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The Soviet Design for a World Language

BY ELLIOT R. GOODMAN

THE Soviet grand design to transform the present nation-state system into a Soviet World State envisages a fundamental reshaping of national languages. The Stalinist era produced a number of striking and explicit statements which both foretold the doom of national languages and predicted the formation of a single world language.

Stalin's contributions were based upon assumptions implicit in Lenin's vision of a socialist world state. Lenin foresaw the assimilation of nations and the formation of a single proletarian world culture. This would presumably include a single world language, although Lenin's actual statements on national languages were confined to the Russian Empire. He approved of the widespread use of a single language, in this case Russian, in a multi-national state as a means of unifying and centralizing power in large state units, as would be required under socialism. Yet he opposed coercion to foist the use of Russian upon the non-Russian peoples. The natural development of economic intercourse, he felt, would cause everyone to adopt Russian voluntarily. Forcible Russification would only drive nations apart and thereby retard their assimilation. Each nation should therefore be given the freedom of using its own language as the first step towards the voluntary adoption of a single, common tongue.

This view, which Lenin advanced prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, underestimated the strength and tenacity of the national sentiment of the oppressed nations which were soon to be set free by the disintegration of the Russian Empire. The first few years after the revolution were consumed with the implementation of this first phase of development in which each nation rediscovered its own national traditions and language. At this point there was little talk of the second stage of development in which a common language would supersede the newly revitalized national languages. The suggestion of one common language for the Soviet Union was condemned as a deviation of Great Russian chauvinism, and even

the very prospect of a single world language came under attack. At the height of this period, in May 1925, Stalin said:

Certain persons (Kautsky, for example) talk of the creation of a single universal language and of the dying away of all other languages in the period of socialism. I have very little faith in this theory of a single all-embracing language. Experience, in every case, does not speak for, but against this theory. Up until now the Socialist Revolution has not diminished, but increased the number of languages, since it has aroused the broad masses of humanity, pushed them onto the political stage and awakened a new life in a whole series of new nationalities, which were formerly unknown or almost unknown.¹

This statement was made upon the same occasion at which Stalin introduced the idea of a "culture, national in form and socialist in content." This formula was intended to set limits upon the further developments of nationalism, by standardizing the ideological content of each culture. Though it was somewhat less obvious, this formula also provided the basis for confining the development of national forms, among which language was the most important, to those modes of expression which Moscow chose to tolerate. The "national form" of a given culture, like its ideological content, was a highly manipulative concept, subject to official definition by Moscow. The handwriting on the wall now clearly warned that henceforth the integrative, not the disintegrative, phase of national development would gradually assume paramount importance. While in 1925 this formula was first directed at integrating the content of each national culture, within a decade it was also aimed at integrating the forms of national culture, including, first and foremost, the integration of national languages. Soon the vocabulary, syntax and even the script of these national languages were all subjected to violent and arbitrary alterations. Thus, when Stalin returned to the language discussion in 1929 and 1930, he no longer discredited the idea of a world language.

Stalin now claimed to revert to the Leninist tradition by acknowledging "Lenin's theses, namely, that with the victory of socialism on a *world scale*, national differences and national languages will begin to die away, that after this victory national languages will begin to be supplanted by one common language."² Though Stalin no longer scoffed at the emergence of a single world language,

¹Stalin, "O politicheskikh zadachakh Universiteta Narodov Vostoka," May 18, 1925, *Sochineniia*, VII, 138-9.

²Stalin, "Natsionalnyi vopros i Leninizm," March 18, 1929, *ibid.*, XI, 342 (italics, Stalin's).

neither did he accept Lenin's original assumptions on the integration of national cultures and languages. Before the revolution Lenin held that the assimilation of nations, which was already under way, would be greatly accelerated by the advent of socialism. Lenin would have rejected Stalin's assertion that national differences would only *begin* to die away *after* the world victory of socialism. Stalin sought to obscure this contradiction by again dragging Kautsky onto the stage. Kautsky was charged with assorted blunders, including the accusation that he "does not understand the mechanics of the development of nations and has no inkling of the colossal power of stability possessed by nations, and believes that the fusion of nations is possible long before the victory of socialism. . . ." Here Stalin obviously shifted the onus of the pre-revolutionary Bolshevik views onto Kautsky, since it is abundantly clear that, until hit by the actual impact of the revolution, neither Lenin nor Stalin had a real "inkling of the colossal power of stability possessed by nations."³

Stalin's 1925 condemnation of a world language was likewise explained away by a *leger de main*. It must have been evident, Stalin insisted, that his denial of a world language referred exclusively to the period of socialism in one country and not to the future period of world socialism. Actually, Stalin's 1925 statement had made no such distinction. But it was just this distinction upon which Stalin now wished to rest his theory of a world language. He looked forward to "the flowering of national cultures (and languages) in the period of the proletarian dictatorship in one country with the object of preparing the conditions for their dying away and merging into one common socialist culture (and into one common language) in the period of the victory of socialism in the entire world."⁴ This ultimate world language, Stalin indicated, "will be neither Great Russian nor German, but something new."⁵

Whatever this new world language might be, Stalin warned that it could not be hurried into existence immediately after the creation of a Soviet World State, "at one stroke, by decree from above."⁶ This world language must evolve without coercion, and through a gradual

³*Ibid.*, XI, 344.

⁴Stalin, "Politicheskii otchet Tsentralnogo Komiteta XVI S'ezda VKP(b)," June 27, 1930, *ibid.*, XII, 370.

⁵Stalin, "Zakluchitelnoe slovo po politicheskomu otchetu TsK XVI S'ezda VKP(b)," July 2, 1930, *ibid.*, XIII, 5.

⁶Stalin, "Natsionalnyi vopros," *ibid.*, XI, 347.

series of stages. "It is a mistake to think that the first stage of the period of the world dictatorship of the proletariat will mark the beginning of the formation of a single common language." At this point the hitherto oppressed national cultures and national languages will find full freedom of expression. Only in the second stage of world socialism, when a single world socialist economy has been successfully constructed, "only in that stage will something in the nature of a common language begin to take shape, for only in that stage will nations feel the need to have a common international language in addition to their own national languages, as a convenience of intercourse and as an aid to economic, cultural and political cooperation." In the beginning, Stalin anticipated that there might be several common international languages existing alongside national languages. The final stage will arrive when the world socialist economic system has fully consolidated its gains and, "when practice has convinced nations of the superiority of a common language over national languages." Only at this point will "national differences and languages begin to die away and make room for a world language, common to all nations."

These views, expressed in 1929, were fully upheld in the Soviet linguistics discussion of 1950, at which time Stalin further refined his description of the fate of national languages, both before and after the creation of a Soviet World State. "*Prior to the victory of socialism on a world scale . . . when national and colonial oppression remains in effect, when national isolation and mutual distrust of nations are reinforced by state differences,*" Stalin held that the crossing of two languages "does not yield some new, third language" but rather "one of the languages usually comes out the victor, whereas the other dies away. . . ." On the other hand, "*after the victory of socialism on a world scale . . . when national and colonial oppression has been liquidated, when national isolation and mutual distrust of nations have been replaced by mutual confidence and a drawing together of nations,*" then "national languages will have the opportunity freely to enrich one another on the basis of cooperation." At this point hundreds of national languages will fuse into zonal languages "and subsequently the zonal languages will fuse into one common international language, which, of course, will be neither German, nor Russian, nor

¹*Ibid.*, XI, 348-9.

English, but a new language which has absorbed the best elements of the national and zonal languages.”⁸

It would seem that the limits of this inquiry had been reached, as this view offers no prospect of further identifying this future world language. Continued probing would be pointless if, in fact, the Soviet leadership considered all the existing major languages on a par, as being equally eligible to shape the form of this future common world tongue. But closer examination shows that this is clearly not the case. In the struggle for world supremacy between East and West the roles of Russian and English are cast in entirely different lights.

The Soviet regime claims that “American colonizers, aspiring to world domination, are seeking to have English recognized as the world language which should replace all other languages.” Accordingly, the American motto “E Pluribus Unum” means “from the separate sovereign states to a single world government, with English as the single world language.”⁹ To facilitate this conquest “American linguists are hastily preparing plans for the ‘simplification’ of the English language in order to make it the single international tongue.” These efforts are producing “the poisonous bacteria of cosmopolitanism” intended to “destroy a feeling of national dignity in the soul,” and thereby aid the capitulation of nations to the “American imperialists.”¹⁰ But such strivings will be of no avail, since an attempt “to force the English language upon all peoples” is sure to meet with “utter failure and defeat.”¹¹

The prospect for Russian is depicted in precisely the opposite manner. Russian is credited with a constant accretion of strength through its supposedly voluntary adoption by an ever-mounting number of non-Russian peoples. This process began in the multi-lingual Soviet Union and has spread to large areas outside the Soviet Union.

During the 1920’s attempts to force the adoption of Russian among non-Russian peoples in the U.S.S.R. were officially condemned out of consideration for the newly aroused sensitivities of

⁸Stalin, “Otvét Tovarishchu A. Kholopovy,” July 28, 1950, *Marksizm i voprosy yazykoznaniia* (Moscow, 1950), pp. 45-7 (italics, Stalin’s).

⁹T. P. Lomtev, “I. V. Stalin o razvitii natsionalnykh yazykov v epokhu sotsializma,” *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 2 (1949), pp. 136-7.

¹⁰A. Yelistratova, “Izmenniki naroda,” *Literaturnaia gazeta*, March 2, 1949, p. 2.

¹¹M. Kammari, “An Outstanding Contribution to the Science of Marxism,” *New Times*, No. 26, June 27, 1951, p. 7.

the non-Russian nationalities. But even this earliest period was marked by relapses into Russification. For example, from 1920 until August, 1923, the Soviet government sanctioned the application in the Ukraine of Lebed's so-called "theory of the struggle of two cultures." In the Ukraine Russian was widely spoken in the cities, while Ukrainian was the language of the countryside. Under the cover of proposing a natural struggle between them, this theory was really intended to produce the victory of Russian over Ukrainian, on the grounds that the future belonged to the Russian-speaking urban proletariat which possessed a culture superior to the backward-looking, Ukrainian-speaking peasantry.

The rediscovery of the various national languages in the Soviet Union came as a mixed blessing to these national minorities, since it often had the curious effect of elevating the importance of Russian among the non-Russian peoples. Instead of creating a common language for ethnically-related peoples who were hitherto largely illiterate, Soviet policy elevated dialects into languages, even, if need be, at the cost of inventing new, written alphabets. This conscious policy of fragmentation might be explained, in large part, by the fear that large, cohesive blocs of non-Russians, speaking a common tongue, would present a formidable threat to the centralized, Russian-based dictatorship. The treatment of the Moslem peoples of the Soviet Union provides the clearest illustration of this policy of parcelization. In an effort to avoid the creation of a large Moslem state in the Volga-Urals region, the Soviet regime created separate Bashkir and Tatar A.S.S.R.'s, and enlarged upon the somewhat artificial distinction between the Bashkir and Tatar languages. Moreover, it was forbidden to write these languages in the Arabic script, since this would have encouraged Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ties, which were far more deadly sins than a tie between the Bashkirs and the Tatars. This pattern of linguistic development was later repeated among the numerous peoples of Turkic stock in Central Asia and in the Northern Caucasus. While non-Russian languages were discovered by the score, their development was carefully channelled and their divergencies inflated so that no new, regional non-Russian language could evolve among them. The logical result of this policy was that Russian increasingly became the *lingua franca* of these non-Russian peoples.

Stalin expressed opposition to Russian as an official state language for the last time in 1930. Those who urged its adoption were still condemned as Great Russian chauvinists. But the trend towards

Great Russian chauvinism was, in fact, well under way. The tempo of introducing the study of Russian among non-Russian peoples was increasingly stepped up during the 1930's, and on March 13, 1938 the Soviet government and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union jointly decreed the obligatory teaching of Russian in all non-Russian schools.¹²

The latter half of the 1930's also marked the switch-over from the use of the Latin to the Cyrillic (or Russian) alphabet for the languages of numerous non-Russian peoples. During the 1920's the Latin script was introduced on the theory, most acutely expressed by Trotsky, that Western Europe and not Russia would be the heart of the Soviet World State. It was assumed that the future world language would be based upon Western European, rather than Russian, roots. Furthermore, the adoption of the Latin, instead of the Cyrillic script within the Soviet Union, avoided the odious connotation of Great Russian chauvinism, an attitude which was still officially condemned during this early period.

Stalin's counterattack in the linguistic field was delayed until the middle 1930's. As late as 1933 a Soviet source reported that "72 nationalities of the U.S.S.R., formerly without alphabets, had received them, of which 64 were based on the Latin script."¹³ Many more languages previously written in another script, for example in Arabic, had also been Latinized. Within a decade virtually a complete transformation occurred in all these languages. Only a few peoples who had for centuries maintained a vigorous literary language in a non-Cyrillic script (the Georgians, Armenians, Finns, Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians) were left untouched. Yiddish was also unaffected, but the Yiddish press in the Soviet Union was almost completely closed down by 1949. All the remaining non-Russian languages in the Soviet Union went through a second painful metamorphosis, this time as part of an undisguised program of Russification. The Soviet leaders frankly stated that the purpose of forcing these non-Russian peoples to adopt the Cyrillic script was to

¹²A. M. Danev, ed., *Narodnoe obrazovanie: osnovnye postanovleniia, prikazy i instruktsii* (Moscow, 1948), p. 86. Isolated Union Republics, such as the Ukraine and Belorussia, made the teaching of Russian compulsory before this. In the Ukraine, for example, Russian was obligatory as early as 1923: see Harold R. Weinstein, "Language and Education in the Soviet Ukraine," *The Slavonic Year-Book, American Series*, I (1941), 144-8.

¹³L. Slavin and T. Khodzhaev, "Natsionalnye raiony na rubezhe dvukh piatiletok," *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 3 (March 1934), pp. 177-8.

accelerate their learning of Russian and broaden the influence of Russian culture. The Soviet press abounded in expressions of gratitude for the "service" which this second alphabet reform had rendered. Thus a group of Kirgiz declared: "The adoption of a new alphabet based on the Russian script has played a tremendous role in elevating the culture of the Kirgiz people by bringing them into closer association with the Great Russian culture."¹⁴

The Estonian philologist, Alo Raun, summarized the impact of this linguistic Russification. "Examining any one of the languages of the Soviet Union, e.g., Mordvinian, one is shocked by the discovery that it swarms with Russian words, and that often only the suffixes are Mordvinian. The word order, use of cases, etc., are a poor imitation of Russian."¹⁵

Soviet authorities, far from objecting to this characterization of their policy, only found fault with those who obstructed its implementation. A long article in *Voprosy Filosofii* in 1949 complained of resistance from "local bourgeois nationalists," who were accused of "masquerading as defenders of their national language." Their treachery "consisted first of all, in attempts to eliminate international and particularly sociopolitical terminology, and to replace it by a provincial, nationalist terminology." That is, the non-Russian languages of the Soviet Union were required to use international terms of foreign origin in the form in which they have been adopted in the Russian language. Secondly, these bourgeois nationalists

sought to use foreign languages as their models, persistently trying to minimize the importance of the Russian language. Belorussian and Ukrainian nationalists injected their native speech with elements of the Polish gentry's speech; the Moldavian nationalists tried to drag into their language aristocratic Rumanian drawing-room words; and the Latvian nationalists, carrying out the orders of the German gentry, attempted to Germanize their tongue. The bourgeois nationalists of our Eastern Republics injected their native languages with Persian-Arabic and Turkish elements. In essence, this was a policy of betrayal of national interests, a policy of cosmopolitanism.

Only by using the Russian language as their model could these non-Russians defend their "national interests." Russian, of course, had no objectionable history, since it had never been the language

¹⁴"Velikomu vozhdzu sovetского naroda I. V. Stalinu, ot Kirgizskogo naroda," *Pravda*, Feb. 1, 1951, p. 2.

¹⁵Alo Raun, "National in Form, Socialistic in Content," *Ukrainian Quarterly*, VI, No. 2 (Spring, 1950), 115-6. See also Ilarion Ohienko, "Ukrainian Literary Language in the U.S.S.R.," *ibid.*, VI, No. 3 (Summer 1950), 229-40.

of the Tsars and the Russian gentry who gathered in their drawing rooms to plot the forcible Russification of the Belorussian, Ukrainian, Polish, and other languages! And how could one resist the obvious logic of the assumption that Russian was the natural model for the languages of the peoples of Central Asia rather than Persian, Arabic, or Turkish! A third and final accusation rested on the charge that "bourgeois nationalists artificially bred local words and forms to obstruct the penetration of Russian words and forms."¹⁶ Again, was it not obvious that the use of local words and forms in a non-Russian language was "artificial," while the use of Russian words and forms was "natural"? In contrast to the petty, narrow-minded mentality nourished by the non-Russian languages, Russian was portrayed in the following manner:

The Great Russian language has become the source of enrichment and flowering for the different national languages. . . . The Russian language is great, rich and mighty. It is the instrument of the most advanced culture in the world. From its inexhaustible treasures, the national languages of the U.S.S.R. draw a life-giving elixir. . . .¹⁷

This Soviet conception of the role of Russian, both within the U.S.S.R., and in the development of a world language, found its theoretical justification by means of a distorted interpretation of the works of Nicolai Ya. Marr, the father of Soviet linguistics. Marr died in 1934, leaving a collection of linguistic theories, many of which rested upon arbitrary assumptions lacking proof or consistency. In broad outline, Marr postulated the operation of a single world glottogonic, or language-forming process. Though all languages are related, they are divided into four classes, representing four chronological strata, or stages of development. Those languages which somehow got stuck at a lower level are without a future, while those in the fourth stage of development represent the material for a future world language. Russian was placed in this highest stage along with all Indo-European languages. Marr considered language as an element in the Marxist superstructure, dependent upon the economic base of society. Consequently, the creation of a single world socialist economy was expected to produce a single world language. Just as this base might be changed by force, so Marr thought the linguistic superstructure should be impelled to develop towards its ultimate goal.

¹⁶Lomtev, "I. V. Stalin," *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 2 (1949), p. 135.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 136.

"Mankind, proceeding towards economic unity and a classless society, cannot help applying artificial means, scientifically worked out, in order to accelerate this broad process."¹⁸

Marr considered himself a strict Marxist who put class above nation. He was interested in the evolution of a future proletarian world language, rather than in the aggrandizement of any single national language, Russian included. But the elements of Marr's theories, and the vagueness with which they were stated lent themselves to easy perversion by subsequent Soviet linguists, who began a systematic glorification of the Russian language, in the guise of Marr's linguistic theories. We have already indicated the application of "artificial means" to favor the victory of Russian in the Soviet Union, where Russian was clearly considered the language of a chosen people who would assume the directing role in the future socialist world society. From this it was an easy step to assert that Russian would likewise be the future world language. This conclusion was explicitly drawn by a Soviet writer in January, 1949. It was held that "one world language has replaced another time and again throughout the thousands of years of the history of mankind," with the economic base of each era raising a different language to world supremacy.

Latin was the language of the ancient world and the early middle ages. French became the language of the ruling classes in the feudal era. It was maintained for a long time together with feudal traditions and customs, and became the language of international diplomacy. English became the world language of capitalism. . . . Looking to the future we see that the Russian language is the world language of socialism.¹⁹

This simple, schematic view appeared to have been upset by Stalin's abrupt intervention in the Soviet linguistics discussion in the summer of 1950. Stalin unceremoniously provided Marr with a second funeral—this time, an ideological burial. Suddenly Soviet philologists "discovered" that the basis of their entire linguistic work had been unscientific. What caused this disavowal of Marr, and what effect did this have both upon the Soviet concept of a world language, and upon the role of Russian in the development of this world language?

The denunciation of Marr was explained first of all, on the grounds

¹⁸Cited in A. Chikobava, "O nekotorykh voprosakh sovetskogo yazykoznaniia," *Pravda*, May 9, 1950, p. 3.

¹⁹D. Zaslavsky, "Velikii yazyk nashei epokhi," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, Jan. 1, 1949, p. 3.

that his theories had introduced such chaos into Soviet linguistics that most serious linguistic work had been brought to a standstill. No doubt there was considerable justification in this complaint. These newly-found critics of Marr's followers charged that the literacy of the non-Russian peoples had unmistakably suffered as a result of the crude attempts to Russify the non-Russian languages.

N. Ya. Marr's followers completely ignored the specific features of national languages and, in an oversimplified and vulgarized manner, interpreted the leading role of the Russian language in the development of national languages as a mechanical hybridization of the two. The practical results of such a vulgarized approach to the development of national languages was the discarding from some alphabets of a number of letters which reflected phonetic peculiarities of the national languages. . . . This harmful approach, involving a break with the existing laws of the national languages, led to anarchy in orthography, to innumerable difficulties in mastery of the grammar of the native language, in the work of local newspapers and magazines, etc.²⁰

But the damage was not confined to non-Russian languages, since these methods had also led to an estrangement of these languages from Russian. "The 'drawing together' of languages, recommended by the followers of N. Ya. Marr, actually only hampers their real harmonizing Destroying historically developed rules of pronunciation does not make it easier, but harder for the working people to master new words borrowed from Russian, i.e., yields results contrary to the aims proclaimed by the supporters of the 'new teaching' on language."²¹ These critics did not object to the principle of altering these non-Russian languages so as to draw them closer to Russian, but only to the use of harsh and clumsy methods which had, in fact, obstructed the attainment of this goal. This sudden abuse of Marr was a tactical concession to the development of non-Russian languages, but it was by no means clear-cut defeat for the Russian language. Subsequent comments made it clear that Russian was not expected to lose its dominant position, nor was the idea of its eventual victory disowned. These goals would be pursued, but with more caution and by more skillful means.

The arbitrary interference with the non-Russian languages had proceeded from the assumption that language was part of the superstructure and therefore subject to artificial manipulation. Stalin now attacked this practice by denying the premise that language

²⁰A. E. Mordinov, "O razvitií yazykov sotsialisticheskikh natsii v SSSR," *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 3 (1950), p. 82.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 83.

was part of the superstructure, or for that matter, that language was even a class phenomenon. This "revelation" had long been a commonplace assumption among those who did not pretend to understand the mysteries of dialectical materialism, but for good Marxists this came as a blow. Language, Stalin announced

was created not by any class, but by all society, by all classes of society, by the efforts of hundreds of generations. . . . Language is the product of a whole series of epochs, in the course of which it takes shape, is enriched, develops, and is polished. A language therefore exists immeasurably longer than any base or any superstructure.

Stalin said that Pushkin's language "has been preserved in all essentials as the basis of modern Russian," and that "the Russian language has remained essentially what it was before the October Revolution."²² Stalin belatedly did for language what he had previously done for the teaching of history, namely: assert the interests of nation above class. Far from destroying the prestige of the Russian language, he was fortifying it by drawing upon the endless stream of historical memories and traditions of Russian nationalism.

There were doubtless other unspoken reasons for the renunciation of Marr's theories. Not only did their distorted application provoke an unprofitable resistance among the non-Russian peoples in the Soviet Union, but they also served to insult many nations outside the U.S.S.R. In Marr's four stages of linguistic development, for example, Chinese was permanently frozen at the lowest level. The embarrassment which this held for Soviet relations with Red China is obvious.

Moreover, Marr's repudiation of comparative philology contradicted the development of Pan-Slavic studies in the East European satellite states of Slavic origin, thus hindering their Russification.

What effect did the discrediting of Marr's theories have upon the Soviet concept of a world language? Chikobava, developing the newly accepted position, noted that "Marr expressed himself in favor of a single common language for future mankind. This is the only matter of principle on which, it would seem, Academician N. Ya. Marr's views are in accord with the theses of Marxism-Leninism." The prospect of a single world language was still upheld, but the "dying away of national languages and the formation of a

²²Stalin, "Otnositelno Marksizma v yazykoznanii," *Marksizm i voprosy*, pp. 4-7.

single common world language will take place gradually, without any 'artificial means' invoked to 'accelerate' this process."²³

This ban on "artificial means," it should be recalled, applies solely to the period *after* the creation of the Soviet World State. Prior to that time Stalin predicted that national languages would engage in a mortal struggle in which "one of the languages usually comes out the victor, whereas the other dies away. . . ." ²⁴ "Such was the case, for instance, with the Russian language, with which the languages of a number of other peoples mixed in the course of historical development, and which always emerged the victor." The effect which this struggle had upon the Russian language was to enlarge its vocabulary, "but this not only did not weaken, but on the contrary enriched and strengthened the Russian language."²⁵ Stalin gave no indication that Russian would not continue to emerge the victor in future struggles which are predicted up until the very moment of the creation of the Soviet World State.

The Soviet theorists have already clearly nominated Russian as a zonal language with unlimited prospects of expansion. "In the formation of a zonal language common to many nations, Russian will undoubtedly play the decisive role of many socialist nations. With the appearance of new socialist nations the world-historic role and influence of the Russian language will steadily increase."²⁶ This view, expressed in 1949, does not seem to have been repudiated in the linguistics discussion of 1950. Following this discussion the importance of Russian was affirmed both within and beyond the borders of the Soviet Union.

The role of the Russian language in the development of the languages and cultures of all the peoples of the U.S.S.R. constantly increases. . . . Russian has therefore become an *international language* for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. But the significance of the Russian language is not limited to this. The Great Russian language is becoming a second native language for the liberated peoples of the countries of the New Democracies as well as for the Chinese People's Republic. . . .

In our time the Russian language is becoming the most popular and widespread language in the world. The process of steady growth of the world significance of the Russian language reflects the vanguard role of our country . . . in the struggle for the liberation of all mankind from the yoke of exploitation and oppression.²⁷

²³Chikobava, "O nekotorykh . . ." *Pravda*, May 9, 1950, p. 3.

²⁴Stalin, "Otvet Tovarishchu . . ." *Marksizm i voprosy*, pp. 45-7.

²⁵Stalin, "Otnositelno Marksizma," *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁶Lomtev, "I. V. Stalin," *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 2 (1949), p. 140.

²⁷Mordinov, "O razviti . . ." *ibid.*, No. 3 (1950), p. 91.

The satellite states duly echoed this glorification of Russian. The Czechoslovak press supported the demand of "giving the Russian language the same rights as our own Czech and Slovak languages. . . . It is for us the world language . . . the language of world-wide brotherhood."²⁸ And Chervenkov, the Premier of Bulgaria, hailed Russian as the language of "the richest and most outstanding culture in the whole world. This imbues the Russian language with a world-historic significance and makes a knowledge of it vital to every advanced fighter for the happiness of his people."²⁹ This bowing and scraping by provincial satraps before the mother tongue of Moscow is a meaningful part of a larger design, for Stalin was quite aware of the importance of a single language in the process of building a world empire. He specifically noted that "the empires of Cyrus or Alexander the Great or of Caesar and Charles the Great . . . were transitory and unstable military and administrative unions. These empires not only did not have, but they could not have a single language common to the whole empire and understood by all members of the empire."³⁰

It would seem that there is a fundamental contradiction in Stalin's position on a world language. On the one hand, Stalin declared that the ultimate world language will be neither German, nor Russian, nor English, but something new. On the other hand, Russian has been accorded a favored and privileged position denied to all other major languages. The Soviet leadership has already designated Russian, but *only* Russian, as one of the world's zonal languages. Some of the offensive, chauvinistic overtones of the campaign to force the adoption of Russian by non-Russian peoples may have been eliminated by the benign assurance that the ultimate world language will not be Russian. But along with this goes the expectation that Russian will continually fight and conquer as many non-Russian languages as possible during the period before the victory of the Soviet World State. Theoretically, Russian is only supposed to enter into open combat with other languages in the arena of national oppression and inequality, that is, in the non-Soviet world. Within the Soviet world, where, by definition, national harmony

²⁸"What the Russian Language Meant and Means to Us," *Slovánský přehled*, No. 7/8 (1949); cited in *News from Behind the Iron Curtain*, II, No. 10 (Oct. 1953), 41.

²⁹"Vsemirno-istoricheskoe znachenie Russkogo yazyka," *Pravda*, Oct. 1, 1952, p. 4.

³⁰Stalin, "Otnositelno Marksizma," *Marksizm i voprosy*, p. 10.

reigns supreme, the struggle for the domination of one language over others has been replaced by the mutual enrichment of one language by another. Yet it is evident that this "mutual enrichment" has been largely a one-way proposition in which Russian has been elevated, consciously and conspicuously, above all other languages.

This encouragement of the victory of Russian both within and beyond the confines of the Soviet world has definite implications for a future world language. If Russian gains a constant series of victories over non-Russian languages in the process of subduing non-Soviet nations to Soviet rule, then at the moment of the creation of the Soviet World State, Russian will have reached an almost impregnable position of universal supremacy. Nor should this position diminish after the Soviet World State has come into operation. The "mutual confidence" and "national equality" among nations, such as is claimed for the present Soviet world, will then have reached a universal scope. Behind a smoke screen of verbiage about the "mutual enrichment" of languages, Russian will then be given the opportunity to triumph on a world scale.

Since the fate of national languages is intimately connected with the ultimate fate of nations, this would mean that the world would become the Russian nation writ large. Lenin predicted the assimilation of nations under the world rule of socialism, but Stalin developed this into the prospect of the assimilation of all nations by the Russian nation ruling a Soviet World State.