within the Soviet Union.[26] Likewise, Stalin insisted it was "necessary to 'take' autonomy away from [the national bourgeoisie], having first cleansed it of its bourgeois filth and transformed it from bourgeois into Soviet autonomy."[27] A belief gradually emerged, then, that the above-class appeal of nationalism could be disarmed by granting the forms of nationhood.

This conclusion was buttressed by a second premise: national consciousness was an unavoidable historic phase that all peoples must pass through on the way to internationalism. In their pre-revolutionary writings, Lenin and Stalin argued that nationality emerged only with the onset of capitalism and was itself a consequence of capitalist production.[28] It was not an essential or permanent attribute of mankind. Bolshevik internationalists such as Piatakov understandably interpreted this as meaning that under socialism nationality would be irrelevant and therefore should be granted no special status. However, both Lenin and Stalin insisted that nationality would persist for a long time, even under socialism.[29] In fact, national self-awareness would initially increase. Already in 1916, Lenin stated that "mankind can proceed towards the inevitable fusion (*sliianie*) of nations only through a transitional period of the complete freedom of all oppressed nations."[30] Stalin later explicated this paradox as follows: "We are undertaking the maximum development of national culture, so that it will exhaust itself completely and thereby create the base for the organization of international socialist culture."[31]

Two factors appear to have combined to create this sense of the inevitability of a national stage of development. First, the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the surprisingly strong nationalist movements within the former Russian empire greatly increased the Bolsheviks' respect for the power and ubiquity of nationalism.[32] Stalin was particularly impressed by the process of national succession in the formerly German cities of Austro-Hungary. At the 1921 Party Congress, he pointed out that, while just fifty years earlier all cities in Hungary had been predominately German, they had now all become majority Hungarian. Likewise, he maintained, all Russian cities in Ukraine and Belorussia would "inevitably" be nationalized, even under socialism. Opposing this was futile: "it is impossible to go against history."[33]

Moreover, this national stage of development took on a more positive connotation as it became associated not only with capitalism but also with modernization in general. In his rebuttal of Piatakov and Bukharin, citing the example of the Bashkirs, Lenin had stated that "one must wait the development of a given nation, the differentiation of proletariat from bourgeois elements, which is unavoidable," and that "the path from the medieval to bourgeois democracy, or from bourgeois to proletarian democracy . . . [is] an absolutely unavoidable path."[34] As Lenin focused Bolshevik attention on the Soviet Union's eastern "backward" nationalities, the consolidation of nationhood became associated with historical developmental progress. This trend would reach its climax during the Cultural Rev-

olution of the late 1920s, when Soviet propaganda would boast that, in the Far North, the thousand-year process of national formation had been telescoped into a mere decade.[35] The formation of nations, then, came to be seen as both an unavoidable and a positive stage in the modernization of the Soviet Union.

A third and final premise asserted that non-Russian nationalism was primarily a response to tsarist oppression and was motivated by an historically justifiable distrust of the Great Russians. This argument was pressed most forcefully by Lenin, who already in 1914 had attacked Rosa Luxemburg's denial of the right of self-determination as "objectively aiding" reactionary Russian nationalists: "Absorbed by the fight with nationalism in Poland, Rosa Luxemburg forgot about the nationalism of the Great Russians, though it is exactly this nationalism that is the most dangerous of all."[36] The nationalism of the oppressed, Lenin maintained, had a "democratic content" that must be supported, while the nationalism of the oppressor had no redeeming value.[37] He ended his attack on Luxemburg with the slogan: "fight against all nationalisms and, first of all, against Great Russian nationalism."[38]

Bolshevik conduct between 1917 and 1919 convinced Lenin that the All-Russian Communist party had inherited the psychology of Great Power chauvinism from the tsarist regime. In non-Russian regions, the Bolshevik party initially relied almost exclusively on the minority Russian proletariat and agricultural colonists, who frequently adopted an overtly chauvinist attitude toward the local population.[39] This attitude alarmed Lenin and prompted his harsh words for Piatakov, who had conducted an anti-Ukrainian policy in Kiev.[40] Lenin's anger about such practices climaxed during the notorious Georgian affair of 1922, when he denounced Dzerzhinskii, Stalin, and Ordzhonikidze as Great Russian chauvinists (russified natives, he maintained, were often the worst chauvinists).[41] Such Bolshevik chauvinism inspired Lenin to coin the term *rusotiapstvo* (mindless Russian chauvinism), which then entered the Bolshevik lexicon and became an invaluable weapon in the national republics' rhetorical arsenals.[42]

Lenin's concern about Great Russian chauvinism led to the establishment of a crucial principle of the Soviet nationalities policy. In December 1922, he reiterated his 1914 attack on Great Russian chauvinism with the added admonition that one must "distinguish between the nationalism of oppressor nations and the nationalism of oppressed nations, the nationalism of large nations and the nationalism of small nations . . . in relation to the second nationalism, in almost all historical practice, we nationals of the large nations are guilty, because of an infinite amount of violence [committed]."[43] This distinction between offensive Great Power nationalism and defensive local nationalism, with the latter being viewed as a justifiable response to the former, then entered formulaic Bolshevik rhetoric. This belief in turn led to the establishment of the important "Greater Danger Principle," namely that Great Power (or sometimes Great Russian) chauvinism was a greater danger than local nationalism.[44]

Lenin's extreme formulation of this principle caused one of his two differences of opinion with Stalin over nationalities policy late in 1922.[45] Stalin had supported

the Greater Danger Principle prior to 1922–23, reiterated his support in 1923, and supervised a nationalities policy based on that principle from April 1923 to December 1932 but was nevertheless uncomfortable with the idea that *all* local nationalism could be explained as a response to Great Power chauvinism.[46] On the basis of his experience in Georgia, Stalin insisted that Georgian nationalism was also characterized by Great Power exploitation of their Ossetine and Abkhaz minorities.[47] Stalin always paired his attacks on Great Russian chauvinism with a complementary attack on the lesser danger of local nationalism.[48] This difference of emphasis was also evident in Lenin and Stalin's terminology. Lenin typically referred to Russian nationalism as Great Power chauvinism, which distinguished it from other nationalisms, while Stalin preferred the term "Great Russian chauvinism." Despite these differences, however, Stalin consistently supported the Greater Danger Principle.

The intersection between nationalities and foreign policy was a fourth factor influencing the formation of the affirmative action empire. Already in November 1917, Lenin and Stalin issued an "Appeal to all Muslim Toilers of Russia and the East," which promised to end imperial exploitation within the former Russian empire and called on Muslims outside Russia to overthrow their colonial masters.[49] This linkage of domestic nationalities policy and foreign policy goals in the East was quite common during the civil war period.[50] After the 1921 peace treaty with Poland left millions of Ukrainians, and Belorussians in Poland, Soviet attention shifted westward. The Soviet Union's western border now cut through the ethnographic territory of Finns, Belorussians, Ukrainians and Romanians. It was hoped that an ostentatiously generous treatment of those nationalities within the Soviet Union would attract their ethnic brethren in Poland, Finland, and Romania. The eventual annexation of Poland's large Ukrainian population was the most important object of this strategy. It should be emphasized, however, that this foreign policy goal was never the primary motivation of the Soviet nationalities policy.[51] It was seen as an exploitable benefit of a domestically driven policy that affected the intensity of implementation in sensitive regions, but not the content of the policy itself.[52]

The analysis of nationalism outlined here implied Soviet state support for non-Russian national identities, but it did not yet specify precisely what this positive nationalities policy should include. How exactly can one support national consciousness without simultaneously encouraging nationalism? And how can one build a unitary state while encouraging potentially divisive substate identities? The reasoning that led from theory to practice can be summarized as follows. Nationalism is a masking ideology that leads legitimate class interests to be expressed, not in an appropriate class-based socialist movement but rather in the form of an above-class national movement. National identity is not an essential and permanent quality but rather an unavoidable by-product of the modern capitalist *and* early socialist world, which must be passed through before a mature internationalist socialist world can come into being. Since national identity *is* a real phenomenon in the modern world, the nationalism of the oppressed non-Russian

peoples expresses not only masked class protest but also legitimate national grievances against the oppressive Great Power chauvinism of the dominant Russian nationality. Neither nationalism nor national identity, therefore, can be unequivocally condemned as reactionary. *Some* national claims—those confined to the realm of national "form"—are in fact legitimate and must be granted in order to split the above-class national alliance. Such a policy will speed the emergence of class cleavages and so allow the party to recruit non-Russian proletarian and peasant support for its socialist agenda. Nationalism will be disarmed by granting the forms of nationhood.

An authoritative account of what forms of nationhood would be supported was finally delineated in resolutions passed at the Twelfth Party Congress, in April 1923, and at a special Central Committee Conference on Nationalities Policy, in June 1923.[53] These two resolutions, along with Stalin's speeches in defense of them, became the standard Bolshevik proof texts for nationalities policy and remained so throughout the Stalinist era.[54] Prior to June 1923, nationalities policy had been debated repeatedly at important party meetings. After these resolutions, this public debate ceased.[55] The 1923 resolutions affirmed that the Soviet state would maximally support those "forms" of nationhood that did not conflict with a unitary central state, namely national territories, national languages, national elites, and national cultures.

By June 1923, national territories had in fact already been formed for most of the large Soviet nationalities.[56] The 1923 resolutions merely reaffirmed their existence and denounced all plans to abolish them.[57] There still remained, however, the problem of territorially dispersed national minorities. Soviet policy opposed their assimilation. It also opposed the Austro-Marxist solution of extraterritorial national-cultural autonomy, whereby dispersed national minorities would be given certain extraterritorial rights to govern their own cultural affairs.[58] Both were considered likely to increase nationalism and to exacerbate ethnic conflict. The solution hit upon by the Bolsheviks in the mid-1920s was characteristically radical. Their national-territorial system would be extended downward into smaller and smaller national territories (national districts, village soviets, collective farms) until the system merged seamlessly with the personal nationality of each Soviet citizen. The result was a grandiose pyramid of national soviets consisting of thousands of national territories of varying size.[59]

The primary focus of the 1923 resolutions were the twin policies of promoting national languages and creating national elites. In each national territory, the language of the titular nationality was to be established as the official state language. National elites were to be trained and promoted into positions of leadership in the party, government, industry, and schools of each national territory. While these policies had been articulated as early as 1920, and were officially sanctioned at the 1921 Party Congress, virtually nothing had been done yet to implement them.[60] The two 1923 decrees condemned this inactivity and demanded immediate action. These two policies were soon referred to as *korenizatsiia* and became the centerpiece of the Soviet nationalities policy.

Korenizatsiia is best translated as "indigenization." It is derived directly not from the stem *koren-* ("root"—with the meaning "rooting") but from its adjectival form *korennoi* as used in the phrase *korennoi narod* (indigenous people). The coining of the word *korenizatsiia* was part of the Bolsheviks' decolonizing rhetoric, which systematically favored the claims of indigenous peoples over "newly arrived elements." In 1923, however, *korenizatsiia* was not yet in use. Instead, the term *natsionalizatsiia* was preferred, which emphasized the project of nation-building.[61] This emphasis was echoed in the national republics, where the policy was simply named after the titular nationality: *Ukrainizatsiia, Uzbekizatsiia, Oirotizatsiia.* The term *korenizatsiia* emerged later from the central nationalities policy bureaucracy, which serviced primarily extraterritorial national minorities and so preferred a term that referred to all indigenous (*korennye*) peoples, not just titular nationalities. *Korenizatsiia* gradually emerged as the preferred term to describe this policy, but it should be noted that Stalin always used *natsionalizatsiia.*[62]

The 1923 resolutions established *korenizatsiia* as the most urgent item on the Soviet nationalities policy agenda. In keeping with Lenin's and Stalin's highly psychological interpretation of nationalism, the subjective effects of *korenizatsiia* were emphasized. It would make Soviet power seem "native," "intimate," "popular," "comprehensible" (*poniatnaia*).[63] It would address the positive psychological needs of nationalism: "the [non-Russian] masses would see that Soviet power and her organs are the affair of their own efforts, the embodiment of their desires."[64] It would likewise disarm the negative psychological anxiety associated with the perception of foreign rule: "Soviet power, which up to the present time [April 1923] has remained Russian power, [would be made] not only Russian but international, and become native for the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities."[65] Native languages would make Soviet power comprehensible. Native cadres, who understood "the way of life, customs, and habits of the local population," would make Soviet power seem indigenous rather than an external Russian imperial imposition.[66]

Finally, the 1923 resolutions also reiterated the party's recognition of distinct national cultures and pledged central state support for their maximum development.[67] Stalin famously defined Soviet national cultures as being "national in form, socialist in content" but did not elaborate on what exactly this meant.[68] The ambiguity was intentional, since Bolshevik plans for the social transformation of the country did not allow for any fundamentally distinctive religious, legal, ideological, or customary features.[69] The translation that best captures the meaning of Stalin's *natsional'naia kul'tura* is not "national culture" but "national identity" or "symbolic ethnicity."[70]

Soviet policy systematically promoted the distinctive national identity and national self-consciousness of its non-Russian populations. It did this not only through the formation of national territories staffed by national elites using their own national languages but also through the aggressive promotion of symbolic markers of national identity: national folklore, museums, dress, food, costumes, opera, poets, progressive historical events, and classic literary works. The long-

term goal was that distinctive national identities would co-exist peacefully with an emerging all-union socialist culture that would supersede the pre-existing national cultures. National identity would be depoliticized through an ostentatious show of respect for the national identities of the non-Russians.

It is also important to understand what the Soviet nationalities policy did not involve. Above all, it did not involve federation, if this term means anything more than the mere formation of administrative territories along national lines. At the April and June 1923 gatherings, the Ukrainian delegation, led by Khristian Rakovskii, pressed very aggressively for the devolution of meaningful federal powers to the national republics.[71] Stalin rebuffed Rakovskii's proposals scornfully and mendaciously labeled his goal as confederation.[72] Although the 1922–1923 constitutional settlement was called a federation, it in fact concentrated all decision-making power in the center. National republics were granted no more powers than Russian provinces.[73] Prior to June 1917, both Lenin and Stalin denounced federation and advocated a unitary state with "oblast autonomy" for national regions. This meant the formation of national administrative units and the selective use of national languages in government and education.[74] In June 1917, Lenin abruptly rehabilitated the term federation but used it to describe what amounted to a much more ambitious version of "oblast autonomy." As Stalin noted coyly in 1924, federation "turned out to be not so nearly in contradiction with the goal of economic unification as it might have seemed earlier."[75] Soviet federation did not mean devolution of political or economic power.[76]

Economic equalization occupied a much more ambiguous place in the Soviet nationalities policy. The 1923 nationalities policy decrees called for measures to overcome "the real economic and cultural inequality of the Soviet Union's nationalities."[77] One economic measure proposed was transferring factories from the Russian heartland to eastern national regions.[78] This policy was in fact adopted but then almost immediately discontinued, a pattern that proved typical of economic equalization programs. In contrast to the commitment to cultural and national equalization, through affirmative action in education and hiring, the Soviet commitment to economic equalization was never institutionalized. Attempts by the "culturally backward" republics to obtain an annual budget line for a program designed to combat their "backwardness" failed.[79] The economic commissariats were consistently hostile to the Soviet nationalities policy. On the other hand, national republics could and often did use the 1923 resolutions and their "backward" national status to lobby all-Union agencies for privileged economic investment.[80] However, they could make no absolute claim to investment based on their national status. Gerhard Simon concludes, only a little too strongly, that "Soviet economic policy has never made overcoming the rift between economically underdeveloped national territories a high-priority issue. Wherever economic equalization occurred, it was only a side effect of other planning priorities, such as development of new resources, increasing regional economic specialization and primarily military-strategic conceptions."[81]

One issue that was not prominently discussed during the 1923 nationalities policy debates was control over migration into the non-Russian republics. The Soviet nationalities policy called for the formation of national territories. Did it also sanction measures to preserve (or create) national majorities in those republics? Initially the answer appeared to be yes. In Kazakhstan and Kirgizia, central authorities even sanctioned the expulsion of illegal Slavic agricultural settlers as a decolonization measure. In the early 1920s, the Soviet Union's eastern national territories were closed to agricultural colonization to prevent an influx of Slavic settlers. However, by 1927, all-Union economic interests had again prevailed over local national concerns, and all restrictions on migration were removed.[82] In the long run, this would have a dramatic Russificatory effect in many of the non-Russian republics.

The Soviet Union was not a federation, and it was certainly not a nation-state. Its distinctive feature was the systematic support of national forms: territory, culture, language, and elites. Of course, these were hardly novel choices. They are the primary domestic concerns of most newly formed nation-states. In Georgia and Armenia, for instance, the Soviet government did not repudiate the nation-building efforts of the Menshevik and *Dashnaktsutiun* governments that it deposed in 1920–1921 but rather boasted that Soviet power had deepened the national work begun by them.[83] Soviet policy was original in that it supported the national forms of minorities, rather than majorities. It decisively rejected the model of the nation-state and replaced it with a plurality of nation-like republics. The Bolsheviks attempted to fuse the nationalist's demand for national territory, culture, language, and elites with the socialist's demand for an economically and politically unitary state. In this sense, we might call the Bolsheviks internationalist nationalists, or better yet, affirmative action nationalists.

To develop this idea, I compare Soviet practice with Miroslav Hroch's famous three-phase model for the development of nationalism among the "small" stateless peoples of Eastern Europe: first, elite nonpolitical interest in folklore and popular culture (Phase A); second, the consolidation of a nationalist elite committed to the formation of a nation-state (Phase B); third, the emergence of a nationalist movement with mass popular support (Phase C).[84] Hroch largely ignored the existing multiethnic state, reflexively assuming it would oppose these developments. The Soviet state, instead, literally seized leadership over all three phases: the articulation of a national culture, the formation of national elites, and the propagation of mass national consciousness. It went still further and initiated even "Phase D" (my term now, not Hroch's) measures typical of newly formed nation-states: the establishment of a new language of state and a new governing elite. To use more familiar Bolshevik terminology, the party became the vanguard of non-Russian nationalism. Just as party leadership was needed to lead the proletariat beyond trade-union consciousness to revolution, the party could also guide national movements beyond bourgeois primordial nationalism to Soviet international nationalism.

This policy represented a dramatic shift from 1913, when Lenin had argued that the party should condemn all national discrimination but warned that "the proletariat cannot go further [than this] in the support of nationalism, for going further means the 'positive' (*pozitivnaia*) affirmative action (*polozhitel'naia deiatel'nost'*) of the bourgeoisie which aims at strengthening nationalism."[85] In the same spirit, the Bolshevik leader Zinovev told a Ukrainian audience in 1920 "that languages should develop freely. In the end, after a period of years, the language with the greater roots, greater life and greater culture will triumph."[86] Dmitrii Lebed, secretary of the Ukrainian Central Committee, called this theory "the battle of two cultures," in which, "given a party policy of neutrality, the victory of the Russian language will be guaranteed due to its historic role in the epoch of capitalism."[87]

By the 1923 Party Congress, neutrality had become anathema. Zinovev himself now stated: "We should first of all reject the 'theory' of neutralism. We cannot adopt the point of view of neutralism . . . , we should help [the non-Russians] create their own schools, should help them create their own administration in their native languages. . . . Communists [should not] stand to the side and think up the clever phrase 'neutrality.' " Neutrality, Zinovev insisted, was simply a cover for Great Russian chauvinism.[88] The 1923 resolutions supported this position.[89] Not only was Piatakov's call for a positive fight against nationalism denounced as Great Power chauvinism; so was Lenin's prerevolutionary policy of neutrality. Lebed's "battle of two cultures" was condemned in 1923, as was a similar "leftist" position in Tatarstan and Crimea.[90]

The Communist party had now embraced the "positive affirmative action of the bourgeoisie" that Lenin had criticized in 1913. However, as the Hroch comparison illustrates, Soviet affirmative action supported national minorities, not majorities. The Bolsheviks now scorned bourgeois governments for supporting only formal "legal equality" instead of taking positive action to achieve "actual equality."[91] This extreme suspicion of neutrality explains one of the most striking features of the Soviet nationalities policy: its resolute hostility to even voluntary assimilation. In this new model, neutrality would inevitably lead to voluntary assimilation because of the historic strength of Russian national culture. Positive action, therefore, was needed in order to defend non-Russian national culture against this unjust fate. No one denounced neutrality and assimilation more categorically than Stalin:[92]

> We are undertaking a policy of the maximum development of national culture. . . . It would be an error if anyone thought that in relation to the development of the national cultures of the backward nationalities, central workers should maintain a policy of neutrality—"O.K., fine, national culture is developing, let it develop, that's not our business." Such a point of view would be incorrect. We stand for a protective (*pokrovitel'stvennaia politika*) policy in relation to the development of the national cultures of the backward nationalities. I emphasize

> this so that [it will] be understood that we are not indifferent, but actively protecting (*pokrovitel'stvuiushchie)* the development of national culture.

Of course, positive action on behalf of one nationality implies negative action toward others.

In the Soviet case, where all non-Russians were to be favored, Russians alone bore the brunt of positive discrimination. Bukharin stated this fact bluntly: "As the former Great Power nation, we should indulge the national aspirations [of the non-Russians] and place ourselves in an unequal position, in the sense of making still greater concessions to the national current. Only by such a policy, when we place ourselves artificially in a position lower in comparisons with others, only by such a price can we purchase for ourselves the trust of the formerly oppressed nations."[93] Stalin, who was more sensitive to Russian feelings, rebuked Bukharin for the crudeness of his statement but did not and could not dispute its content.[94] Soviet policy did indeed call for Russian sacrifice in the realm of nationalities policy: majority Russian territory was assigned to non-Russian republics; Russians had to accept ambitious affirmative action programs for non-Russians; they were asked to learn non-Russian languages; and traditional Russian culture was stigmatized as a culture of oppression.[95]

New phenomena merit new terminology. As a national entity, the early Soviet Union can best be described as an affirmative action empire. I am, of course, borrowing the contemporary American term for policies that give preference to members of ethnic groups that have suffered from past discrimination. Such policies are common internationally and go by various names: compensatory discrimination, preferential policies, positive action, affirmative discrimination.[96] They often accompany decolonization. I prefer the term "affirmative action" because it describes precisely the Soviet policy choice: affirmative action (*polozhitel'naia deiatel'nost'*) instead of neutrality. The Soviet Union was the first country in world history to establish affirmative action programs for national minorities, and no country has yet approached the vast scale of Soviet affirmative action.[97] The Soviet Union also adopted even more extensive class-based affirmative action programs and considerably less assertive gender-based programs.[98] As a result, the vast majority of Soviet citizens were eligible for some sort of preferential treatment. Affirmative action permeated the early Soviet Union and was one of its defining features.

However, the existence of such programs alone does not justify calling the Soviet Union an affirmative action empire, since I am proposing this term as an ideal-type to distinguish the Soviet Union *as a national entity* from alternative ideal-types: nation-state, city-state, federation, confederation, empire. Affirmative action refers here not only to programs on behalf of members of a given ethnic group but primarily to Soviet state support for the national territories, languages, elites, and identities of those ethnic groups. As noted in the Hroch comparison, the Communist party assumed leadership over the usual process of national formation and took positive action to construct Soviet international nations (nations in form

not content) that would accept the formation of a unitary, centralized Soviet state. Positive support of the forms of nationhood was the essence of Soviet nationalities policy. The formation of the Soviet Union in 1922–1923 established the territorial form of nationhood, not a federation of autonomous national territories.

Therefore, I refer to the affirmative action empire as the national constitution of the Soviet Union. I am using the word "constitution" here in the British sense of a set of fundamental rules that structure the political life of a state. I add the adjective "national," as I am concerned exclusively with how the Soviet Union was structured as a national or nation-like entity, that is with regard to the problem of nationality. It was not the Soviet Union's formal written constitution of December 1922 that constituted the Soviet Union as a national entity but rather the nationalities policy articulated in 1923. It was affirmative action, in the broad sense that I have defined it, that structured the Soviet Union as a multiethnic state.

The term "affirmative action empire" represents an attempt to capture the paradoxical nature of the multiethnic Soviet state: an extraordinarily invasive, centralized, and violent state formally structured as a federation of sovereign nations; the successor state to the collapsed Russian empire that successfully reconquered most of its former national borderlands but then set out to systematically build and strengthen its non-Russian nations, even where they barely existed. In 1967, Alec Nove and J. A. Newth puzzled over a state that seemed to privilege its eastern periphery while simultaneously holding it in subjection: "therefore, if we do not call the present relationship colonialism, we ought to invent a new name to describe something which represents subordination and yet is genuinely different from the imperialism of the past."[99]

The affirmative action empire was not a traditional empire. I am not aligning myself with those who now argue that the Soviet Union, because of its shared characteristics with other empires, can be classified in objective social science terms as an "empire."[100] On the contrary, I am emphasizing its novelty. Mark Beissinger has pointed out that, prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union, by and large only hostile observers called it an empire.[101] Supporters and neutral scholars called it a state. Beissinger likewise has noted the circularity of the currently popular argument that the Soviet Union collapsed, like the Habsburg and Ottoman empires before it, because it was an empire: in the modern world, empires collapse along national lines; the Soviet Union collapsed along national lines; therefore, the Soviet Union was an empire; therefore, as an empire, the Soviet Union was bound to collapse along national lines.[102] However, Beissinger goes on to argue that, because of the widespread assumption that in the modern world empires are doomed, empire is a very important subjective category. To the extent that citizens perceive their state as an empire (and themselves as subjects), its long-term viability is gravely compromised.

Lenin and Stalin understood very well the danger of being labeled an empire in the age of nationalism. In fact, here lies the real connection between the Soviet Union's national constitution and the collapse of the Habsburg and Ottoman

empires. The nationalities crisis and final collapse of the Habsburg empire made an enormous impression on Lenin and Stalin, who viewed it as an object lesson in the danger of being perceived by their population as an empire. As a result, the Soviet Union became the first multiethnic state in world history to define itself as an anti-imperial state. They were not indifferent to the word "empire." They rejected it explicitly.

Indeed, the affirmative action empire was a strategy designed to avoid the perception of empire. The Greater Danger Principle was based on the belief that non-Russian nationalism was a defensive response to the experience of Russian Great Power or imperial chauvinism. Since the Bolsheviks intended to rule dictatorially and to promote major social transformation, their actions were likely to be perceived as Russian imperialism. To avoid this perception, the central state would not be identified as Russian. Russian national self-expression would be downplayed. Ironically, this preserved the national structure of the old empire. The Bolsheviks explicitly renounced the idea of a state-bearing people. Despite this fact, in an important sense the Russians did remain the Soviet Union's state-bearing people. Only the Russians were not granted their own territory and their own Communist party. Instead, the party asked the Russians to accept a formally unequal *national* status in order to further the cohesion of the multinational state. The hierarchical distinction between state-bearing and colonial peoples was thus reproduced, but reversed, as the new distinction between the formerly oppressed nationalities and the former Great Power nation.[103] As the state-bearing people, Russians were now literally asked to bear the burden of empire by suppressing their national interests and identifying with a non-national affirmative action empire. Had Lenin lived to write a theoretical account of his creation, he might have called it *The Soviet Union, as the Highest Stage of Imperialism.*[104]

In its ideal-typical form, the affirmative action empire persisted for a mere decade. In December 1932, in response both to the Soviet leadership's growing dissatisfaction with some of the unintended consequences of the affirmative action empire and to a short-term crisis in grain requisitions that was attributed to Ukrainian nationalism, the Soviet Politburo issued a series of resolutions that initiated a fundamental revision of the Soviet nationalities policy.[105] These changes have often been portrayed as the abolition of *korenizatsiia.*[106] This judgment is much too strong, but it is also symptomatic of the important subjective perceptual changes that followed as a consequence of these policy revisions.

Three of the four major policy components of the affirmative action empire survived the 1930s with only minor revisions. The commitment to training and promoting indigenous cadres, including the practice of affirmative action in university admissions and employment, continued throughout the 1930s and beyond. The principal change was that, in deference to Russian sensibilities, affirmative action was now carried out silently. It disappeared almost entirely from published Soviet sources, but not from bureaucratic archives or from real life.[107] The thousands of minute national territories established in the 1920s were either formally or informally abolished in the 1930s, but the remaining thirty-five larger

national territories were actually strengthened in 1936, and most have remained an essential part of the Soviet and post-Soviet landscape to the present day.[108] The promotion of distinctive national identities actually intensified after December 1932, as the Soviet discourse of the nation shifted from an insistence that nations were modern constructs that emerged as a consequence of capitalist production to a primordial, essentialist conception of national identity that emphasized the deep historic roots of all Soviet nations.[109] The change in language policy was more substantial. By 1932, despite major efforts, the attempt to establish the non-Russian languages as the dominant language of government in the non-Russian republics had, with the exception of Georgia and Armenia, largely failed. After 1932, this policy was quietly abandoned, and Russian became the dominant (though not exclusive) language of the government, the party, large industrial enterprises, and higher technical education in the non-Russian territories. The national languages continued to be promoted in general education, in the press, and in cultural production.[110]

With respect to policy toward most non-Russians, then, the affirmative action empire continued with limited corrections throughout Stalin's rule.[111] There was, however, one policy change of the 1930s that struck at the heart of the affirmative action empire: the rehabilitation of the Russian nationality and traditional Russian national culture. In January 1934, Stalin officially announced the abandonment of the Greater Danger Principle that had stigmatized Russians as the former Great Power nationality.[112] Initially it seemed that Russians would acquire an equal national status, but by 1936 they had already been raised to the rank of "first among equals" in the Soviet family of nations.[113] The new policy did not involve forced cultural or linguistic russification, but it did involve an aggressive promotion of bilingualism and a re-engineering of non-Russian languages and cultures to accentuate their proximity and openness to Russian linguistic and cultural influence.[114] There were two main reasons for this dramatic policy shift. First, the aggressive affirmative action of the 1920s had provoked high levels of resentment among Russian party members. Second, and more important, the Bolshevik leadership increasingly felt that the affirmative action empire had led to an unacceptably high level of national Communist assertiveness among non-Russian cultural and political elites and so provided an inadequate principle of Soviet unity.[115] In the 1920s, the voluntary invisibility of the Russian nationality was meant to unify the multiethnic state (by disarming non-Russian distrust of their former oppressor); in the 1930s, the visibility and centrality of the Russians would serve the same function. This new principle of Soviet unity was represented by the metaphor of the Friendship of the Peoples, a friendship that was said to have been forged by the Russians and to have existed already for many centuries.[116] The Friendship was propagandized as a kind of supranational imagined community for the multiethnic Soviet people.[117]

The affirmative action empire was a logically coherent but highly utopian strategy. The reform of that strategy in the mid-1930s moved it in a more pragmatic direction but in doing so introduced a contradiction that would persist

throughout Stalin's rule and beyond. The affirmative action empire had preserved, indeed accentuated, the imperial structure of a state-bearing imperial nation and colonial nations but reversed its valence by promoting the national "forms" of the former colonial nations and downplaying the expression of Russian national identity. The first half of this formula persisted in a revised form beyond 1932 because Stalin continued to believe that the promotion of non-Russian national "forms," if properly supervised, did reduce non-Russian resentment and so forestalled the growth of non-Russian nationalism.[118] In the short run, this was probably correct. However, in the long run, the simultaneous promotion of non-Russian identities and the re-establishment of the Russians as the much-praised and highly visible state-bearing nationality of a centralized state proved a recipe for the subjective perception of empire. As the non-Russian nations modernized and developed a sizable literary intelligentsia under Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the subjective perception that they were living in a Russian empire slowly spread. With the advent of Gorbachev's political reforms, this perception would suddenly explode and fatally undermine Lenin's affirmative action empire.

Notes

1. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was the first of the old European empires to see its existence threatened by separatist nationalism. Its nationalities policy was therefore followed closely by Russian intellectuals, including Lenin and Stalin, both of whom polemicized with the Austro-Marxists over the nationalities question. The Austrian half of the empire pioneered many of the strategies adopted by the Soviet Union, but theirs was primarily a defensive strategy of granting concessions to nationalist demands, whereas the Soviets pursued an active, prophylactic strategy of promoting non-Russian nation-building to prevent the growth of nationalism. See Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch, eds., *Die Habsburgermonarchie, 1848–1918. Band III. Die Völker des Reiches* (Vienna: Verl. d. Osterr. Alad. d. Wiss., 1980).

2. The standard work on Indian affirmative action is Marc Galanter, *Competing Equalities: Law and the Backward Classes in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984). See also Sumita Parikh, *The Politics of Preference: Democratic Institutions and Affirmative Action in the United States and India* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). India's version of *korenizatsiia,* the formation of language-based territories shortly after independence, was influenced by the Soviet model. See *Report of the States Reorganisation Commission* (New Delhi: Management of Publications, 1955), pp. 40–43.

3. This embarrassing fact was pointed out by Georgii Chicherin, "Protiv tezisov tov. Stalina," *Pravda,* no. 50, March 6, 1921, p. 2.

4. Richard Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union: Communism and Nationalism* (rev. ed., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964); Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 20–83; Andrea Graziosi, *Bol'sheviki i krest'iane na Ukraine, 1918–1919 gody. Ocherk o bol'shevizmakh, natsional-sotsializmakh i krest'ianskikh dvizheniiakh* (Moscow: Airo-xx, 1997).

5. Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917–1923* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999); Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53 (Summer 1994): 414–452; Suny, *The Revenge of the Past,* pp. 84–106; Hélène Carrère d'Encausse, *The Great Challenge: Nationalities and the Bolshevik State, 1917–1930* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1992).

6. For a good background discussion, see Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question,* pp. 7–28.

7. *Vosmoi s"ezd RKP/b/. 18–23 marta 1919 g. Protokoly* (Moscow, 1933), pp. 79–80.

8. Ibid., p. 82.

9. Ibid., pp. 48–49. This position was briefly supported by Stalin as well in December 1917 and January 1918. I. V. Stalin, "Otvet tovarishcham Ukraintsam v tylu i na fronte," *Sochineniia,* vol. 4 (Moscow: Gosudaestvennoe izoatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1953–1955), p 8; "Vystupleniia na III vserossiiskom s"ezde sovetov R., S. i K. D.," vol. 4, pp. 31–32.

10. Lenin's two major prerevolutionary attacks on Piatakov's position, whose major exponent was Rosa Luxemburg, were "O prave natsii na samoopredelenie" (1914) in V. I. Lenin, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (hereafter PSS), vol. 25 (Moscow, 1975–1977), pp. 255–320, and "Sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia i pravo natsii na samoopredelenie" (1916), PSS, vol. 27, pp. 151–166. He also debated Piatakov at the Party's Seventh Conference in April 1917; see *Natsional'nyi vopros na perekrestke mnenii. 20-e gody. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Nauka, 1992), pp. 11–27.

11. *Vosmoi s"ezd,* p. 55.

12. Ibid., pp. 54–55.

13. Ibid., p. 107.

14. Ibid., p. 108.

15. Ibid., p. 387. Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the Nationalities Question,* p. 21.

16. On the Bolsheviks' reconquest of the Imperial Russian borderlands, see Pipes, *The Formation of the Soviet Union.*

17. For the period 1912–1916, in addition to the works already cited, see "Tezisy po natsional'nomu voprosu" (1913), PSS, vol. 23, pp. 314–322; "Kriticheskie zametki po natsional'nomu voprosu" (1913), PSS, vol. 24, pp. 113–150; "Itogi diskussii o samoopredelenii" (1916), PSS, vol. 30, pp. 17–58. For the period 1919–1922, besides his speeches at party congresses, see "Pis'mo k rabochim i krest'ianam Ukrainy . . ." (1919), PSS, vol. 40, pp. 41–47; "Ob obrazovanii SSSR" (1922), PSS, vol. 45, pp. 211–213; "K voprosu o natsional'nostiakh ili ob 'avtonomizatsii' " (1922), PSS, vol. 45, pp. 356–362.

18. Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR. Stenogramma zasedaniia sektsii 12 s"ezda RKP/b/ po natsional'nomu voprosu 25.04.23," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS* no. 3 (1991): 169. Stalin's articles and speeches are collected in I. Stalin, *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonial'nyi vopros* (Moscow: Partizdat, 1934).

19. Lenin, "Kak Episkop Nikon zashchishchaet Ukraintsev?" (1913), PSS, vol. 24, p. 9.

20. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd RKP/b/. 17–15 aprelia 1923 goda. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow: Izadtel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1968), p. 612.

21. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1983), p. 129.

22. In addition to the examples given from Stalin, see Lenin's "Kriticheskie zametki," pp. 119–120.

23. Stalin, "Politika sovetskoi vlasti po natsional'nomu voprosu v Rossii" (1918), in *Marksizm,* p. 54.

24. Stalin, "Vystupleniia na III vserossiiskom s"ezde," p. 31.

25. For a good early statement of this position, see S. Dimanshtein, "Narodnyi kommissariat po dele natsional'nostei," *Zhizn' nastional'nostei,* no. 41, December 26, 1919, p. 2.

26. In his prerevolutionary writings, Lenin repeatedly cited Sweden's granting Norway independence in 1905 as having sped up the emergence of class conflict in both countries. Lenin, "O prave natsii," p. 289; "Sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia," p. 253.

27. Stalin, "Odna iz ocherednykh zadach" (1918) *Sochineniia* vol. 4, p. 75.

28. Stalin, *Marksizm,* 4–15; Lenin, "O prave natsii," pp. 255–271.

29. On Lenin, see *Tainy natsional'noi politiki TsK RKP. Stenograficheskii otchet sekretnogo IV soveshchaniia TsK RKP, 1923 g.* (Moscow, 1992), pp. 30–31; on Stalin, see *Marksizm,* pp. 155–165.

30. Lenin, "Sotsialisticheskaia revoliutsiia," p. 256.

31. *Rossiiskii Tsentr Khraneniia i Izucheniia Dokumentov Noveishei Istorii* (RTsKhIDNI) 558/1/4490 (1929): 9.

32. Expressions of Bolshevik surprise at the strength of nationalism in the former Russian empire were common. For an example, see Zatonskyi's comments at the Tenth Party Congress. N. N. Popov, ed., *Desiatyi s"ezd RKP/b/. Mart 1921 g.* (Moscow: Partiinoe Izdatel'stvo, Moscow, 1933), pp. 205–209.

33. Ibid., p. 216.

34. *Vos'moi s"ezd,* p. 55.

35. *II sessiia VTsIK XV sozyva. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1931), p. 16. For a sophisticated analysis of Soviet developmentalist ideology, see Yuri Slezkine, *Arctic Mirrors. Russia and the Small Peoples of the North* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994).

36. Lenin, "O prave natsii," p. 277.

37. Ibid., pp. 275–276.

38. Ibid., p. 319.

39. Popov, *Desiatyi s"ezd,* pp. 195–209. Pipes, *The Formation,* pp. 126–154; 172–183; Alexander G. Park, *Bolshevism in Turkestan, 1917–1927* (New York, 1957), pp. 3–58; V. L. Genis, "Deportatsiia russkikh iz Turkestana v 1921 godu ('Delo Safarova'), *Voprosy istorii,* no. 1 (1998): 44–58.

40. Andrea Graziosi, "G. L. Piatakov (1890–1937): A Mirror of Soviet History," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 16 (June 1992): 102–166.

41. Lenin, "K voprosu o natsional'nostiakh," pp. 356–362. The Georgian Affair has drawn an enormous amount of attention because of its link to Lenin's "testament." See Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question,* pp. 172–212; Pipes, *The Formation,* pp. 276–293; Richard Pipes, *Russia under the Bolshevik Regime* (New York: Knopf, 1993), pp. 471–480; Moshe Lewin, *Lenin's Last Struggle* (New York: Pantheon, 1968), pp. 43–64. For documents on the affair, see "Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR," no. 9 (1989): 191–218; Yuri Buranov, ed., *Lenin's Will: Falsified and Forbidden* (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1994).

42. At the 1921 Party Congress, Zatonskyi attributes this term to Lenin. Popov, *Desiatyi s"ezd,* p. 207.

43. Lenin, "K voprosu o natsional'nostiakh," p. 359.

44. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 693–695.

45. Their second difference of opinion came over the structure of the Soviet Union and in particular the place of Russia within the Soviet Union. Stalin strongly opposed the formation of a separate Russian republic with its own separate government (TsIK) in Moscow, as this would provide a potent center for Russian separatism. Lenin insisted on this as a consequence of making the RSFSR, Belorussia, Ukraine, and the Transcaucasus formally equal, and Stalin reluctantly agreed. See Terry Martin, "The Russification of the RSFSR," *Cahiers du monde russe* 39 (1998): 99–118.

46. Popov, *Desiatyi s"ezd,* p. 188; *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 486–487.

47. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 487–490.

48. Ibid., pp. 487–488. This tendency led the Ukrainian National Communist, Mykola Skrypnyk, to attack Stalin's constant "double bookkeeping," p. 572.

49. I. Lazovskii and I. Bibin, *Sovetskaia politika za 10 let po natsional'nomu voprosu v RSFSR* (Moscow-Leningrad: Gosudanstvennoe Izdatel'stvo, 1928), pp. 2–3.

50. Suny, *Revenge of the Past,* pp. 83–97; Edward Hallet Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–1923,* vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1950), pp. 314–339; Pipes, *Formation,* pp. 155–192.

51. Bolsheviks hostile to the affirmative action empire often interpreted it as no more than a foreign policy ploy. See *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 79, 221.

52. For a fuller discussion, see Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70 (1998): 813–861.

53. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 691–697; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 282–286.

54. These proof texts were collected in periodic editions of Stalin's *Marksizm i natsional'no-kolonialnyi vopros.*

55. As already mentioned, nationalities policy was discussed at the 1917, 1919, 1921, and 1923 party congresses. It was also discussed separately at the June 1923 TsK conference on nationalities policy, at several TsK plenums in 1923, and at numerous TsIK and VTsIK sessions. After June 1923, the content of nationalities policy was not discussed again in higher party bodies, with one exception: Kalinin's Politburo Commission on RSFSR Affairs in 1926–1927. On this commission, see Martin, "The Russification of the RSFSR." Issues of implementation were discussed, but nevertheless, from 1924 to 1938, nationalities policy was never an agenda point at a party congress and was only twice an agenda point at a TsK plenum: in 1924 on the national delimitation of Central Asia and in 1937 on the study of the Russian language. RTsKhIDNI 17/2/153 (1924): 123–132; 17/2/628 (1937): 120–123.

56. By June 1923, there were already two federal republics, five union republics, twelve autonomous republics, and eleven autonomous oblasts. The delimitation of Central Asia in 1924 would complete the process of forming national territories. For an overview of the establishment of national territories in this period, see the special issue of *Zhizn natsional'nostei,* no. 1 (1923); also Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question,* pp. 29–107. For the best case study we have of territorialization, see Daniel E. Schafer's essay in this volume and his dissertation, "Building Nations and Building States: The Tatar-Bashkir Question in Revolutionary Russia, 1917–1920" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1995).

57. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 693–694; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 283–284.

58. Tim Bottomore and Patrick Goode, eds., *Austro-Marxism* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978).

59. On this policy, see Terry Martin, "Borders and Ethnic Conflict: The Soviet Experiment in Ethno-Territorial Proliferation," *Jahrbucher fur Geshchicte Osteuropas* 47 (September 1999): 538–555.

60. This policy was not yet articulated in the 1919 Party Congress resolution. For early statements, see S. Dimanshtein, "Eshche malo opyta," *Zhizn natsional'nostei,* no. 33 August 31, 1919, p. 1; Stalin, "Politika sovetskoi vlasti po natsional'nomu voprosu v Rossii," in *Marksizm,* pp. 58–64.

61. *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* p. 284.

62. For instance, see Stalin's remarks at the Sixteenth Party Congress in 1930. *XVI s"ezd vsesoiuznoi kommunisticheskoi partii/b/. Stenograficheskii otchet* (Moscow, 1930), p. 54.

63. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 62; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* p. 102; *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 481–482.

64. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 62.

65. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* p. 482.

66. Stalin, *Marksizm,* p. 62.

67. The more important statement on national culture, however, was a 1925 speech by Stalin. Stalin, "O politicheskikh zadachakh universiteta narodov vostoka," in *Marksizm,* pp. 155–165.

68. Ibid., 158. Stalin's original formulation was actually "proletarian in content." It appears that the shift to the canonical "socialist in content" occurred after Stalin's use of the phrase at the June 1930 Party Congress. *Marksizm,* p. 194.

69. For an account of Soviet attacks on such customs, see Douglas Northrop's essay in this volume and his dissertation, "Uzbek Women and the Veil: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 1999). See also Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat: Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919–1929* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1974); Jörg Baberowski, "Stalinismus als imperiales Phänomen: die islamischen Regionen der Sowjetunion, 1920–1941," in Stefan Plaggenborg, ed., *Stalinismus: neue Forschungen und Konzepe* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 113–150; Shoshana Keller, "The Struggle against Islam in Uzbekistan, 1921–1941: Policy, Bureaucracy and Reality" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1995).

70. Herbert Gans, "Symbolic Ethnicity: The Future of Ethnic Groups and Cultures in America," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 2 (1979): 9–17. On the relationship of national culture and national identity, see the sophisticated analysis in K. Anthony Appiah, "Race, Culture, Identity: Misunderstood Connections" in K. Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutmann, *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 30–107.

71. "Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR," *Izvestiia TsK KPSS,* no. 9 (1989): 18–19; "Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR. Stenogramma," no. 3 (1991): 170–172; no. 5 (1991): 154–176; *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 576–582; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 107–110; *Natsional'nyi vopros na perekrestke mnenii,* pp. 86–91, 97–100.

72. "Iz istorii obrazovaniia SSSR. Stenogramma," no. 4 (1991): 169–176; no. 5 (1991): 154–176; *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* pp. 649–661; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 260–272.

73. However, they were granted different governmental structures, including their

own sovnarkom, several independent commissariats, and in Ukraine even their own Politburo. After Stalin's death, this would prove important.

74. Stalin, *Marksizm,* pp. 42–43, 48–49; "Protiv federatsii" (1917), *Sochineniia,* vol. 3, pp. 23–28; Lenin, "Proekt platformy k 4 s"ezdu sots-dem latyshskogo kraia" (1913), PSS, vol. 23, pp. 209–210; "Tezisy po natsional'nomu voprosu," pp. 317–320.

75. "Protiv federatsii," p. 31.

76. Stalin's associates often joked about the "autonomy" of their national territories. Voroshilov began his letter to Stalin about the formation of the Chechen autonomous oblast in January 1923 with jocular congratulations: "I congratulate you on the formation of yet another autonomous territory!" The letter's editor sees this as evidence of an ironic attitude toward the Soviet nationalities policy as a whole, but Voroshilov goes on to express his concern that the local Communists did not understand the importance of promoting Chechen national cadres. Autonomy was a joke, but *korenizatsiia* was not. " 'Chechentsy, kak vse gortsy, ne khuzhe, ne luchshe'. Pis'mo K. E. Voroshilova I. V. Stalinu," *Istochnik,* no. 1 (1999): 66–67.

77. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* p. 694.

78. Ibid., p. 694; *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* p. 285; "Iz istoriia obrazovanii SSSR. Stenogramma," no. 3 (1991): 178–179.

79. These attempts are discussed in chapter 4 of Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001).

80. For an excellent case study, see the successful lobbying efforts of the Kazakh government to get central approval for the construction of the Turkestano-Siberian railway. Matthew Payne, "Turksib: The Building of the Turkestano-Siberian Railroad and the Politics of Production during the Cultural Revolution, 1926–1931" (Ph.D. diss, University of Chicago, 1995). See also R. W. Davies, *Crisis and Progress in the Soviet Economy, 1931–1933* (London: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 485–487.

81. Gerhard Simon, *Nationalism and Policy toward the Nationalities in the Soviet Union* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1991), p. 297. On this issue, see Alec Nove and J. A. Newth, *The Soviet Middle East: A Model for Development?* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967); Donna Bahry, *Outside Moscow: Power, Politics and Budgetary Policy in the Soviet Republics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); Donna Bahry and Carol Nechemias, "Half Full or Half Empty? The Debate over Soviet Regional Equality," *Slavic Review* 40 (1981): 366–383; Gertrude Schroeder, "Nationalities and the Soviet Economy" in Lubomyr Hajda and Mark Beissinger, eds., *The Nationalities Factor in Soviet Politics and Society* (Boulder Colo.: Westview, 1990), pp. 43–72; I. S. Koropeckyj, *Location Problems in Soviet Industry before World War II* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1971).

82. See Martin, "Borders and Ethnic Conflict."

83. *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 141–156. *Natsional'nyi vopros na perekrestke mnenii,* pp. 141–150.

84. Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Hroch's paradigm has been utilized extensively by Andreas Kappeler, "The Ukrainians of the Russian Empire, 1860–1914," in Andreas Kappeler, ed., *The Formation of National Elites* (New York: New York University Press, 1991), pp. 105–132; Kappeler, *Russland als Vielvoelkerreich: Entstehung, Geschichte, Zerfall* (Munich: Beck, 1992): pp. 183–191. See also Robert J. Kaiser, *The Geography of Nationalism in Russian and the USSR* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 33–93.

85. Lenin, "Kriticheskie zametki," p. 132.

86. RTsKhIDNI 374/27s/1709 (1929): 50. See also D. Lebed, *Sovetskaia Ukraina i natsional'nyi vopros za piat' let* (Kharkov: Derzhavne Vyd-vo Ukrainy, 1924).

87. Lebed, *Sovetskain Ukraina,* p. 50.

88. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* p. 604.

89. Ibid., pp. 693–694. See also "Zanozy v nashei natsional'noi politike," *Zhizn natsional'nostei,* nos. 6–7 (1922): 1–2.

90. See Stalin's comments on the "leftists," *Tainy natsional'noi politiki,* pp. 83–84.

91. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* p. 694.

92. RTsKhIDNI 558/1/4490 (1929): 9.

93. *Dvenadtsatyi s"ezd,* p. 613. Presumably Bukharin also authored the Pravda editorial that appeared the same day as his speech (April 24, 1923), which called for "the greatest concessions and self-sacrifice on the part of the former Great Power nation—even at this price we must purchase the fullest trust, support and brotherly solidarity from the formerly oppressed nations." *Natsional'nyi vopros na perekrestke mnenii,* p. 178.

94. Ibid., p. 651.

95. This does not mean Russians were discriminated against in any other aspect or that their life opportunities were worse than those of non-Russians. All nationalities had equal legal rights. The expression of national hatred was punished. Moreover, as individuals, Russians were often in a better position, since the central government worked in Russians as did the best universities.

96. Galanter, *Competing Equalities*; Thomas Sowell, *Preferential Policies: An International Perspective* (New York: Morrow, 1990); Nathan Glazer, *Affirmative Discrimination: Ethnic Inequality and Public Policy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987; 1st ed, 1975); Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), pp. 653–680.

97. India is usually credited with having invented affirmative action, but Indian affirmative action programs for national minorities (The Scheduled Tribes) began in 1951. Galanter, *Competing Inequalities,* pp. 18–40.

98. Affirmative action for workers is discussed in Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union, 1921–1934* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); and Fitzpatrick, "Stalin and the Making of a New Elite," in *The Cultural Front: Power and Culture in Revolutionary Russia* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp. 149–182. Labor policies toward women are discussed briefly in Wendy Z. Goldman, *Women, the State & Revolution: Soviet Family Policy and Social Life, 1917–1936* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 109–118. These Soviet programs were established at the same time as the first caste-based affirmative action programs in pre-independence India, which were adopted in the 1920s and 1930s. Galanter, *Competing Inequalities,* pp. 18–40.

99. A. Nove and J. A. Newth, *The Soviet Middle East: A Model for Development?* (London: Praeger, 1967), p. 122.

100. Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrot, eds., *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y.: Sharpe, 1997). Karen Barkey and Mark Von Hagen, eds., *After Empire. Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997).

101. Mark Beissinger, "The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11 (1995): 149–151.

102. Ibid., pp. 154–158.

103. Prerevolutionary class identities were likewise preserved as Soviet categories with their valence likewise reversed; see Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia," *Journal of Modern History* 65 (December 1993): 745–770.

104. Lenin, "Imperializm, kak vysshaia stadiia kapitalisma" (1916), PSS, vol. 27, pp. 299–426.

105. The key resolution blaming the grain requisitions crisis in Ukraine and Kuban on the implementation of Ukrainization was passed on December 14, 1932. Two further resolutions followed on the next two days. *Holod 1932–1933 rokiv na Ukraini. Ochyma istorykiv, movoiu dokumentiv* (Kyiv: 1990), pp. 291–294. RTsKhIDNI 17/3/911 (16.12.32): protokol 126, punkt 1; 17/3/911 (15.12.31): protokol 126, punkt 50. For a detailed analysis of the origins and causes of this abrupt policy shift, see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, particularly chapter 7.

106. For instance, Bohdan Nahaylo and Victor Swoboda, *Soviet Disunion: A History of the Nationalities Problem in the USSR* (New York: Hamilton, 1990), pp. 60–80.

107. The evidence for this claim can be found in Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, chapter 9.

108. Martin, "The Russification of the RSFSR." The number thirty-five includes the union and autonomous republics and autonomous oblasts as of 1938. Several of these (Kalmyk, Chechen-Ingush, Kalmyk, Crimean) were abolished in 1944 when their indigenous inhabitants were deported. With the exception of the Crimean ASSR, they were restored shortly after Stalin's death.

109. See Terry Martin, "Modernization or Neo-Traditionalism? Ascribed Nationality and Soviet Primordialism," in David Hoffman and Yanni Kotsonis, eds., *Russian Modernity: Politics, Practices, Knowledge* (New York: St. Martin's, 2000). See also Mark Saroyan, *Minorities, Mullahs, and Modernity: Reshaping Community in the Former Soviet Union* (Berkeley: International and Area Studies, University of California at Berkeley, 1997), pp. 135–166.

110. Georgia and Armenia are exceptions where the native language lost some ground to Russian but remained dominant. Otherwise, these generalizations summarize a complex reality that varied from republic to republic. For more detail, see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, chapter 9.

111. I say "most" non-Russians, since the 1930s also witnessed the emergence of the category of "enemy nations" who were targeted for deportation, arrest, and, in 1937–1938, mass execution. Prior to World War II, this category embraced "diaspora" nationalities, and during World War II it spread to other "indigenous" nationalities, such as the Chechen, Ingush, Kalmyks, Crimeans, Kabardinians and several other small nationalities. Martin, "The Origins of Ethnic Cleansing"; N. F. Bugai, *L. Beriia–I. Stalinu: "Soglasno vashemu ukazaniiu . . ."* (Moscow: Airo-xx, 1995).

112. *XVII s"ezd*, p. 32.

113. The phrase "first among equals" is used in Peredovaia, "RSFSR," *Pravda*, no. 31 February 1, 1936, p. 1. On the growing promotion of a "russocentric" ideology in the 1930s and after, see David Brandenberger's essay in this volume and his dissertation, "The 'Short Course' to Modernity: Stalinist History Textbooks, Mass Culture and the Formation of Popular Russian National Identity, 1934–1956" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1999).

114. On the question of linguistic russification, see Peter Blitstein's essay in this volume.

115. For a more detailed discussion of the causes of the rehabilitation of the Russian nationality, see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire,* chapters 7, 10, 11.

116. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire,* chapter 11; Lowell Tillett, *The Great Friendship: Soviet Historians on the Non-Russian Nationalities* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

117. On the precursors to the Friendship in late imperial Russia and the early Soviet Union, see Joshua Sanborn's essay in this volume.

118. For evidence that Stalin did believe this and intervened to preserve Soviet affirmative action, see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire,* chapter 9.