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SUCCESSION OR SUBVERSION: PROFESSIONAL STRATEGIES OF SOVIET CULTURAL REVOLUTION. THE CASE OF NIKOLAI MARR

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Nikolai Marr's controversial New Teaching on Language was officially recognized as Marxism in Soviet linguistics and gained the position of the dominant scientific authority and social power in the early 1930s. Although the phenomenon of Marrism is frequently analysed from different points of view, its sociological dimension remains under-researched. Specifically, it is the role of the institutional environment and social dynamics within the discipline of linguistics that deserves particular attention. Making use of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the scientific field and professional strategies, this paper examines the ascent of Marr's doctrine with regard to the institutional incentives and bureaucratic mechanisms employed for its promotion. Taking into account Marr's social and professional status, the article examines the ideological struggle in Soviet linguistics between Marrists and their opponents in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and argues that the succession and subversion strategies employed by the younger practitioners in the scientific field played a significant role in determining its outcome and securing the intellectual and social victory of Marrism, facilitated by the general socio-political atmosphere of Soviet Cultural Revolution.

Nikolai Iakovlevch Marr is perhaps the most famous (or infamous) figure in the history of Soviet linguistic scholarship. His unorthodox theory, broadly concerned with linguistics, ethnology, folklore and archaeology, which was first known as the Japhetic theory and later transformed into the New Teaching on Language, dominated Soviet linguistics for nearly twenty years as the officially endorsed Marxist linguistic doctrine, the legitimate Soviet discourse on language. Marrism and 'Stalinism' in Soviet linguistics have been the continuous foci of scholarly attention within different analytical frameworks. Specifically, Marr's doctrine has been examined as an application of Marxism in linguistics, as a utopian intellectual movement of Russian Modernism, as a socio-cultural phenomenon consistent with Soviet official practice of myth-making, and from a number of other perspectives, which have helped put an end to the previously wide-spread oversimplification claiming that a totally eccentric trend had inexplicably attained the position of intellectual hegemony in a major scholarly discipline and Soviet humanities in general.[1] It seems, however, that a particular aspect of Marrism has

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not so far received sufficient attention and calls for further investigation, namely, the importance of the social and institutional context which supported Marr's academic career and created the necessary incentives for the victorious accession of his doctrine. Indeed, Marr's prominent position as the head of a long list of scientific institutions provided his school with a strong bureaucratic footing, particularly in Leningrad. He was, to name just a few, the director of the State Academy of the History of Material Culture [*Gosudarstvennaia Akademiia istorii material'noi kul'tury (GAIMK)*], the Japhetic Institute (later renamed the Institute of Language and Thought [*Institut iazyka i myshleniia*]), the Institute of Nationalities [*Istoriko-lingvisticheskii institut natsional'nostei*], and of the State Public Library in Leningrad. Notably, Marr was given control of most of these institutions long before his teaching was proclaimed Marxist and gained monopoly in Soviet humanities. Moreover, there were serious constraints on it as well, particularly at the time of the Cultural Revolution, when Marr's brand of Marxism was openly confronted by its opponents, and Marr himself could easily be associated with the feared bourgeois threat. In short, the sociological dimension of the victory of Marrism appears to be particularly complex and important. The present article attempts to deal with this relatively neglected aspect of Marrism, arguing that the social dynamics within Soviet linguistic institutions played a decisive role in the formation of Marrist intellectual hegemony. In particular, it examines the strategies chosen by the practitioners in the discipline on Marr's side and among his opponents, and employed in order to maximise the agents' pay-offs in the professional, and by extension, ideological, struggle, whose goal was establishing an indisputable authority in Soviet discourse on language.

Pierre Bourdieu's sociology of science and, specifically, his 1975 article 'The Specificity of the Scientific Field and the Social Conditions of the Progress of Reason', provide a suitable analytical framework for our inquiry.[2] Bourdieu characterizes the scientific field as a 'system of objective relations between positions already won (in previous struggles), and the locus of a competitive struggle, in which the issue at stake is the monopoly of scientific authority, defined inseparably as technical capacity and social power. In other words, it is the monopoly of scientific competence, in the sense of a particular agent's socially recognized capacity to speak and act legitimately, in an authorized and authoritative way, in scientific matters' (Bourdieu: 257). The role of the institutional setting in the scientific struggle is pivotal as the authority obtained in previous struggles is objectivized in institutions, and commands the strategies and objective chances of the different agents in present struggles. The agents of scientific struggle are usually the dominant scholars, on the one hand, and the newcomers in the discipline, on the other, who use antagonistic discourse strategies, the *conservation* strategy for the dominant, and *succession* or *subversion* strategy for the new entrants in the professional field. The strategies tend to be, but are not necessarily, directly correlated to extra-disciplinary factors, as the general socio-cultural atmosphere may favour or hinder the activities within a relatively autonomous scientific field. Viewed from this perspective, Soviet linguistic discipline in the late 1920s and early 1930s emerges as a vivid example of a scientific field in the process of a generational change, where the struggle for scientific authority was exacerbated by intervening socio-political circumstances. This will be examined in detail at a later point, while at first it is important to look back briefly at Marr's career in Russian academic institutions from the late nineteenth century, in order to form a clearer sociological picture of the discipline and Marr's position in it at the time of the linguistic battles of the Cultural Revolution.

Marr's scholarly biography before 1917

Nikolai Marr (1864–1934) was the son of a Georgian mother and a Scottish naturalist, whose adventurous character brought him to Georgia in 1822. Marr's native language, Georgian, became his lifelong passion. When, in 1884, Marr left for St. Petersburg, his intention was to enrol in the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University and specialize in Georgian Studies in order 'to clarify the origin of the Georgian language'.[3] From this year, Marr's career and whole life were linked to the University. In 1891, he started teaching at the Department of Armenian Studies; in 1901, after completing his doctorate Marr received the title of professor; in 1911, was appointed dean of the Faculty of Oriental Languages and, in 1912, became an academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences. During these two decades of his academic activity, Marr's investigations were primarily concerned with literary and archaeological monuments of Georgian and Armenian culture. Indeed, the material culture of ancient Georgia and Armenia, as well as their linguistic diversity, had always been the focal point of his interest and would give birth to his Japhetic theory.[4] Marr collected, catalogued and published manuscripts in these languages (among them his classic work on the famous Vardan parables, for which Marr was awarded a golden medal of the Russian Geographic Society), conducted fieldwork expeditions, organized and supervised archaeological excavations at the site of the ancient Armenian capital at Ani, where he later established a museum. His findings were invaluable for the exploration and scientific popularization of Caucasian culture, and had brought him Europe-wide recognition as the leading specialist in the field of Caucasian studies. However, specifically the Japhetic component of Marr's ideas, which related the Georgian language to Semitic languages and established its genetic affinity to Armenian, had been met with scepticism even by the scholar's closest allies at the Faculty, such as Professor Viktor Rozen, one of the most influential Russian Orientalists of the time. When, after Rozen's death in 1908, the members of the Academy of Sciences proposed Marr as the new head of the Academy's Oriental section, the academicians expressed their general restrained attitude to the Japhetic theory in the following way: 'Do not expect that we are going to help you, but we will not obstruct you either'.[5]

Recent research has convincingly demonstrated that the much discussed idiosyncrasy of Marr's Japhetology was, in fact, remarkably consistent with a general neo-romantic movement in European intellectual life of the early twentieth century. Like Karl Vossler's school in Germany or the Italian Neolinguists, Marr proclaimed a crossed character of world languages. He insisted on a typological, not a genealogical, affinity of all languages, containing a common ancient Japhetic core, and called for a study of living languages in immediate interrelation with the cultural, social, political practices of the peoples who speak them. From a different point of view, it may be argued that the ideological pathos of the early variant of the Japhetic theory largely rested upon Marr's anti-colonial views. He rejected Indo-European linguistics for its obsession with European languages and 'dead' written sources, and ultimately came to accuse all European linguistic research of being inherently racist. Yet, on another level, Marr's nationalist (and later internationalist) ideas were formed in fierce opposition to the Russian imperial policy of linguistic and cultural colonialism that took particularly ugly forms in the Caucasus in response to local nationalism. Hence, the Japhetic theory was conceived and envisaged by its author as a counteraction to Eurocentrism and Great Russian chauvinism, on the one hand, and as a scientific realisation of Marr's strong

belief in the right of underprivileged nations 'to create history', on the other (Mikhankova: 75). From this standpoint, Marr's enrolment at St. Petersburg University provided him with the necessary intellectual and ideological stimuli for the evolution of his theory. In his own words, 'Japhetic theory is a teaching born from the heart of the Leningrad university environment' as a dialectic antithesis to the abstract linguistic science that at the turn of the century flourished in all Russian academies, universities, research institutes and scientific societies.[6] In his memoirs, Marr recalls a peculiar contradictory feature of St. Petersburg University — its ostensible goal of promoting the Great Russian ideology in politically oppressed nations of the Empire meant that the University in fact provided an institutional setting for ethnographic and linguistic research of these nations. From an ideological point of view, the Faculty of Oriental Languages became the stronghold of a certain type of oriental humanism, encouraged by such eminent scholars as the Orientalist Viktor Rozen and the famous philologist Aleksandr Veselovskii, which created a favourable atmosphere for the emergence of Japhetology (Marr 2002: 8–9). As we have already seen, as a member of the Faculty Marr had the opportunity to conduct extensive linguistic, ethnographic and archaeological research in the Caucasus, regularly publishing his findings in the University series *Theses and Investigations in Armenian–Georgian Philology* [*Tezisy i razyskaniia po armiano-gruzinskoi filologii*]. This professional journal, existing from 1900 to 1913, had greatly contributed to establishing a high academic status and Europe-wide prestige of Caucasian studies at the University of St. Petersburg. Marr was appointed dean of the Faculty of Oriental Languages in 1911 and, as many of his students admitted, had taken up the job with indefatigable energy, charisma, enthusiasm and sincere devotion to scholarship. Marr's temperament, frequently compared with an 'eternal geyser' and a 'volcano', had transformed the academic environment at the Faculty, making it more democratic, efficient and scientifically challenging.[7] Once again, if we leave aside the problematic issue of the theoretical value of Marr's Japhetic doctrine, his institutional service to the University appears to be decisively positive. He managed to enliven research and teaching at the Faculty, shake its administrative hierarchy, and do away with the privileged groups of students, such as future diplomats and attachés, who only attended language classes and were relieved of studying theoretical courses. At the same time, Marr always supported junior staff and talented young students, trying to help them also in financial terms. The Faculty's curriculum was reformed, mainly through the establishment of an introductory general course for all new students, which was a preparation for entry into the wide field of Caucasian and Oriental studies. In relation to Marr's expeditions to Ani, a new course, devoted to the history and culture of this ancient town, was introduced into the curriculum, involving compulsory archaeological fieldwork at the site. Moreover, unlettered Caucasian languages began to be studied at the Faculty (Golubeva: 29–30). Marr had also dreamt of merging the Historical–Philological and Oriental Faculties in order to bring the research of European and Oriental languages under the same institutional and methodological umbrella. In an attempt to facilitate this process, for the first time in the Faculty's history the dean began to invite specialists in non-Oriental linguistic disciplines to take part in the Faculty's formal scientific proceedings, such as *viva voce* of its postgraduate students (Mikhankova: 206). The merger of the Faculties did take place after the October Revolution in 1919, but, as we shall shortly see, academic considerations were not at this point its primary motivating force.

Apart from his position as the head of the Oriental Faculty and Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Marr was a member of a number of professional scientific societies in St. Petersburg and Moscow: the Russian Archaeological society (1889–1917), the Moscow

Archaeological society (1895–1913), the Russian Geographic society (1904–1913), and the Russian Palestinian Society (1917–1934). We can see, therefore, that in spite of the wide-spread scepticism towards his Japhetic theory and a few professional conflicts within the University, Marr's scholarship was highly regarded by the Russian academic community, ensuring his rapid rise through the levels of university administration. For all his anti-bourgeois fervour Marr was, in fact, a respectable St. Petersburg professor, an intellectual, who sought to advance high culture and support it with a secure institutional framework. These incentives, together with Marr's hope of spreading his Japhetic teaching to the masses, became the main factor that defined Marr's activity after the Revolution.

Building up the institutional framework

After the Revolution a deep structural reorganization of scientific institutions was commenced both in St. Petersburg and Moscow, and lasted for a few years. This was a 'complex and difficult' process with many successful and failed experiments, and a constant search for seemingly impossible solutions to a great number of problems (Golubeva: 34). After the February revolution a whole range of democratic measures was implemented in higher education, among them the resolution to admit female students to universities. By 1918, higher educational institutions had been declared open for all those who wished to enter, even without a diploma of secondary education.[8] For all his charismatic and flamboyant nature, Marr undoubtedly played an active role in the process of university restructuring. In the autumn of 1919, his long-term plan of uniting the Oriental and Historical-Philological faculties was realized; the two faculties, together with the Law faculty, were merged into a single Faculty of Social Sciences, and Marr was elected dean of this huge administrative unit. In their explanatory note, Marr and the Dean of the Historical-Philological faculty, Professor Sergei Zhebelev, had argued that the merger of their faculties would be theoretically and methodologically beneficial for both parties, and would expand their scientific horizons and determine novel approaches (Golubeva: 36). We may suggest, however, that the decision about the formation of the single Faculty of Social Sciences was taken not so much in response to the professors' request, but as a provision under the Party's programme to reorganize Soviet higher education along Marxist lines. The existing Philological, Historical and Law faculties were united into joint Faculties of Social Sciences, specifically directed towards educating and training a new Marxist elite. A shortage of qualified Communist cadres meant, however, that the 'bourgeois' professors continued to work at the new faculties and, moreover, retained leading scientific and administrative positions. When such a merger was effected in Moscow University, a 'bourgeois' professor was elected dean of the new Social Science school, while in St. Petersburg (Petrograd) the post was given to another non-Marxist professor, Marr, whose bias towards ethnography and linguistics could hardly satisfy the demand for a full-scale Marxist social science education (Fitzpatrick: 68). At the same time, Marr's election to the post implied not only his personal authority in St. Petersburg academic circles, but also his colleagues' soft recognition of the fact that, although controversial, his Japhetic theory was perhaps the only presentable alternative to the traditional scholarship, from which the newly formed Faculties of Social Sciences were supposed to be dissociated. This was, however, a short-lived and unsuccessful educational endeavour in scientific, as well as ideological terms. In 1925, the universities returned, more or less, to the old structural model, with traditional

faculty and departmental division. In Leningrad University, a new Faculty of Linguistics and Material Culture [*Fakul′tet iazykoznaniia i material′noi kul′tury, (Iamfak)*] emerged, incorporating the old Oriental department and definitively relying on Marr's platform, which had always been characterized by a primary interest in the elements of material culture and their interrelation with the evolution of language.

As before the Revolution, Marr's academic activity was not confined to St. Petersburg University. Between 1920 and 1929, he worked as head of the Leningrad Institute of Living Oriental Languages, where he taught Georgian ethnography, history and language. He was also chair of the linguistic section and the scientific board at the Institute for the Comparative Study of Literatures and Languages of the West and East [*Institut sravnitel′nogo izucheniia literatur i iazykov zapada i vostoka* (*ILIaZV*)], where he exerted much influence up to 1925. From 1917 until the end of his life, Marr was also head of the Caucasian Historical–Archaeological Institute and, from 1919, he worked as a permanent member of the All-Russian Commission for the protection of museums and artistic monuments. In Moscow, Marr took an important role in the reorganization of the Lazarev Insitute, which in 1921 became the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and employed Marr's curriculum of four-year courses in Armenian, Syrian, Arabic, Georgian, Persian and Turkish languages and cultures. In 1924, Marr was elected director of the Public Library in Leningrad and remained in this position until 1930.

Despite the many high-ranking administrative positions Marr occupied in the post-revolutionary years, it is still possible to say that only two institutions served him specifically as channels for the expansion and popularization of the Japhetic doctrine and, as such, were the dearest to the scholar's heart and mind. The first is the State Academy of the History of Material Culture [GAIMK] and the second is the Japhetic Institute. In April of 1919, Marr's efforts to reorganize the old Archaeological Commission were realized in a Narkompros decree on the establishment of GAIMK with Marr at its head. The main objective of the Academy, as that of the Commission before, was the study of the monuments of material culture. However, the principal difference between the Academy's activity and the work of the old Commission lay in the introduction of an ideological component, a new approach to objects of material culture as depositories of social and cultural content of their epochs: 'research of objects of material culture cannot be confined to their forms and technique, without considering in the first place their functions, their social and economic meaning and, consequently, the ideology of the given epoch' (cf. Mikhankova: 265–266). Marr tried to introduce this broadly dialectic approach, characteristic of his Japhetic teaching, as the leading research method in GAIMK, regardless of strong opposition on the part of many of its members. Another aspect of GAIMK's activity was concerned with the protection of museums and ancient monuments, along with the technological research of the objects of material culture. For this purpose, the Institute of Archaeological Technology was created under the aegis of GAIMK. Although the GAIMK, almost involuntarily, became the first institutional stronghold of Marr's Japhetology, the influence of the doctrine in Leningrad intellectual circles remained very limited and certainly could not compete with its author's personal authority. Paradoxically, between 1917 and 1920, when Marr occupied the highest administrative positions of any younger Soviet scholar, he remained utterly alone on his Japhetic battlefield. In 1920, he complained at a meeting of the Academy of Sciences that his old colleagues had all gone and that until new students could be educated, Japhetic linguistics was kept alive only by his own 'scarcely productive and solitary work' (Mikhankova: 270). In 1921, Marr applied to the Academy with a proposal to create a Japhetic institute, with the

specific purpose of organizing linguistic research and training a new generation of students under the framework of Japhetology. At first, the Institute occupied a room in Marr's flat and had only six permanent staff members, but it quickly became a major centre of intellectual life in Leningrad and attracted a lot of mature and younger scholars, who eagerly took part in its scientific work, regardless of their attitudes to Japhetology. For the time being, the Japhetic Institute served as a forum for a lively exchange of novel ideas, which flourished in post-revolutionary Leningrad in spite of all the economic and structural difficulties of the period.[9]

It is usually believed that the decisive shift from Japhetology towards the New Teaching on Language took place in 1923–1924. By that time, Marr's doctrine already had a strong institutional setting, which ensured bureaucratic and financial support for Japhetic research, and guaranteed the possibility of regular publishing and educating new specialists in the field. In other words, Marr's Japhetology became a proper scientific school with its own theoretical platform and powerful institutional instruments, used for its popularization and the increase of its symbolic power and scientific influence. From a Soviet point of view, Marr, with his pre-revolutionary academic achievements and a record of leftist sympathy, to some extent embodied the reconciliation between the new regime and the 'old' intellectuals. Moreover, the Japhetic theory itself was remarkably in tune both with the avant-garde epoch and the Soviet regime. Its iconoclastic, anti-bourgeois character, on the one hand, and its emphasis on a materialist interpretation of language phenomena, on the other, made Marr's teaching one of the possible candidates for a leading approach in a specifically Soviet brand of scholarship. When, after *Pravda*'s article 'The First Warning' [*Pervoe preduprezhdenie*] on 21 August 1922, the search for a materialist method in various academic disciplines began, the formulation of the New Teaching on Language came at precisely the right time to be considered a serious candidate in the quest for a materialist linguistics. The fact that intrinsically Marr's doctrine presented an inseparable unity of its theoretical and ideological components, being an example of the so called 'Promethean linguistics', gave it an *a priori* advantageous position in the increasingly politicized scientific field.[10] As far as the much-discussed issue of Marxism in the New Teaching of Language is concerned, we would limit ourselves here to a comment that its apparently problematic character, combining features of Hegelian idealist dialectics with vulgar sociologism, was far less extraordinary in nature than it may seem at first glance. We have seen that a slightly broader perspective allows us to establish several conspicuous links between Marr's theories and a number of pre-revolutionary ideological and intellectual trends. A modification of these trends in the post-revolutionary period is what Clark calls an 'ecology of revolution' (Clark: 219). She argues that when the New Teaching on Language was married to Marxism, it was an example of a general phenomenon in the ecology of revolution, as particular intellectual orientations found themselves in a new force field: 'Such an explanation does not necessarily imply repression, opportunism, or calculated moves' (Clark: 220). This is extremely apt with regard to the transformation of Japhetic theory into the New Teaching on Language.

A bourgeois intellectual in Soviet garb

Marr's in many respects questionable Marxism would, however, become a burning issue in the context of the Cultural Revolution's exacerbation of professional and ideological conflicts

in intellectual professions, all the more so because of the 'ideological vulnerability' caused by Marr's pre-revolutionary status and his privileged social position in Soviet society, which offered a potentially easy target for the cultural revolutionaries. With the advent of the Cultural Revolution and its militant spirit of fostering a new Soviet culture, free from the ideological shadows of the bourgeois past, Marr and his school faced very serious constraints, in spite of or, rather, because of their secure status throughout the 1920s.

Indeed, in terms of his social and institutional background, Marr, as an academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, was a problematic candidate for the construction of the proletarian culture. From a Soviet social perspective, he was rather a typical 'bourgeois intellectual' with leftist views, belonging to the 'traditional "caste" of intellectuals that absorbs new members and is not created by the class rising to power'.[11] Marr shared with other members of the professoriate 'a strong sense of their intrinsic worth and pride in their lineage' and always proudly used his pre-revolutionary professorial title. During NEP, as the New Teaching on Language was taking on its final shape, Marr continued to belong to the 'old' intellectual elite, which had acquired a high status in the new Soviet society and was patronized by the Party and the state.

In her outstanding analysis of the relationship between the so-called 'old' professors and Soviet power, Sheila Fitzpatrick notes that in the six years between the deportations of 1922 and the beginning of the anti-'bourgeois specialists' campaign in 1928, 'the old professors lived increasingly comfortable and relatively independent lives in their own sphere, dealt with the Soviet government as negotiators rather than petitioners, and enjoyed privileges which, *mutatis mutandis*, put them in much the same position vis-à-vis society as a whole as they had had before the revolution' (Fitzpatrick: 67). At the end of 1923 Grigorü Zinov´ev, the Party head in Leningrad, announced that the intelligentsia and the Party had reached mutual understanding, which principally involved not 'remembering the past any more' (Fitzpatrick: 77). The political and ideological consensus of the two meant that the professorial elite enjoyed relative economic prosperity during NEP. The elite spirit of the professoriate was best manifested in their two professional institutions. The first, the Commission for Improving the Everyday Life of Scholars [*Komissiia po uluchsheniiu byta uchenykh*], provided financial support and a number of exceptional recreational facilities to scholars during NEP, and was commonly regarded by less privileged colleagues as an 'aristocratic institution because it is the milieu of certain circles of old scientific workers' (Fitzpatrick: 79). The second, the Section of Scientific Workers [*Sektsiia nauchnykh rabotnikov*], was formed under the umbrella of the Soviet Teachers' Union, but its contacts with the Union were minimal. It was as exclusive an institution as could be desired (Fitzpatrick: 78), and very efficient at representing the needs of its members. Incidentally, from 1923 until 1931, Marr was three times elected chairman of the Section's Central Committee, which emphasizes once again Marr's unquestionable belonging to the caste of the old intelligentsia. At the same time, this period of a happy, if a little forced, marriage between the professoriate and Soviet power meant that Marr's position as a leading figure in Soviet cultural and intellectual circles was strengthened. The year 1925 marks the beginning of Marr's meteoric rise to power in the second half of the 1920s, when the New Teaching on Language became a natural component of a new Marxist campaign and received full-scale institutional backing, as well as public patronage of the leading Bolshevik bureaucrats such as Mikhail Pokrovskii and Anatolii Lunacharskii.

The campaign, which began among Marxist intellectuals in Party institutions of scholarship and higher education, called for a professionalization of the social sciences and the humanities

on sociological grounds, and linguistics, with its decisive shift towards a sociological orientation, emerged as a kind of pilot discipline in the process. This became obvious when at the national congress of the Academy of Sciences in 1927 Marr was selected to give the opening address to the audience (Clark: 205). An increase in political demand for specifically sociological theories of culture meant a redirection of institutional resources into new channels and led to an exacerbation of the smouldering conflict between the two antagonistic poles of the Soviet scientific front: the Party institutions, formed after the Revolution and charged with the mission of creating a Communist scholarship, were opposed by half-reformed old institutions, bases of non-Party intellectuals and bourgeois professoriate, surviving under the state patronage.[12] To an extent, this dualistic dynamic was epitomized in RANION, the Russian Association of Scientific Research Institutions in the Social Sciences [*Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia nauchno-issledovatel'skikh institutov obshchestvennykh nauk*], which was formed in 1921–22 around the Social Sciences Faculty of Moscow University as a 'concession to the non-Party professoriate', many of whom were based at eighteen RANION's institutions and enjoyed a great degree of autonomy in their research agendas (David-Fox, p. 239). Throughout the 1920s, however, attempts to strengthen Marxist scholarship at RANION resulted in the establishment of Communist administration of the Association and an increase of its central power by 1927. By the end of NEP, RANION was an influential coalition of a number of Moscow–Leningrad arts and social sciences institutions, with ILIaZV (where Marrists were represented) being the leading institution in Leningrad. Although at some institutions, including ILIaZV, research was mostly transferred onto sociological and Marxist grounds, RANION was still criticized for its general 'tendency to study anti-Marxist problems' (David-Fox: 240). Hence, the Association's position was weakened due to its double situation: a generation of young Marxist-trained scholars at its institutions, on the one hand, and the Communist administration, on the other, reacted against the non-Party professors, whose relative professional and political autonomy began to be viewed as a serious obstruction to the realization of the Party's project on the cultural front (David-Fox: 239–240). These internal divisions at RANION put it in a disenfranchized position in 1928, when the Communist Academy in Moscow, the leading Party institution of higher learning, set out to realize its long-standing hegemonic goals by orchestrating an assault on RANION. Incidentally, in 1928 Marr was elected head of the Section of Materialist Linguistics at the Communist Academy, which meant that his institutional base extended to the political centre of the country and, together with Leningrad institutions, provided Marr with a strong bureaucratic back-up. More importantly, however, Marr's seat at the Communist Academy would become a strategic position within the main Party's bastion in scholarship, called upon to finish with the NEP dual dynamics in the scientific field. Thus, with so many research institutions under his influence, a dominant position at the University and the Academy of Sciences, Marr's power in Soviet scholarly circles dramatically increased. The institutional framework, however, did not yet guarantee recognition of Marr's doctrine by the authorities. Its official elevation to the position of a Marxist teaching occurred in the same year, when the New Teaching on Language was publicly pronounced by Lunacharskii a true Marxist attainment in the field of linguistics.

In the quickly changing ideological climate, however, Marr's position was only relatively stable. As we have seen, Marr's success in the period of NEP was partly a result of the general reconciliatory policy of the Party leadership towards the old professors. By the mid-1920s, the attitudes of both parties were mutually accommodating. The professorial

circles accepted the regime and the division of roles in exchange for recognition of their social status and privileges. As Fitzpatrick notes, 'the high intelligentsia was a part of Soviet high society, and its members had relatively free access to the holders of power' (Fitzpatrick: 83). Indeed, the Party's political protection and a high social status led to the emergence of a peculiar mood in the professorial milieu, best described as 'not only confident but demanding' (Fitzpatrick: 85). A few examples from Marr's career specifically testify to this atmosphere of self-confidence and a certain intimacy in dealing with the political elite. One of Marr's post-graduate students at ILIaZV, Mikhail Altman, recalled how Marr had once gone to Moscow to see Pokrovskii, at the time Lunacharskii's deputy at Narkompros, for the specific purpose of asking him for a maintenance scholarship for Altman during his PhD studies (Golubeva: 33). At the Second Congress of Scientific Workers in 1927, Academicians Marr and Sergei Ol´denburg, permanent secretary of the Academy of Sciences, led an attack on Narkompros, which was a sign of their special relationship with the political leadership and their general sense of self-confidence. The Academicians criticized Narkom Lunacharskii and his ministry for their failure to obtain adequate finance for higher education and scholarly research, and did so with a 'mixture of condescension and intimidation' that had not previously been characteristic of Soviet public discourse (Firzpatrick: 85). The proceedings of the Congress were reported daily in the Soviet press, and Marr and Ol´denburg's almost arrogant behaviour and demands could, in the changing political atmosphere of the looming Cultural Revolution, be easily perceived in terms of the alleged 'bourgeois threat' by those rank-and-file educational workers who began to express discontent with the current situation and articulate their professional grievances against the privileged bourgeois intellectuals under the banner of militant Marxism. Lunacharskii who, in contrast to the professors, must have felt the presence of changes in the air, made an attempt to warn the old intellectual elite of its now more precarious position, writing shortly after the Congress:

> The intelligentsia leaders may, of course, hope that organs like Narkompros which care for the interests of science will obliquely defend them, and even go out of their way to do so, in order to keep them, as major theoreticians, for the country. But they must not be surprised if the revolution, which has to defend itself from its enemies meticulously and ruthlessly, has also produced organs which look on such things from a completely different point of view (Fitzpatrick: 86).

Indeed, it was not long before the 'great turning point' of 1928–1929 terminated the NEP period of relative stability and social cohesion, and did so in terms of 'class war'. The 'revolution from above', initiated by the Shakhty trial and directed against the 'bourgeois intelligentsia', was eagerly supported from below by those sections of the rank-and-file Communist intelligentsia who felt that 'new young forces' had to be brought into higher education, scientific and cultural life, in order to do away with the bourgeois 'lords of the kafedra'. In the true spirit of the class struggle of the Cultural Revolution, scientific fields turned into battlefields, where the greater aim of creating a proletarian intelligentsia was perhaps inseparable from less unselfish objectives of advancing a theory, gaining scientific authority, and receiving control of institutions and financial channels.

Succession or subversion: professional strategies of the Cultural Revolution

It is clear that Marr's direct lineage to the highbrow academic culture of the pre-revolutionary and NEP periods might have made him an ideal target for militant Marxist and Komsomol activists of the Cultural Revolution. After all, Marr was not even a member of the

Communist Party when, in 1928, a re-election campaign was started against non-Marxist professors. The fact that the New Teaching on Language had been recognized as Marxist by the Party bureaucrats does not, in itself, justify or explain the strengthening or the ultimate victory of Marr's position in the early 1930s. If Lunacharskii himself came under attack for his patronage of 'bourgeois specialists', what about Marr, with his vulnerable social status and dubious Marxist rhetoric? A highly suggestive episode of the administrative and ideological struggle within KIPS, the Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of Russia [*Komissiia po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava naseleniia Rossii*] in 1929, signals a perceptible threat to Marr's position as a non-Party scholar which, perhaps, made him adopt a more aggressive strategy as, *inter alia*, a means of self-defence. The episode again involved Ol´denburg, the then head of KIPS, and Marr, permanent member of the Commission, and took place in the process of the restructuring and purging of the Academy of Sciences.[13] When in 1929 a government commission was formed to investigate the Academy's activities, Ol´denburg was appointed to serve on the commission and tried to co-operate by mediating and explaining the new Party line to his academic colleagues. He was, it may seem, still following the unwritten rules of conduct of the NEP period, when the non-Party professors' general political loyalty guaranteed appeasing patronage of the state. It was a different climate, however, and in October 1929 Ol´denburg himself came under attack, was dismissed from his post of the secretary of the Academy and relieved of administrative duties. KIPS, as an institution within the Academy, was undergoing the same processes and was subjected to scrutiny by a minor commission, comprised of Party and government officials, as well as a number of younger Marxist ethnographers, who criticized KIPS for its structural malfunctioning, on the one hand, but most pertinently, for both exhibiting 'great power (Russian) chauvinism' and encouraging 'national separatism' (Hirsch: 140). The affair was closely followed by the press and characteristically presented as a struggle against a 'closed corrupt circle' of old intellectuals, recalcitrant in their bourgeois habits and refusal to change (Hirsch: 141). Notably, Sergei Bykovskii, destined to be one of the most militant Marrists, was among the members of the commission, and voiced the unambiguous attitude of the younger generation of Communist ethnographic scholars with published articles like 'Ethnography at the Service of the Class Enemy'.[14] More surprisingly, however, some of the old KIPS staff, including Marr, opposed Ol´denburg and used the official attack on KIPS as an opportunity to rebalance power within the institution. The motives behind Marr's censure of his old colleague were perhaps of dual nature: an act of self-preservation without doubt, but also possibly driven by Marr's belief in the scientific advantages of his own brand of ethnography. Already in 1924, while the KIPS Census commission was deliberating on the format of the future 1926 census questionnaires, Marr objected to the proposed formula for identifying respondents' nationalities on the basis of religion, language and anthropological type. He argued, in line with his general theory, that nationality was a reflection of group consciousness and could not be established on the grounds of 'blood, territory or physiological type' (Hirsch: 110). With mounting external pressure greatly reducing the autonomy of the scientific field, the extra-disciplinary circumstances provided Marr with an opportunity to assert his vision of ethnographic research. He proposed to restructure KIPS by including experts of non-Russian nationalities and trained Marxists, and to aim its work at the promotion of the economic and cultural development of the Soviet peoples (Hirsch: 141). On a more personal level, Marr's denunciation of Ol´denburg as an old-regime scholar, who failed to adopt a Marxist approach to ethnography and underestimated the importance of 'political questions', looks like yet another attempt to divert attention from his own imperial past which, as was now obvious,

kept Marr in the same precarious position. This realisation entailed a strategic change in his public behaviour: if in 1927 Marr openly argued against the inclusion of Party representatives in the Academy's re-election board, insisting that it was the academics' job, in 1929 the necessity to secure, if not to save, his career made an old bourgeois professor a vocal Party ally. No less importantly, after Ol´denburg's removal from KIPS, Marr was appointed new head of the Commission and, as such, acquired an additional institutional base for his theory. This proved to be particularly vital at a time when old and new institutional conflicts were being resolved in a radical way, eliminating the previously dominant structures and modes of relations in the scientific field, but also creating possibilities for expansion and assertion of power. Hence, my central argument is that at the time of the Cultural Revolution, institutional dynamics played a decisive role in linguistic scholarship, as in other spheres of science and higher learning, and allowed Marr's school not only to protect its position, but also to fortify it significantly and ultimately to emerge as an unlikely victor in this particular revolutionary battle.

Yet I would claim that in most cases Marr remained largely a symbolic figure in the process, personally resorting to the conservation strategy, which required little action and relied on retaining the *status quo*, as long as the balance of theoretical and institutional power was preserved.[15] It may be argued that the actual struggle was taking place among scholars of the younger generation, who adopted different professional strategies in their fight for intellectual dominance and the ensuing power, both real and symbolic. As mentioned elsewhere, the two major strategies available were the succession and the subversion strategies, by which we understand a discourse strategy employed by younger practitioners in a professional field, who seek acceptance and advancement in the discipline. The succession strategy is by definition less socially disruptive and less risky for its agents than the subversion one, which is aimed at undermining and overthrowing the previously established authority and at a subsequent restructuring of the entire institutional framework. In the late 1920s, younger practitioners in the field of linguistics made use of the general militant atmosphere of the Cultural Revolution and the period of a frenzied institutional reorganization in order to pursue their specific goal of attaining recognition in the discipline and, bearing in mind the Promethean character of this scholarship in the Soviet Union, the resultant political security and the Party leadership's patronage in the new emerging, specifically, Communist brand of Soviet science. In these dynamics, Marr's younger followers, who by that time had formed the core of the school, were in a privileged position thanks to the strong institutional basis of their doctrine both in Moscow and Leningrad, and naturally preferred to resort to the succession strategy in order to advance themselves at the expense of their aging leader's fame, and to secure full monopoly of scientific authority for the younger generation of Marrists. Paradoxically, for Marr's disciples, whether idealists or careerists,[16] the Cultural Revolution meant also an opportunity to reduce Marr's real power, making it more symbolic, while transferring the practical levers of influence to their own hands. They were opposed by those scholars whose scientific rejection of Marrism and the ambition to establish a different brand of Marxist linguistics led them to adopt the risky subversion strategy which, however, was in harmony with the general anti-authority spirit of the time, and might have proved workable.

A brief look at the social background of Marr's younger students, who were at the front of the linguistic battles, can provide us with an insight into their chosen strategy of professional discourse. It is extremely important to emphasize that among militant Marrists, actively seeking promotion in the discipline under the slogans of the Cultural Revolution, there were no professional highly-qualified scholars of recognized standing, who otherwise might have experienced Marr's influence (like Nikolai Iakovlev, Lev Zhirkov or Lev Iakubinskii) or

collaborated with him (like many of the GAIMK scholars or Olga Freidenberg, a mythologist and literary critic). Those who did take part in the Marrist campaigns were usually linguistically incompetent parvenus, whose association with Marr's school had provided them with a respectable professional status, which could be retained and strengthened only with the help of the succession strategy. The most active among them were the lawyer Levon G. Bashindzhagian, the history teacher and ethnographer Sergei N. Bykovskii, and perhaps the most infamously bellicose, Valerian B. Aptekar´, who was head of the Publishing Department at RANION and worked as Marr's acting deputy at the Section of Materialist Linguistics of the Communist Academy, in spite of his lack of a linguistic training, and Fedot P. Filin, who in 1931 became Marr's postgraduate student after graduating from a pedagogical institute (Alpatov: 55–56, 100). The Japhetic Institute, which in 1928 opened its own postgraduate programme, became a centre for training new linguists from national minorities, who very often did not have any linguistic background and 'apart from the Japhetic theory, knew almost nothing'.[17] For the majority of these people the anti-intellectual drive and the ideological war of the Cultural Revolution provided a unique opportunity to advance themselves in the linguistic profession under the well-established theoretical framework, where most ideas were reaching far beyond the scientific realm and as such could be interpreted and promoted even by professionally unqualified, but ideologically trained 'scholars'. Militant Marrists remained faithful to their succession discourse, portraying the Japhetology as the only linguistic theory that for many years had been consistently trying to develop an anti-bourgeois, anti-Indo-European linguistics, which found its final realization in the Marxist New Teaching on Language. Operating within the strong institutional setting of the New Teaching on Language, they succeeded in defaming and ousting from their positions many senior colleagues, or seriously obstructing their work (Alpatov: 86–87). The Marrists' strategy, however, did not work so directly and immediately in those institutions, which for the time being remained relatively independent from Marrism, and whose members still possessed enough power to try to oppose its encroaching hegemony. For them subversion was the only available strategy in the battle against Marrism.

The two most significant counteractions against the Marrists' offensive were undertaken by Evgenii Polivanov in 1929 and by the *Iazykofront* [Language Front] group in 1930. Both discussions, unfortunately for Marr's opponents, took place at the Communist Academy, whose own hegemonic plans were particularly directed against the rival RANION, and where the Marrists, represented by Aptekar´, held a very strong position. However, it would be wrong to assume that Marr's opponents had no chance of winning from the very beginning. When Polivanov called in 1929 for a linguistic discussion at the Communist Academy, he was a highly influential linguist, head of the linguistic section at RANION, one of the central figures of language construction and, perhaps most importantly, a committed Marxist since 1919, who uncompromisingly rejected the New Teaching on Language and offered his own version of Marxism in linguistics. An important observation should be made here: the fierce opposition between Polivanov and Marr and, particularly, its dramatic outcome in Marr's favour, have often tempted historiographers to portray it in terms of an almost self-denying sacrifice in the name of science on Polivanov's part. Without doubting the courage and dignity of Polivanov's act, it is nevertheless reasonable to assume that Polivanov must have had certain reasons to believe that his attack against Marrism could be successful. Polivanov was a linguist of stature and had an impressive record of service to the Bolsheviks since the October Revolution. Between 1926–1929 he occupied a number of high-ranking

positions in Moscow research and educational institutions, among which the Party-run Communist University of the Labourers of the East [*Kommunisticheskii universitet trudiashchikhsia Vostoka*]. Besides, his brand of Marxism in linguistics, a broadly sociolinguistic approach with emphasis on the applied aspect, was of much less problematic character than Marr's and, certainly, much more useful for Soviet language policy. In organizing the discussion, Polivanov hoped to expose the obvious scientific inconsistency of Marr's theory, its contradiction to and abuse of linguistic facts, disguised by Marxist rhetoric. In the summary of his speech at the discussion Polivanov wrote: 'any science, which claims to take part in the construction of a realistic and, specifically, Marxist picture of the world, must rely on factual material and not be reduced to a number of general assumptions, unrelated to concrete facts of the given field of phenomena'.[18] He also offered an alternative — a methodological outline of a Marxist linguistics which, in short, consisted in the necessity to develop socio-group (class) dialectology and to study the evolution of language in its interconnection with the evolution of a human collective.[19] Polivanov's reference to the practical irrelevance of Marr's doctrine was symptomatic and could have struck the right chord in the general atmosphere of mandatory usefulness, practicality and serviceability in science and scholarship, produced by the policies of the Cultural Revolution. Besides, his brand of Marxist sociolinguistics was already being put in practice by other former students of Ivan Baudouin de Courtenay at Leningrad's ILIaZV, such as Boris Larin or Viktor Zhirmunskii. But Polivanov's main mistake was precisely his failure to mobilize support for his campaign against the Marrists, which was essential for the success of his subversion discourse. Although intimidated by the Marrists' aggressive strategy, more than a few opponents of the New Teaching on Language still existed, especially at Polivanov's RANION Institute of Language and Literature [*Institut iazyka i literatury*] and Gustav Shpet's State Academy of Artistic Studies [*Gosudarstvennaia akademiia khudozhestvennykh nauk, (GAKhN)*]. These scholars, who remained independent from Marr's institutional framework, could perhaps have been organized in a sustained anti-Marrist campaign under the leadership of a militant Bolshevik and Marxist such as Polivanov. Polivanov, however, preferred the riskier strategy of personal confrontation with his opponents.[20] In relying entirely on himself, Polivanov had probably underestimated the extent to which linguistics had been 'sovietized' or, in other words, bureaucratized during NEP, making the institutional framework and support a much more powerful weapon in ideological battles than professional authority or revolutionary charisma. The ultimate factor, however, which seems to have largely pre-determined the outcome of the discussion, was the institutional confrontation between the RANION and the Communist Academy, which culminated in the Academy's assault on RANION in April 1928. RANION, as a base of the mixed non-Party and Marxist scholarship, characteristic of the NEP period, fell victim to the communization policies of the Cultural Revolution and the Academy's quest for dominance. In May 1928 a special meeting of the high-level Academy's officials concluded that a parallel existence of such institutions as RANION could not be supported by scientific planning and was undesirable for the Communist Academy (David-Fox: 241–242). With this in mind, the fact that Polivanov, a leading figure within RANION, started his attack on Marr's school, strongly associated with the Communist Academy, in 1929, when the Academy had already agreed on RANION's imminent demise and absorbed a few of its institutes, emerges as a desperate attempt to retain the bipolar institutional dynamics. It is clear, however, that precisely because RANION's fate had already been decided, Polivanov could not and would not succeed. Thus, the institutional dynamics on a larger scale, together with Marrists' overwhelming local

bureaucratic power and successful application of the succession discourse, played a major role in Polivanov's defeat, his subsequent removal from all positions in both capitals and his exile to Central Asia. It also involved purges and elimination of the Institute of Language and Literature, and of Shpet's GAKhN. By 1930 the Communist Academy had absorbed most of RANION's institutes, and the Association ceased to exist.

But even after the victory of Marr's school in 1929 and the subsequent purges in the humanities, criticism against the now monopolist doctrine was not silenced completely and intensified again in the second half of 1930. On 15 September 1930 the Moscow and Leningrad scholars of *Iazykofront* published a declaration of their platform. Its ideological leaders were Georgii Danilov and Timofei Lomtev. Among the members of the Front were also Mikhail Gus and Ernst Drezen, the leaders of the Esperanto movement and activists of language reform projects, Janis Loia, Konstantin Alaverdov and other scholars. Having learned, perhaps, from Polivanov's errors, the Language Front challenge was much better organized from political and institutional points of view. The group had powerful supporters in the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, RAPP [*Rossiiskaia assotsiatsiia proletarskikh pisatelei*] and, specifically, its splinter faction Literary Front. When a few months later in February 1931 the Frontists established their own institutional centre in Moscow, the Scientific Research Institute of Linguistics [*Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut iazykoznaniia, (NIIIaZ)*], the director's post was given to Mark N. Bochacher, one of the most vocal members of RAPP and the Literary Front. Bochacher was also editor-in-chief of *Iazykofront*'s intended ideological mouthpiece, the journal *Revoliutsiia i iazyk* [Revolution and Language], whose sole number was published by NIIIaZ in 1931. Moreover, certain members of the Party's Central Committee and Narkompros sympathized with the Language Front platform. In fact, NIIIaZ was organized under the umbrella of Narkompros, where a frontist Alaverdov worked. Two institutional branches of the Front were also opened in Leningrad and Smolensk (Alpatov: 96–97).

For the young members of the Language Front the thrill of the intradisciplinary power struggle, intensified by the stark necessity of professional and political survival, meant that their attack on the main enemy, the Marrists, could only be an 'all or nothing' event. It was the Marrists' immense power and hegemonic influence in the discipline and beyond that the Frontists aimed to subvert by focusing on the most vulnerable features of the New Teaching on Language. Their strategy, aptly formulated by Lomtev in the title of his talk at the discussion as 'Ili marksizm, ili marrizm' [Either Marxism, or Marrism], was aimed at exposing and undermining those of Marr's ideas, which most obviously contradicted Marxism. As such, the Front's discourse strategy had to deal with the New Teaching's on Language ideological, rather than scientific, accuracy and value, and was meant to impress the influential Party bureaucrats primarily: 'Appropriating the positive aspects of Japhetology, linguists-Marxists must at the same time overthrow its mechanistic bases. Only overcoming the mechanistic tendencies in linguistics will ensure a real victory over idealism, will clear the ground for creating a truly Marxist, party linguistic science, will bring it to the service of the socialist construction and the cultural revolution.'[21] Accepting what they called the 'revolutionary core' of Marr's doctrine (denunciation of the Indo-European framework, the hypothesis of the superstructural and class character of language, its limited materialism), the Frontists relentlessly criticized all the idealist features of the New Teaching, its mechanistic materialism, its ridiculous contradictions of Engels's concept of class and the primeval society, and, no less importantly at the time of the socialist construction drive, its 'divorce from practice' and

functional uselessness. For the Language Front activists, Marr's theory was 'fruitless for a practical solution of topical militant tasks, posed by the modernity', and was thus 'given a severe sentence by life itself'.[22]

The *Iazykofront*'s alternative programme combined theoretical linguistics with a strong applied aspect, and was based on the concept of language as a carrier of ideological significance, a powerful tool of cultural change and social interaction, which reflects the structure of society and is capable of regulating it. The Front's discursive power was strengthened by their consistent resort to the highest authority, the Marxist classics, and an effective interpretation of their ideas on language. Such a programme appealed to the professional linguists and the masses alike. Language issues in the early 1930s, fired by the spirit of creating and educating a new man for the new Soviet society, were the concern of almost everyone. The Frontists' campaign for active language reforms answered the popular demand and won support for their programme, declared in open letters from teachers' and workers' collectives from all over the country. On the wave of popularity, the Frontists managed to establish their own strongholds in a number of institutions, including the Marrist citadel at the Section of Materialist Linguistics of the Communist Academy. They addressed the most topical linguistic issues of the time, such as the eradication of illiteracy, the campaign for the literary standards of the Russian language, spelling reform, standardization of terminological systems, and national language construction. They planned to organize a Linguistic University for Workers and created a 'bourgeois heritage brigade', where proletarian students were introduced to classics of European linguistics in critical appreciation. They were concerned about telephone audibility and the sexist character of the Russian language, which they considered to be one of the most conservative superstructures in Soviet society. The leader of the Front, Danilov, was particularly interested in recording, studying and rationalizing the language of the Soviet worker. Insisting on the class nature of language and its capacity to express class ideology, the Frontists at the same time fought for a socialist language culture and taught Soviet workers a precise, clear, uncontaminated Russian language, which made them ever more popular among socially mobilized masses on their way upwards in the socialist society.[23]

And yet, in spite of the Front's popularity or — perhaps because of it — its long-running battle with Marrism was lost in May 1932, when it was disbanded by decree of the Cultural Propaganda Office of the Party's Central Committee. In the words of a contemporary, at the time 'the issue of linguistic trends and institutions was decided somewhere in the highest offices' (Alpatov: 99). It is true that the Front's campaign against Marrism was well-organized and consistent with their chosen subversion strategy, inasmuch as it emphasized the idealist features of the New Teaching on Language and strove to raise public awareness of its ideologically dated character, unfit for the practical demands of the socialist construction. They secured rather strong institutional support and during the period of the Cultural Revolution had every reason objectively to hope for a positive outcome to their struggle. But in this case even the well-planned and well-executed professional strategy proved unworkable, invalidated by the power of extra-disciplinary factors. The Cultural Revolution was nearing its end, with its militant discourse and practice of social disruption gradually replaced by cultural conservatism, social cohesion and a purist campaign for the literary Russian language of High Stalinism. As such the Front fell victim to its own ideology, which was 'more left' than the Party line, more voluntaristic and far too popular, which posed a risk to the Party's authority (Smith: 101). All forms of radicalism — be it RAPP's literary programme or Language Front's Marxist linguistics — came to be discouraged. In the new climate of establishing a single

authoritative discourse, the Marrists' less disruptive and less provocative succession strategy once again won the Party's approval. Doubtless, the New Teaching on Language thesis of a future single language of a classless society suited the official campaign of language standardization and Russification better than the Front's ostensible interest in class dialects and discursive interaction.

After the closure of NIIIaZ, Marrism enjoyed a complete victory on the ideological and institutional fronts, and became the hegemonic Soviet linguistic doctrine. The Japhetic Institute, renamed the Institute of Language and Thought [*Institut iazyka i myshleniia*] in 1931, remained virtually the only linguistic institution in the country. Marr and his teaching were officially canonized and endorsed as the Marxist dogma in Soviet humanities. Thus, in the late 1920s — early 1930s the scientific field of linguistics in the Soviet Union had gone through a dramatic process of a generational change, facilitated by the general ideological climate of the Cultural Revolution and its aftermath, which resulted in full monopolization of scientific authority on the part of a single school and the ensuing twenty years of its power. A struggle for symbolic power in the scientific field which is invariably concerned with a delimitation of the field's boundaries and establishment of a 'true intellectual authority',[24] under the specific Soviet condition of a greatly reduced autonomy of the cultural (and scientific) field, translated into the Marrists' struggle to appropriate the Marxist dogma in linguistics and, consequently, to impose their ideological authority and acquire a very real social power and political legitimacy.

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[1] On various recent interpretations of Marrism see Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa* [A History of a Myth] (Moscow: Nauka, 1991); Alpatov, 'What is Marxism in Linguistics', in *Materializing Bakhtin: The Bakhtin Circle and Social Theory*, ed. by C. Brandist and G. Tihanov (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), pp. 173–193; B. Gasparov, 'Development or Rebuilding. Views of Academician T. D. Lysenko in the Context of the Late Avant-Garde', in *Laboratory of Dreams. The Russian Avant-Garde and Cultural Experiment*, ed. by J. E. Bowlt and O. Matich (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 133–153; M. V. Gorbanevskii, *V nachale bylo slovo: maloizvestnye stranitsy istorii sovetskoi lingvistiki* [In the Beginning Was the Word: Little-known Pages of Soviet Linguistic History] (Moscow: Isdatel´stvo Universiteta Druzhby Narodov, 1991); A. P. Romanenko, 'Sovetskaia filosofiia iazyka: E. D. Polivanov — N. Ia. Marr' [Soviet Philosophy of Language: Polivanov — Marr], *Voprosy iazykoznaniia*, 2 (2001), 110–122; P. Sériot, *Structure et totalité*, (Paris: Press Universitaires de France, 1999); Y. Slezkine, 'N.Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics', *Slavic Review*, 55: 4 (1996), pp. 826–862.

[2] Here cited from a later edition: P. Bourdieu, 'The Specificity of the Scientific Field and the Social Conditions of the Progress of Reason', in., *French Sociology: Rupture and Renewal since 1968*, ed. by C. C. Lemert (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), pp. 257–292.

[3] N. Ia. Marr, *Izbrannye raboty* [Selected Works] (Leningrad: Gosudarstvennoe sotsial´no-ekonomicheskoe izdatel´stvo, 1933), I, p. 9.

[4] Marr used the term Japhetic languages in reference, initially, to Caucasian languages by analogy with Semitic and Hametic language families, all derived from the names of the biblical Noah's three sons. Seen as highly unusual and controversial by Marr's contemporaries, the idea of a Japhetic language as a mother source of many European languages had nevertheless been present in European lingua-philosophical discourse since the sixteenth century. On this see Sériot, 'Si Vico avait lu Engels, il s'appellerait Nicolas Marr', in *Un paradigme perdu: la linguistique marriste,* ed. by Sériot, *Cahiers de l'ILSL*, 20 (2005), pp. 227–254. Another interesting link has been suggested by Slezkine (1996: 835), who argues that Marr's idea of the Japhetic kinship was remarkably similar to the standard medieval Georgian family tree, where all Caucasian languages had been related to each other as Japhetic.

[5] Mikhankova, *Nikolai Iakovlevich Marr. Ocherk ego zhizni i nauchnoi deiatel´nosti* [N. Ia. Marr. A Story of His Life and Scientific Activity] (Moscow, Leningrad: Izdatel´stvo akademii nauk SSSR, 1949), p. 171.

[6] Marr, *Iafetidologiia* [Iaphetology] (Moscow: Kuchkovo Pole, 2002), pp. 50–51.

[7] O.D. Golubeva, *N. Ia. Marr* (Sankt Peterburg: Rossiiskaia Natsional´naia Biblioteka, 2002), p. 32. See also Mikhankova, pp. 206–207.

[8] S. Fitzpatrick, *Education and Social Mobility in the Soviet Union 1921–1934* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 49.

[9] Alpatov, *Istoriia odnogo mifa* [A History of a Myth] (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), p. 29.

[10] Katerina Clark describes 'Promethean linguistics' as an attempt to generate a significance for a discipline that exceeds its professional bounds. See Katerina Clark, *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 207.

[11] Antonio Gramsci's definition of a traditional intellectual is cited from Clark, 'The "Quiet Revolution" in Soviet Intellectual Life', in *Russia in the Era of NEP. Explorations in Soviet Society and Culture* ed. by S. Fitzpatrick, A. Rabinowitch, and R. Stites (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 222.

[12] This dichotomic institutional dynamics in Soviet science and higher learning in the 1920s has been fully explored in David-Fox's *Revolution of the Mind: Higher Learning among the Bolsheviks* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997).

[13] I am relating the factual side of the conflict from Francine Hirsch, *The Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 140–143.

[14] Bykovskii's article was published in *Sovetskaia etnografiia*, 3–4 (1931).

[15] Symbolic, but not entirely personally uninvolved in some of the episodes of the denunciation campaigns, carried out by the Marrists in 1928–1932. On this see Alpatov (1991, pp. 85–87) and Gorbanevskii (1991, pp. 52–72).

[16] R. L'Hermitte, 'Utopie et langage en U.R.S.S.', *Revue des Études Slaves*, LVI/1 (1984), 145.

[17] V. V. Vinogradov, and B. A. Serebrennikov, eds. *Protiv vul´garizatsii i izvrashcheniia marksizma v iazykoznanii* [Against Vulgarization and Distortion of Marxism in Linguistics] (Moscow: Izdatel´stvo AN SSSR, 1951–1952), II, p. 167.

[18] E. D. Polivanov, *Stat´i po obshchemu iazykoznaniiu* [Papers on General Linguistics] (Moscow: Glavnaia redaktsiia vostochnoi literatury, 1968), p. 176.

[19] See the stenographic report of the Polivanov discussion at the Communist Academy on 4, 18 and 25 February 1929 in Polivanov, *Trudy po vostochnomu i obshchemu iazykoznaniiu* [Works in Oriental and General Linguistics] (Moscow: Nauka, 1991), pp. 508–552.

[20] In a letter he wrote in reply to an insulting Marrist article in *Vechernaia Moskva*, published on 1 March 1929 and in perfect logic of the succession discourse entitled 'Kto travit akademika Marra?' [Who is Persecuting Academician Marr], Polivanov asserts: 'The decision to make a speech criticizing the factual side of the academician Marr's Japhetic theory was taken solely by me, without any help on anyone's part'. Cited from V. Lartsev, *E. D. Polivanov. Stranitsy zhizni i deiatel´nosti* [E. D. Polivanov. Pages of Life and Activity] (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), p. 85.

[21] G. Danilov, 'Iafetidologiia v nashi dni' [Japhetology in Our Time], *Revoliutsiia i iazyk*, 1 (1931), 21–27.

[22] Quotes respectively from K. Alaverdov, 'Praktika iafetidologov i sovremennost´' [Japhetologists' Practice and Modernity], *Revoliutsiia i iazyk*, 1 (1931), 50–55; Danilov, 'Iafetidologiia v nashi dni'. For a fuller view of the *Iazykofront* discussion, see also M. Bochacher, 'Lingvisticheskaia diskussiia' [The Linguistic Discussion], *Na literaturnom postu*, 3 (1931); Ia. Loia, 'Za marksistskoe iazykovedenie' [For a Marxist Linguistics], *Russkii iazyk v sovetskoi shkole*, 5 (1930), 54–56, and other articles from both conflicting sides.

[23] For more on Language Front's linguistic experiments and their participation in language construction and educational projects of the early 1930s, see Michael G. Smith, *Language and Power in the Creation of the USSR, 1917–1953* (Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 103–121.

[24] Bourdieu, *Choses dites* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1987), p. 171.