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The fate of Nikolai Marr's linguistic theories: The case of linguistics in the political context

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Those who study the development of linguistic theories and related intellectual trends do not usually like to see intellectual trends as being directly shaped by societal changes or, even more so, by the direct intervention of raw power. As a matter of fact, it is believed that it is ideology that shapes the political and social reality.

The belief in the absolute power of "discourse" over pliable social/political matter (in this interpretation, discourse permeates and shapes the social/political reality in a sort of neo-Platonic way) is shared not just by the aging post-modernist left, but even by the right—indeed, by quite a few "neocons," who believe that ideology is of the foremost importance. According to the USA neocon strategists, it requires little eloquence to convince people that the American capitalist democracy is the best among the possible options. The military, of course, should also provide essential help by removing tyrants who prevent people from being fully cognizant of their inalienable rights. Thus, the war against "Islamofascism" is to be primarily fought on the "fields of discourse." Still, a detailed analysis of the ideological trends could easily reveal that not only has ideological construction emerged from the political realities but also that raw power—especially in totalitarian states—shapes the course even of the majority of theoretical discussions, such as those that deal with linguistic or historical phenomena of the distant past. The case of Nikolai Marr, the leading Soviet linguist in the early Soviet era, and the legacy of his theories could be a good example.

1. Marr's pre-revolutionary career and germination of his linguistic theory

Nikolai Marr had an idiosyncratic background. He was born of a Georgian mother and a Scottish father, who was much older than his wife (Golubeva, 2002, pp. 9–10). His early career hardly augured well for his future as a great linguist. In fact, he barely wrote Russian, the language of the empire (p. 13). Still, he was able not to just finish high school but to become a student of St. Petersburg University, which, by some accounts, was one of the world centers for the study of the Orient in the late 19th century (p. 21). In 1888, Marr graduated and became engaged in the study of Armenian culture and history (p. 23), and by 1900 he had become a professor in the same university, where he taught for 40 years (p. 25). Long before the Bolshevik Revolution, Nikolai Marr made his name as a specialist in Caucasian history and culture, especially those of Armenia. At the same time, while specializing in these narrow studies, Marr had great ambitions to be the creator of a linguistic theory that could explain the origin and evolution of world languages in a new way.

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As contemporaries recall later, he was a man of inexhaustible energy[1] and boundless ambition; and, in the future, he would accept without any reservations the accolades of those who compared him to Copernicus, Darwin and similar luminaries (Golubeva, 2002, pp. 70). He wanted to change linguistics completely, and he seems to have pondered about a new theory even before the Bolshevik Revolution (Meshchaninov, 2001). Indeed, already as a student, he had discovered that the traditional linguistic theory that divided languages into different linguistic groups did not work; and by 1886 he had noted the similarities between the Georgian and Semitic languages (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 16, 27; Thomas, 1957, pp. 2). In 1899, he had also proclaimed that the Armenian language is the result of "Indo-European and Japhetic integration (Alpatov, 1991, p. 18)." By the beginning of the 20th century, he also had discovered that the languages of major linguistic groups, e.g., Indo-European languages, are not the most ancient but are preceded by other languages; in fact, these languages could be seen as a synthetic arrangement where several languages had been integrated with each other. The Armenian language in this arrangement, for example, was a product of both Indo-European languages and the more ancient language that preceded them (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 173). It seems that Marr also had formed his Japhetic theory by that time (L'Hermitte, 1987, pp. 13) and was convinced that the scholarly community should accept his discoveries. He also apparently believed that the scholarly community did not accept his findings because of bureaucratic routine; and proclaimed that scholars were jealous because of fear that new findings would undermine their prestige and position. With his boundless enthusiasm, Marr hardly minded using force if necessary to drive his ideas through bureaucratic obstacles. The Bolshevik Revolution and the rise of the Soviet regime had provided him with the means to accomplish his plans. And, in fact, his energy and ambition made him a good example of scholars in that turbulent era (Freidenberg).

2. Linguistics of worldwide revolution

While analyzing Marr's theories one should remember that they were quite contradictory in their nature. "Marr's theories are chiefly notable for the fact that they merge, overlay one another, and in their historical development, undergo an almost endless number of modifications and permutations. This characteristic of his constructs brought in its train another: his theories are full of contradictions, lapses, and exaggerations (Thomas, 1957, pp. 135)." Still, his theories have a definite core: the rejection of the attachment of a particular language to a particular racial/ethnic group and emphasis on the mutual synchronic nature of the languages of various groups and their plasticity that actually made it possible to create one language for all of humanity. And this is what made Marr's theories quite appealing to Russia and the USSR's new rulers, at least in the very beginning of the Soviet regime's existence.

To start with, upon ascending to power, the Bolsheviks had discarded most of the institutions and theories inherited from pre-revolutionary Russia. They discarded, at least in the very beginning of their rule, the previous theories as being "bourgeois" and unacceptable to a new society of workers and peasants. The Bolsheviks also believed that Soviet Russia was not just the first country of workers and peasants but was also a springboard for worldwide revolution, which, in the future, would create a worldwide republic of workers and peasants. In this respect, the Bolsheviks followed the Marxist doctrine of "Proletariat of all countries unite!" and was strongly against nationalism, which, in their view, disunited the workers. This stress on international globalism also stemmed from the Bolsheviks' view of the Russian empire, the Russia of the tsar, as the "prison of the nations." Many, if not all, of the Soviet regime premises were appealing to Marr, who accentuated this internationalistic aspect of his theories, believing this would make them more appealing to new rulers and would help him to be a leader of emerging Soviet linguistics.

Having a good sense of the prevailing political climate in the USSR, Marr proclaimed that all linguistic theories that had existed and were approved by the global scholarly community should be discarded. And, consequently, it was only the new Soviet scholars—and Marr, of course, included himself among these scholars—who should create a new Soviet linguistic. This linguistic should be the science of the future. Marr also had a good sense of what the Soviet leaders wanted from him as well as from other scholars who took the Bolsheviks' side, especially those who were in the social sciences and humanities. Indeed, Marr had never tried to hide the fact that his theories were directly connected with the demands of the regime. Marr made this clear in one of his public speeches. He stated that he is fully aware of the political needs of the regime and regarded himself as the regime's soldier first of all. "I realized the fiction of apoliticalness and, naturally, discarded it. At the present moment of aggravated class struggle, I firmly stand at my post (that of a fighter on the cultural-scientific front) for a clear general line in proletarian scientific theory, and for the general line of the Communist party (Thomas, 1957, pp. 88)." And he stated that he put himself on the side of the regime from the very beginning of the regime's existence. "From the first days of October, I stood, to the best of my abilities, shoulder to shoulder with Communist comrades and, together with other nonparty people of similar stamp, assisted in the work of a revolutionary cultural-scientific construction of incomparable scope… (pp. 88)". His linguistic theories were also directly connected with the needs of the state: "I tried and am trying to develop a theoretical science of language—the region in which I carry on my scientific work (pp. 88)." The state seems to have reciprocated. He was hailed on all sides as *the* greatest Soviet linguist. In 1928, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of his scholarly

[1] One could assume that Marr would actually work himself to death. See Golubeva, 2002, p. 22, 64–65. This assumption, indeed, does not look as being absolutely incredible if one would remember that Marr's death was directly related with one of his professional trips. "In 1933, on one of his countless trips, he fell ill of the grippe and, a few months later, had a slight stroke. He never fully recovered. During the night of December 19, 1934, he died of arteriosclerosis. (Thomas, 1957, p. 88).

work, the Communist Academy gave him the Lenin Prize for his published work. And his "career became a triumphal procession (pp. 88)."

Five years later, he received the highest reward of the state. "In 1933, on the forty-fifth anniversary of his scholarly work, the Soviet government bestowed on him the Order of Lenin, and the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. decreed that the Institute of Language and Thought was to bear his name." Marr's life, however, was drawing to a close (pp. 88). Still, even his death did not stop the flow of state awards and honors. Indeed, "literally scores of posthumous honors were bestowed upon him; the most important of these was the naming of the State Academy of History of Material Culture after him (pp. 88)." This high appreciation of Marr's work was, of course, due to the fact that his linguistic theories fit well the political designs of the regime.

The Soviet leaders had emphasized that "world revolution" was at hand; at least, this was so in the beginning of the 1920s. Later, the Bolsheviks proclaimed that the capitalist world had entered a period of "temporary stabilization." Still, the notion of "world revolution" had not completely disappeared from official discourse, possibly not until the beginning of WWII. Nationalism, which emphasized proletariat unity with the bourgeois, was absolute anathema until the late 1920s/early 1930s, at least in official statements. Marr had translated this ideological doctrine in his linguistic theories. He stated clearly that the theory that sees language divided into several linguistic trees was absolutely unacceptable, for it implied that language—and, therefore, the people—had been divided along linguistic and ethnic lines already in the beginning of human history and, therefore, their future divisions were predestined. Marr had resolutely rejected this assumption (Thomas, 1957, pp. 59). His goal was to emphasize the sameness of the people, or, to be precise, the sameness of the toilers, which, in the future, would help unify them for future worldwide revolution and unity in a society of toilers. For this reason, Marr started his analysis with prehistory, the time when human beings had only begun to develop their linguistic capacity. At that time, humans, regardless of their groups, later, tribes, or, to be precise, semi-tribal affiliations, spoke a very simple language/dialect, on the basis of four simple sounds (Chikobava, 1951–1952; Golubev, 2002, pp. 61).

The primitive simplicity of these early proto-languages implied that they could be easily melded into one language; one could assume that all humanity—and at that time, it existed in conditions of "primitive communism," according to Marxist dictum—spoke one language, if not in actuality at least in potentiality. And, of course, social and political universalism was the harbinger of the future unity of socialist humanity. Elaborating on this notion, Marr wrote, "According to Japhetic linguistics, the birth, growth and future or eventual achievement of human speech can be depicted in the form of a pyramid standing on its base. From a wide base, a proto-linguistic state is passed through a series of typological transformations, aspiring to the summit, that is, to the linguistic unity of the whole world. The paleontology of Indo-European linguistics, with its single proto-language, is reducible to a pyramid placed on its summit with the base upward (Thomas, 1957, pp. 281)." One could assume, as Marr implied, that all people in the dawn of human history spoke a multiple "dialect" of one language. This linguistic sameness of the prehistoric people—who lived, according to Marxist doctrine, in the condition of "primitive communism"—indicated the future unity of the global proletariat after the future worldwide revolution. Later, these primitive "dialects," proto-languages, or at least most of them, had coalesced in what Marr called the Japhetic language, which was the virtual *lingua franca* for the majority of the people in Eurasia. Thus, in this interpretation of the origin of languages, they were not connected with certain linguists and, implicitly, ethnic families but with certain stages in social/economic development (Golubev, 2002, pp. 61). This linguistic universalism in the early historical era also indicated the future unity of the humanity of the worldwide socialist society.

The universalist aspect of Marr's theory was also emphasized by his fondness for the theory of the integration of languages. It was through this symbiosis of language that a new language emerged. As a matter of fact, Marr emphasized the notion that one could not find languages that did not experience the influence of other languages (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 407). The new languages did not eliminate the previous languages; they continued to exist in the new languages but in different forms (Gukhman, pp. 319). This linguistic, and, implicitly, societal, unity of humanity—of course, mostly toilers—had been preserved, at least in its latent form, until the present day. And, for this reason, Marr had found similarities in languages that traditional linguists would never find.

Moving from pre-historical and early historical periods to the historical period, Marr could not ignore the linguistic groups and clear differences in languages. Still, even here, Marr was unwilling to accept the notion that people of a particular nation had spoken the same language regardless of social division, e.g., toilers and the elite had the same language, So, in one of the interpretations of the origin of Indo-European languages, he made Indo-European languages the product of social and economic changes (Serebrennikov)—the Indo-European languages might be called a language of the conquerors, the language of the ruling elite (pp. 54), who also were influenced by the original Japhetic family. Elaborating on this, Marr wrote: "Over the entire land known to the cultural world of that time—from the Caucasus and Asia Minor to the Iberian Peninsula—there was one language, the language of the Japhetic family. They and the Semites were disunited although not yet separated. A blow at the unity of the Japhetic world, perhaps, may have been delivered even earlier; but the last 'annihilating' blow—the *coup de grâce*—was the Indo-European invasion, with the resulting mixture accompanied by a process of hybridization, the birth of new, mixed linguistic types and the drying up of mutual comprehension."[2] This was related with Marr's general premises, which often related this or that language with a particular social group/class (Sukhotin). In fact, in some cases, Marr asserted that each nation has two

[2] Quoted in Thomas (1957), p. 53.

separate languages: one the language of the elite and the other the language of the toilers (pp. 16). Relating linguistic domination with social/economic and political domination, Marr here stated that the future elite had taken over the people of the Japhetic language—who, in this reading became a type of toilers. The elite in this case imposed not just their power over the originally Japhetic-speaking masses but also their ideology and even the domination of the elite's languages. It was essential, as Marr implied, to ensure the elite's domination over the masses. Here, of course, Marr had followed the Marxist dictum that implied that the elite, e.g., the bourgeois, could maintain its power over the proletariat in many ways because the bourgeois was able to brainwash the proletariat and impose upon it the bourgeois ideology; and this was one of the essential, if not the most important, dictums of Marxism. Indeed, it is assumed by Marxists that Marxism's major goal was to liberate workers from the domination of the bourgeois ideology and acquire the ideology that would be the most adequate to proletariat needs.

3. Marr and "turn to the East"

Blurring the differences between the languages was one of the major ideological postulates that made Marr's approach to languages a linguistic backdrop, so to speak, of worldwide revolution. There was also another aspect of Marr's theory that fit well the political design of the Soviet regime in the very beginning of its existence. While believing in following Marx, of course, that a revolution in Russia would spark a revolution in Europe, the place of an advanced and numerous proletariat, the Soviet rulers soon discovered that launching a European-wide victorious revolution would not be as easy as they believed. Later, when the dreams of worldwide revolution in the West had subsided even more, the Soviet leaders increasingly turned to the East in search of allies. Indeed, here the Bolsheviks' call for revolution had found much more receptive ears, due, of course, to the very simple fact that anti-capitalist propaganda was seen simply as anti-Western. Moreover, this anti-Westernism had also racial overtones for the colonial powers of Europe were also the powers of the white man. Marr had a very good sense of the regime's needs and responded to these political demands already in 1918/19, he pointed out that the study of the "archaic world of Asia, Africa and Europe" should be the essential task of Soviet scholars (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 286).

Sensing the importance of the East, Marr later reemphasized the importance of studying Asian cultures and languages and hailed the Orient as a "huge and rising power of future humanity." Following the Soviet leaders, he implicitly transformed not the European proletariat but all the suppressed people of the East as a vanguard, together with the people of the USSR, of the future revolution of the liberation of humanity (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 377). The importance of non-European people in the present and the future and the general anti-colonialist drive of Soviet foreign policy, which, of course, would increase in the post-WWII era, also led Marr to engage in the study of the African language (pp. 398). This anti-colonialist and, implicitly, anti-European drive was also integrated into respect for minorities whatever they were. Marr, for example, blasted the French for paying too much attention to the Roman Empire and the Latin language and ignoring the contributions of the indigenous people of Europe (pp. 401).

Marr's theory, with its universalistic appeal, fit well in the political designs of the Soviet elite the support of the minorities, and the increasing "turn to the East" where the revolutionary geopoliticians of the regime looked for the replacement of the European proletariat as the major ally of the regime. It was clear to observers that Marr had received an official blessing and that those who would follow after him would have a much better chance of promoting their careers than others. It was not accidental that Marr quickly acquired numerous followers. Like their teacher and boss, they proclaimed that "all languages of the world have a genetic connection (Lomtev)" and there would be a unified language in the future, at a time when socialism would be victorious all over the globe (Grande). And they proclaimed, those linguists who attached a particular language to a particular ethnic/racial group were nothing but reactionary servants of the bourgeoisie (pp. 104). While the triumph of one language was inevitable, Soviet scholars were to be prepared for the future. And, in fact, the Soviet scholars had already taken a step in this direction and started to create the same alphabet for all the people of Soviet Union (pp. 106). The anticipation of a future unified language also led to the popularity of Esperanto.[3]

While association with Marr's enemies could bring nothing but trouble, affiliation with "Marrism" was a different story. One, of course, could not guarantee that an affiliation with Marr would be trouble-free. The intellectual and political climate had changed rapidly; and, in any case, one could not be sure that Marr was still seen by the authorities as the paragon of Soviet science, association with whom could lead to a good career and security. One, of course, could add that those young and ambitious Soviet scholars, many of them rising from the lower classes to pursue an academic career, were not entirely unique in their behavior. And the environment in which they worked was also not entirely unique. Those who worked in the West knew well that those who followed fashionable theories and subjects and those who accepted the dominant interpretations of these subjects had a much better chance of promoting their careers than those who did not follow the rules. Still, one might not compare life in Western academia with that of life in the Stalinist USSR. With all the problems that the ostracized "ugly ducklings" could face in the West, they would still not be concerned with personal security. And this was, indeed, the case with the Stalinist USSR where professional ostracism led not just to the inability to publish and loss of job but, increasingly, to exile and, as state repression grew, to a Gulag. Marr's invectives against his enemies inadvertently helped the regime to eliminate those whom the regime regarded as troublemakers.

[3] "Khronika nauchnoi lingvisticheskoi zhizni," *Sumerki Lingvistiki*, pp. 173–176.

4. Marr and the terrorist policy of the regime

Marr implicitly regarded himself as somewhat of a Marxian linguist. He regarded it his duty as a Soviet scientist—and, of course, as a good way to promote his career—to destroy the old traditional linguistics that emphasized the historical separation of the people along linguistic/ethnic lines. He emphasized that language development is clearly connected with social-economic and political development, and, implicitly, with particular social strata. The theory thus fit will with Marxist internationalism of the early Soviet regime and the dream of worldwide revolution. Institutionalized as Marxism incarnated in linguistics, Marr's theories received the full support of the state, which, implicitly saw those who did not agree with Marr as committing, not just scholarly but, implicitly, political errors, which would lead to appropriate and increasingly harsh punishment by the state. Marr hardly discouraged the state from using repression against those who did not agree with his theories. Moreover, he actually helped the state. The reason why Marr had encouraged the terrorist drive of the regime against those who disagreed with his theories was manifold. On one hand, the call for being harsh with those who did not fit the system and who could be suspected of being the enemy of the regime was the spirit of the times. Leniency could be seen as a sign of compliance with the enemies of the regime. Indeed, those who did not attack the alleged enemies with appropriate vigor could well themselves be seen as the enemy and end badly. Marr understood this well. He understood that he could well end in the same way as those whom he failed to accuse with appropriate vigor. Marr was pretty much aware that, despite heaps of praise from the regime, he could end his life badly and be thrown from the scientific and quasi-political Olympus to a camp or a cell as a man condemned to death. Marr saw this as everybody else saw this happen with leading figures in the Soviet hierarchy, such as Trotsky, who overnight was transformed from the right hand of Lenin and the apple of the eye of the Soviet regime into a disgusting enemy of the people with his followers thrown in camps already in the 1920s. Marr also most likely felt that despite the fact that he was still praised as the greatest linguist, his theories were increasingly out of step with the spirit of the times.

The theory of those who discarded nationalism and actually mocked it had been officially banned since 1932 when the authorities openly condemned the theory of M. N. Pokrovsky—the leading Soviet historian of the early years of the Soviet regime. And it was Pokrovsky who fully supported Marr. Moreover, the ideological and political loyalty to "big brother" was not at all a guarantee of one's career or even physical survival, especially in the 1930s when the regime started to strike out randomly against even its most dedicated stalwarts. One could state that Marr himself was not sure that he would be spared by the regime; already in the 1930s, during the peak of his influence, he still dreaded arrest (Golubeva, 2002, p. 73).

Marr's fear for his own life was one of the major, possibly subconscious, reasons why he tried to demonstrate his, implicit, call for tough punishment for those who disagreed with him. Besides this reason, there was possibly another one. Despite his formidable position in the scholarly community and quite a few followers who supposedly were fascinated with Marr's theories, he felt that he had no real supporters, that those who clung to him did this just for career considerations. He felt that he was actually isolated. Indeed, even at the height of his power and influence, by the end of his life, Marr complained that he was actually completely isolated. It goes without saying, he complained, that Western scholars had slandered both his name and his theories. He implied here that they were against him for various reasons. One was that he was quite dedicated to scholarship and fully engaged "in the most sacred" for him scholarly research (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 421). He implied that Western scholars in the majority are not real scientists who dedicated their life to the sacred task of advancing human knowledge, but petty careerists; and for them Marr's true dedication to science looks strange and irritating—and this was the reason they disliked him. Secondly, as he implied, they hated him because of his great scientific discoveries; because they demonstrated how worthless was the research of these Western scholars; and for this reason, he asserted, they would slander him and his theories even after his death (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 421). The problem, however, existed not just in the West. Indeed, Marr complained that he had enemies not only in the West but he actually did "not know the place where there is no negative feeling about me (pp. 361)." And here, he implied, that he was hated even in the USSR, regardless of all external signs of respect and love. By the end of his life, in 1930, Marr complained he still did not "have not even one true follower" among specialist linguists (Marr). Marr's most trusted lieutenants also complained that even those who supposedly fully subscribed to Marr's theories actually were not true followers. This feeling of isolation or even of despise by others infuriated Marr even more, and he called on the authorities to strike against his enemies. Marr, for example, directly accused Indo-Europeanists as being the people who justified the suppression of the colonial people by European imperialists (Alpatov, 1991, pp. 63). Such accusations could well lead not just to the loss of a job but also to a transfer to a Gulag.

The grave implications of Marr's invectives against his opponents became increasingly clear by the late 1920s and, of course, through the 1930s, where the intensity of repressions had risen dramatically. The connection between the critics of Marr's theories and anti-regime ideological stands seems to have lost any logic by the 1930s. By 1933, Marr was gravely ill and would die by 1934. Moreover, this was a time when the increasing stress on Russian nationalism started to undo the universalistic internationalism of his theories. Still, by that time, Marr's accusations against those who disagreed with him became quite handy for the state to strike against the groups of scholars who could be seen as a potential threat for the regime.

As was noted, Marr's emphasis was on the universalist aspect of the languages and disconnection between languages and particular ethnic groups. This could hardly be accepted by any serious Slavists who saw the Slavic language as a part of the Indo-European linguistic tree related to particular ethnic groups. They also related the

Russian language to Russians as an ethnic group. Marr definitely saw these people as being serious ideological and, implicitly, political, enemies. And the state definitely took Marr's implicit recommendation to deal harshly with these people close to heart when it opened the "case of Slavists" (*delo Slavistov*) in 1933/1934, which had led to the arrests of quite a few leading Russian Slavists; many of them had been physically eliminated (Gorbanevsky, 1991, pp. 87–88).

5. From Marr's universalism to Russian nationalism: Eurasianists as the missing link

Marr's theory of the intrinsic interconnection of the languages was related to the regime's belief in the coming of worldwide revolution, which would transform backward Russia, at least from the Marxist perspective, into the leader of the world community. These dreams were not entirely fiction. In the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution, the revolutionary movement had errupted in many countries in Europe and was especially strong in Germany. The social upheaval was well supported by the Red Army, which plunged deeply into Poland with the goal of a rich Germany. Leon Trotsky, commander-in-chief, had been inspired by a mixture of a new peculiar form of nationalism and revolutionary élan. His war effort in fighting Poland had received the full blessing of some officers of the Russian imperial army, who saw in the war the transition from early internationalism to primordial healthy Russian nationalism.

The merger of nationalism and socialist ideology led to what is called "National Bolshevism." By the 1920s, the dreams of worldwide revolution started to be removed from the realm of practical politics and became increasingly an abstract shibboleth, rather like the assumption among the Christian ideologists that all Christians, in fact, all humans, are brothers and sisters, albeit in both cases this assumption had and has little if any practical implications for the majority. While the dream of a worldwide proletariat started to subside, the emphasis was put increasingly on the unity of the people of the USSR. As a matter of fact, the Soviet ideologists started to emphasize that Soviet people were united not only because of the same social background—after 1929, the regime ideologists proclaimed that the people of the USSR had purged "exploitive" classes (landlords and capitalists) from their midst—not only because of their common goals, building a socialist, and later communist, society, but because of their common historical roots that could be traced to almost the prehistoric past. "Eurasianists"—a group of émigrés—had elaborated on this theory and promulgated that the people of Russia/Eurasia had historically constituted an organic unity. Their culture and languages were also interrelated; and it was this common space and historical destiny, not the formal linguistic roots, that were the more important. In the context of this theory, elaborated on, for example, by such Eurasian-minded linguists as Prince Trubetskoy and Roman Jacobson, Russian was closer to the Turkic languages of Russia/Eurasia than to the languages of Western Slavs, plainly because Western Slavs lived outside Eurasian space. The relationship between Eurasianist linguists and Marr was complicated. Some flatly discarded Marr's theories and even contemptuously compared Marr's writings with those of a person from a madhouse (Golubeva, 2002, pp. 69). Besides a scholarly disagreement, one should remember the political and personal disagreement, so to speak. Still, a close look indicates that there was much similarity between Eurasianist linguistics—and Eurasianism as a creed in general—and Marr's theories.

The Eurasianists' relationship to Marr was deeply connected with the Eurasianist views on the Soviet regime. And, here, one could see that the relationship of Eurasianists to the Soviet regime was not totally antagonistic. To start with, Left Eurasianists—those who split from the mainstream—had a strong drive toward the Soviet regime, quite a few of them plainly identified themselves with the regime and assumed that this regime actually had a global mission to save humanity not just from social problems but even from what could be called its metaphysical ills. For example, the Left Eurasianists believed that the Soviet leaders had followed the pathway of Nikolai Fedorov, the extravagant savant of pre-revolutionary Russia who assumed that Russia's goal is to lead humanity to complete victory over nature, spreading humanity over the cosmos and even the resurrection of the dead.

Mainstream Eurasianists, including leading Eurasianist linguists such as Trubetskoy, also expressed a positive feeling toward the regime, mostly because of the increasing integration of cultures of the people of Russia/Eurasia and the developing cultures of the ethnic minorities of Russia/Eurasia. Still, conservative Eurasianists distanced themselves from the regime and often looked at it with hostility. Besides ideological problems with the regime, they had a personal reason. Their colleagues and relatives who remained in the USSR suffered, and their own position in emigration was often precarious, whereas those who were incorporated in the Soviet establishment enjoyed perks, the good life, and stability; at least, those in emigration often perceived this to be the case, especially before the wave of terror in the 1930s. For quite a few of these people, Marr was a good example of an unprincipled scholar, who actually sold himself to new masters for personal comfort and power. Moreover, Marr was seen as a person whose accusation against those who disagreed with him led to the direct intervention of the authorities; or, at least, the authorities had taken Marr's accusations as a good excuse for repression. All of this could hardly help Marr to emerge as a positive figure in the eyes of many Eurasianists who knew him and/or his work. Still, Marr was not completely ostracized. For example, he engaged in correspondence with a leading Eurasianist historian–George Vernadsky, the son of the Soviet Academician Vladimir Vernadsky who, together with Edouard Le Roy, was the inventor of the term "noosphere," the sphere of human thought and activities with cosmic dimension, and a teacher and researcher at Yale University.[4] The very fact that Vernadsky was engaged in correspondence with Marr indicated that Eurasianism and Marr's theories had a lot in

[4] Their correspondence is preserved in Vernadsky Collection in the Bakhmet'ev Archives in Columbia University.

common. Both discarded the well-established connection between language/culture and particular ethnic groups and saw the connections between languages/cultures that were seen as being completely different from each other by the majority of their colleagues. In a way, their linguistic/cultural construction was arbitrary; they were post-modernistic arbitrary. They were actually creators of "imagined communities," if one would use Benedict Anderson's famous term. The major difference seen between Marr's theories and those of Eurasianists was geographic limits. For Marr, all the world languages were actually interdependent and related, whereas for Eurasianists everything was related to the space of Russia/Eurasia. While Eurasianists, especially in their early reasoning, regarded all the people of Russia/Eurasia and their culture/language as being equally important, as time progressed, they increasingly saw Russians as the key element of Eurasia/Russia. The Russian culture and language became pivotal. It is true that Eurasian people do constitute a brotherly family of languages/culture; still, in this family it was the Russians who played the role of benign "older brothers" in linguistic/cultural and, implicitly, political arrangements. And it was Eurasianism—despite its position of émigré teaching—that provided the connection between Marr's linguistic/cultural universalism—linguist backdrop for the theory of world revolution—to the ideology of Russian nationalism, in its peculiar, idiosyncratic, arrangement that became the leading creed in the late Stalin USSR. Here, Marr's theories were hardly acceptable and was discarded by the regime.

6. The rise of Russian nationalism and the increasing role of ethnic Russians as "older brothers"

The notion of the Soviet people as a mosaic of various ethnic groups bound together not just by the common, present-day social positions, the striving to build socialism and, later, communism, but also because of their common historical roots continued to be an essential element of Soviet ideology in the post-WWII era. Still, Russian nationalism started to be increasingly pronounced; and ethnic Russians increasingly played the role of "older" and, therefore, major "brothers" in the Soviet family. The great importance of the state, in late Stalinist Russia/USSR demanded the emphasis on unity of all ethnic Russians, regardless of social position. And, here, the cosmopolitan internationalism of Marr's theories were one of the victims of the new trends.

This process of ideological transformation had started in the late 1920s/early 1930s and reached its peak during the WWII and, especially, post-WWII periods. The Bolshevik Revolution in this reading was important not because it started the transformation of the global community into a socialistic society of the future but because it had forged the mighty Russian state. In fact, in this interpretation, history is seen not as the transition from capitalism to socialism, as was suggested by Marxism and early Leninism, but as the progressive aggrandizement of the Russian state, endowed with a messianic mission. This interpretation of history necessitates the end of the early internationalist views, with rather negative views on the Russian state. These views could be found in the works of Mikhail Pokrovsky, who fully supported Marr, and whose views, implicitly, regarded as being quite similar to his own (Thomas, 1957, pp. 92). Besides the attack of the Pokrovsky school of interpretation of history, especially Russian history, these changes of ideological paradigms manifested themselves in many other ways. Indeed, the increasing importance of the Russian state and ethnic Russians led to an interest in everything Slavic.

The study of Slavic civilization was hardly encouraged in the early period of Soviet history as a subject closely connected with Russian nationalism and nationalism in general; all of this was anathema in early Soviet ideology. Marr, following the general ideological trend, could hardly appreciate the study of Slavic languages and cultures, which implied, at least in the context of traditional Slavic studies, that the Slavonic languages were a branch of Indo-European languages that themselves were tightly connected with particular ethnic groups but not with a particular stage of development or some mystical conqueror who mastered the original Japhetic folk. And it was not surprising that Russian Slavists were decimated by authorities and possibly not without Marr's encouragement. Still, the situation started to change by the 1930s as war increasingly loomed on the horizon, with Germany as one of the most likely foes. The increasingly nationalistic patriotism changed the very nature of the visualization of the USSR's future war. It became distinctly different from what one could find in Soviet ideology in the 1920s. The increasing international tensions and corresponding increasing stress on Russian nationalism framed a possible confrontation with the Germans not as a struggle between the capitalist West and socialist Russia/USSR but as a primordial struggle between Slavs, Russians first of all, and Germans. This could be easily seen in Sergei Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*, which dealt with the Russian fight against the Teutonic knights in the 13th century. The interest in Slavic civilizations was revived. During WWII, Slavophilism provided additional ideological justification for Soviet war efforts, which, in this case, were placed in the context of the centuries-old struggle between the Slavs and Germany. Therefore, it was not surprising that in 1943 a Department of Slavic Studies was opened in Moscow State University (Alpatov, 1991, pp. 131). By the end of WWII and the emergence of the Soviet/Russian East European empire, the importance of Slavic civilization was fully legitimized. One of the manifestations of these processes was the official renewed interest in a modified form of Slavophilism that emphasized the leading role of ethnic Russians in the Slavic family. The theory did not just justify the close ties between ethnic Russians and Ukrainians and Belorussians—who constitute the central Slavic core of the USSR—but also provided justification for the emerging East European, mostly Slavic, empire. The USSR, with its Slavic core, was given, at least in the context of this theory, a role as the natural protector/patron of the Slavic people in Europe, the role allotted by pre-revolutionary Slavophiles to the Russian monarchy.

Marr's theory emphasized the similarities of languages and their clear connection with the social position of those who spoke the languages. This theory had worked in the beginning of Soviet history; at the same time, it had

become increasingly unworkable by the 1920s and, even more so after WWII when Russian nationalism became an integral part of Soviet ideology. And while Marxism-Leninism continued to be the official ideology, Russian nationalism had increasingly played the leading role in official and public discourse. As a matter of fact, the real, functional ideology of the regime could be defined as National-Bolshevism. The very nature of this ideology was the assumption that the glory of the Bolshevik Revolution and the Soviet regime was not so much the promotion of worldwide revolution as the strengthening of the Russian state. Russian nationalism implied the unity of all Russians—the major ethnic group of the USSR. This unity was arranged along ethnic lines, not so much along social lines; and it also implied a stress on ethnic Russians' common origin and illustrious past.

Marr's theories were actually ideological misfits, so to speak, already by the 1930s; and his theories were not entirely discarded because of what might be considered an intellectual/ideological inertia, an obscurity of linguistic and state interest in other intellectual realms. Marr himself was dead; thus he could not create a problem. Finally, one of the possible reasons was that Marr was Georgian, the same ethnicity as Stalin; and accusations of being not totally pro-Russian held against one Georgian could have a negative association with Stalin at a time when he was shaping his image as the great Russian patriot. All of the complexity of the political-ideological trends in the late Stalinist USSR explains why that by the late 1940s, when the emphasis on Russian nationalism had reached its peak, Marr's teaching was still not officially discarded; and he continued to be regarded, officially, as a great Soviet linguist. Still, the new ideological element required a reinterpretation of Marr's teaching.

Sensing the changes in the intellectual/political climate, those who dealt with Marr's intellectual heritage tried to transform him into a good Russian patriot who understood the importance of ethnic Russians for the development of the Russian state. V. A. Mikhankova, the author of the quoted work on Marr, engaged in this work with enthusiasm.

As the experienced ideological cadre—and otherwise Mikhankova would not have been employed nor her work published—she understood the importance of the current ideological trends. One of them was the discarding of the dangerous "Norman theory," whose supporters maintain that Kievan Russia was built by Normans. This theory downplayed the historical legitimacy of ethnic Russians as the major ethnic group that built the Russian state and, implicitly, reduced them to just one of the ethnic groups of the state. The Eurasianists did the same; and their emphasis on the role of other, non-Slavic, people of Eurasia in the building of Russia was also out of order in the current ideological climate. Fully understood, the new trend, Mikhankova stated, that what Marr emphasized was that Russians were an indigenous people of Russia and they did not come from other places. The stress on the fact that various people—Russians/Slavs in general—were an indigenous people was important in the neo-traditionalist ideology of the late Stalin era, for it emphasized the legitimacy of Russians/Slavs as residents of what would be the Russian state in the future. At the same time, this stress on Slavic/Russians actual over-presence in the territory of the East European plain implicitly discarded the postulates of Eurasianists and Eurasianist-sounding ideologists of the early Soviet period, who emphasized that the Slavs were just one among many of the people who lived in Northern Eurasia.[5] Rejecting this notion, Mikhankova stated that Marr fully understood that it was Russians and other Slavic people who were the builders of the Kievan state (Mikhankova, 1949, pp. 295). The Slavic languages, including the Russian language, had developed internally; and the role of other languages in the formation of the Russian language should not be overestimated (pp. 291–294). As a matter of fact, Marr emphasized that the Russian language should be the focus of Soviet researchers (pp. 293). In this presentation of Marr's views, he was not just a great Russian patriot but he actually despised the West. It was not just Western scholars who were narrow-minded ideologists of the bourgeois, but Western life itself was actually primitive and poor. It was noted in this respect that when Marr visited Germany, he found that the people lived extremely poorly and did not even eat well (pp. 463). The attempt to make Marr a good Russian patriot, and, consequently, a praiseworthy figure, had been made before Stalin's criticism of Marr in this regard; and praise of Marr would be immediately stopped when Stalin made it clear what he thought about Marr.

Marr's theories with their universal appeal were already at odds with the general political-ideological trends in the 1930s. Even less did his theories fit the ideological milieu of the late 1940s-early 1950s. For various reasons, Marr's theories had not been a subject of the several major ideological campaigns of the late Stalinist era, when the state rallied against the West not so much as a manifestation of capitalism but plainly because the West was a foreign civilization that had been hostile to Russia since the dawn of Russian history. One might assume that Stalin was still reluctant to attack his fellow Georgians for not being good Russian patriots, for this could still cast an unfavorable shade upon him. And it is this that made it possible for some Soviet ideologists to transform Marr into a wholesome Russian nationalist. Still, a few years before Stalin's death, he took a decisive step in unmasking Marr's follies. One possible explanation was that by the end of his life, Stalin felt himself so much Russian and so much detached from the Georgians—despite his heavy accent—and so much above ordinary mortals that he believed that the critics of Marr would hardly tarnish his image in any way. At the same time, Marr's internationalism, mixed with what could be called by Stalin as critics of a sort of vulgar

[5] This stress on historical legitimacy as being related to the assumption that this or that people had lived in a particular region from centuries or even millennia looks strange to people of the New World, e.g., Americans and Canadians, most of whom, besides of course, Indians, are descendants of émigrés who came to the place relatively recently. This notion, however, is quite important in other parts of the globe, especially among the members of what could be defined as traditionalist society, or society with a strong traditionalist streak in their political culture. For them, the notion that their ancestors had lived on this land for centuries/millennia is quite important for legitimacy.

Marxism, was clearly incongruous with the ideological architectonics of late Stalinism.

For this reason, Marr's theories were resolutely discarded by Stalin, who had blasted them, in one of his most well-known works on purely scientific subjects. Stalin presented Mars theories as having no scientific validity. Elaborating on Marr's problems,Stalin maintained that Russians had developed their distinct language from the beginning of their history. Stalin also asserted that language did not change along with historical development—at least not as drastically as Marr suggested—and that both the masses and the elite used the same language (I.V Stalin, 1950). Stalin also mocked Marr's assumption that each class had its language. At best, one could assume, Stalin stated, that some professional groups had their distinct argo but not a language (Stalin, 1930, p. 409). Moreover, Stalin asserted that the language could not be described as being similar to culture and state. It is not a "superstructure" but a phenomenon that belongs to both "base" and "superstructure (Stalin, 2001, pp. 384–387)." Stalin also discarded Marr's other pet project—the idea of the essential intrinsic sameness of all languages, which was implicitly connected with the assumption that languages are moving to an increasing fusion as time progresses. And this foreshadowed the future rise of the one language, the way of communication for the toilers' future worldwide socialist society. Elaborating on this notion, Stalin pointed out that some people assumed that he actually supported Marr's theories and quoted his statement in this regard at the 16th Party Congress. This is a misunderstanding, he said. The fusion of the languages in one tongue is a process of the distant future, the time of the victory of socialism all over the world (Stalin, 1930, pp. 415). At the same time, Stalin implied, the emphasis should not be on discussions about the distant future but on the study of present-day languages in their specificity and concreteness. Moreover, the present-day languages, indeed, emerged from different linguistic groups and, implicitly, from different people; and there is evidence of "proto-languages (Stalin, 2001, pp. 404)." Stalin also blasted Marr's approach to the achievement of linguistics in the past (pp. 402). Marr, Stalin pointed out, with an air of sarcasm, saw himself as the greatest scholar, who should be the only fountain of ultimate wisdom. Here, Stalin, of course, implicitly, placed the criticism of Marr's ambition in a broader ideological context. The late Stalinism, with the emphasis on Russian nationalism not only restored the importance of the Russian past (this had already been done in the late 1920s–30s) but made Russia's achievements the unsurpassable ones in the time immemorial in all aspects of life, including science. At the same time, Western achievements, in the past and in the present, were marginalized or discarded. So, when Stalin attacked Marr, disregarding the achievements of his predecessors, Stalin meant not the Western linguists but the Russian linguists of prerevolutionary Russia and those who continued to work under Soviet regimes. In conclusion, Stalin, with his characteristic hypocrisy, attacked Marr (who was dead by that time) for being absolutely intolerant of the opinion of others; and he purged people from their jobs just because they disagreed with his theories (pp. 403). Stalin, of course, failed to mention that in his lifetime Marr could hardly do anything without his, Stalin's, direct approval. The official discarding of Marr's theories had provided the opportunity for those who disagreed with Marr to attack their fallen idol. For some time, there was an opportunity to attack the prevailing dogma, and Marr's detractors were heartened by Stalin's statement that science could not exist without free discussion. Still, for the vast majority engaged in the anti-Marr drive, the support of anti-Marr views was caused by the desire to hold a job and avoid the direct repression of the state, which, by the end of the Stalinist era increasingly employed the punishment prevailing in the modern West–where those who did not fit lost their jobs. And this required not just discarding Marr's theories as purely false scholarly work but relating their criticism with the entire ideological construction of the regime at that time. In a way, those who attacked Marr were engaged in the same activities in which Marr and his supporters had engaged in the past, when they proclaimed that those who disagreed with Marr had not just made scholarly mistakes but actually committed ideological/political crimes.

Stalin's publication immediately led to the response of the Soviet establishment. In 1951, special meetings of representatives of the four leading humanity/social science-focused institutions—Institute of Language, Institute of Archeology, Institute of Ethnography and Institute of History—took place. Marr's and related theories were discarded (Predislovie, 1953). And, apparently at these meetings, it was proclaimed that Marr's theories were not only wrong from a scholarly point of view, but also politically inappropriate, albeit the political accusations were still wrapped in pseudo-scholarly rhetoric.

Stalin's proclamations, and later those of leading Soviet scholars, that Marr's theories were completely unacceptable, led to an array of publications that maintained that Marr's theories had no scholarly value (Tret'iakov, 1953). This, however, was just a code word for finding in Marr's theories not just scholarly problems but profoundly serious political problems. The theories were "politically incorrect," which required appropriate responses on all levels. Indeed, the art of the Soviet social scientists, especially during the Stalin era, was to distill the general, sometimes abstract, statements of the leader and elaborate on what he just implied. This had provided the leader, Stalin this case, the role of detached guru, who provided just general guidance and did not engage in too detailed an analysis that could reveal that the leader did not know everything.

The Soviet ideologists quickly discovered that the major reason for Stalin to reconsider his view on Marr was due to Marr's theory disregarding the centrality of ethnic Russians and the Russian language and culture as the major building block of the pre-Revolutionary Russian state and, later, the USSR. And it is not surprising that Soviet linguists and historians attacked these statements with gusto.

In this new interpretation of Marr's work, he was transformed into a scholar who disregarded and marginalized the role of ethnic Russians, their culture and language, in building up the Russian state, and finding in it too much of an influence of the culture and language of the people who lived there before the Slavs (Levin, pp. 234). While Marr had marginalized the role of the Russian

language and ethnic Russians, he had paid too much attention and, as the critic implied, provided the wrong interpretation of the role of non-Russian people on the territory of the Russian state/USSR. And this was done not only by Marr but also by a score of people intellectually related to him. Marr and those who were in his intellectual sphere made mistakes in dealing with the Jews and Judaism. This was a glaring example of Marr and similar people's scholarly, and, even more, political, problems.

As was noted above, the attacks against Marr's theories were mostly due to the fact that they provided no room for Russian nationalism and espoused a rather modest role for ethnic Russians, reflecting the universal millenarian universalism of the early years of the regime, which saw itself as the spearhead of world revolution. This period was also profoundly, anti-state, at least from the ideological perspective. One should, of course, have no illusions in regard to real life. The Soviet regime had implemented the reign of terror from August/September 1918 and had been engaged in a "discipline and punish" policy—if one would use the title of the famous Michel Foucault book—from then on. And while the state had consistently increased its control over society, the intellectual process was lagging in actual changes of ideological direction. For a while, the Soviet ideologists continued to visualize worldwide revolution as a spontaneous, almost anarchical, torrent, similar to that of the Bolshevik revolution. At least this was a vision of the revolution by some Soviet writers of the early Soviet era, Isaac Babel, for example. The anti-statist image of the socialists was also grounded in the emerging Soviet holy writ—Lenin's writing. In his work, *State and Revolution*, Lenin regarded the Soviet state as quite different from that bourgeois state. The socialist state was seen here as much less controlling and repressive than the bourgeois state plainly because the Soviet state rested on the support of the vast majority of the people—the workers and peasants. It is true that Lenin had composed his work before the Bolshevik revolution. Still, it had never been discarded, and it became a part of the emerging Soviet canonical writings. This anti-statist message of Lenin's writing was especially strong in the early years of the Soviet regime when the pristine myth of the revolution as the manifestation of the people's will was still fresh in the minds of Soviet ideologists. The future was visualized as a harmonious society in which the state as an institution hovering over society would actually disappear. The dream not only was over by the late 1940s, early 1950s, but the Russian state had reemerged not just as a crucial aspect of Russian life but almost as a divine force led by a semi-divine leader: Stalin. The crucial, focal importance of the state in late Stalinism made it different not only from the early Soviet ideology but also to some degree from Nazi ideology where, despite the assertion that the "*Deutschland über alles*," (Germany is over all) the stress was not so much on the state as on the "folk," the Germans–Aryan folk in general. The stress on the state in the ideology of the regime had a particular implication for Russian nationalism. Since the state soared above all ethnic groups of the empire, it was detached from a fixed affiliation with any ethnic group, even from ethnic Russians, despite their endless glorification by official ideology. Indeed, it was mostly ethnic Russians who were the raw material from which the state had taken most of the resources to aggrandize itself.

It was ethnic Russians–who were the majority of the peasants and who were the majority of *kolhozniki* (collective farm members)—who, in a way, were nothing but state bondsmen who provided the state with foodstuffs and raw materials. It was ethnic Russians who mostly populated the gulags and who were out-and-out state slaves. And it was ethnic Russians who were the major source for the Red Army engaged in defending the country and the spread of the empire. This use of ethnic Russians as material for building the mighty USSR was not unique; and one could easily find similarities between the USSR, especially in its Stalinist version, and the Oriental despotism of the past, as had been noted by Karl August Witfogell (1896–1988) several generations ago in his classic work, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power*. Indeed, it was Chinese peasants who were the major pool for coolie labor, which produced the Great Wall, Great Canal and similar constructions of the ancient Chinese. All of this was done by Oriental despotic regimes, not because the Chinese state was hostile to the Chinese or was the Soviet/Russian state hostile to ethnic Russians—albeit many enemies of the Soviet regime proclaimed that this was, indeed, the case—but, plainly, because both the Han Chinese and the Russians were the majority, an easily available resource. The Oriental despotic state had no other interest but itself and actually approached the majority in the same way as the European powers of the 19th century and the Nazi state approached others—subjugated colonial people, or "*untermensh*" in more general terms. This absolute, divine-like position of the state in the late Stalinist USSR/Russia had created a sense of the anti-Russian nature of the state and its profound detachment from ethnic Russians.[6] The notion of Sovietness is deeply connected with the divine nature of the absolute state, transcending the narrow definition of Russian nationalism much more than the sense of "Aryanism" transcended the narrowly understood sense of "Germanism." Besides the absolute power of the state, there were other restraints for full-blown Russian nationalism in its racial, biological definition. European racism was the product of capitalist modernity with its private property and, therefore, the sacredness of law, that application had transcended interpersonal relationships. This was absent in Stalinist Russia/USSR, the social/economic characteristics of which were quite similar to those of Oriental despotism. For all these reasons, Russian nationalism has never accepted the racial rigidity of the Nazis. It has been, in various degrees, tempered with "Eurasianism" of a sort. The minorities were implicitly accepted as participants in building of the Russian state, and even culture, in their position of "younger brothers." The point was to be selective. While some minorities were indeed a "younger brother" of the family, others were

[6] This alienation of the Russian state, especially in the Soviet period, and the paramount role of the state is admitted by modern Western historians. And some Western historians who, following many Russian nationalist-minded dissidents, believed that Russians were actually victims of the Soviet state, which in no way should be equated with Russia/Russians. As an example of such views, see, Hosking (2006).

actually enemies or potentially enemies in the midst of the family. Jews were clearly denigrated as being pseudo brothers and actually enemies of the Russians, Soviet people in general, and, of course, the state, albeit, here, the Jews are seen purely as an ethnic/racial category.

The Jews' role was quite different in the very beginning of the Soviet regime, where Jews were its most ardent supporters. Not only were some of the leading Bolsheviks Jewish—from an ethnic perspective, of course—Trotsky, Aleksandr Zinov'ev and Lev Kamenev could serve as examples; but the Jews had permeated all segments of the Soviet bureaucracy, from cultural institutions to the secret police. The changes in the state's approach to the Jews, of course, did not change very much the approach of the masses—the populace—especially in the western part of the state, e.g., Ukraine, which had been anti-Semitic for centuries. The state also started slowly to change the approach to the Jews as time progressed. This could be traced to the late 1920s and coincided with the increasing role of Russian nationalism as well as a drive against Trotsky and his supporters, quite a few of them Jewish. Still, the anti-Semitic policy of the regime was not developed until the post-WWII period and coincided with a certain debacle in the Middle East. The story relates with the emergence of Israel. In the process of the Israeli war with its Arab neighbors, the USSR was on the side of Israel; and Czheckoslavakia, already under Soviet control, had provided the Israeli army with weapons. The assumption that Israel would be on the side of the USSR was not groundless. Israeli Jews, mostly Jews from Eastern Europe, saw the Red Army as the deliverer from the Nazis; and socialist trends were quite strong in Israeli society. Still, these hopes did not materialize; and Israel became increasingly seen as a bulwark of the West. This accelerated the anti-Semitic drive in the Soviet elite; and Jews, under the disguise of "rootless cosmopolitans," became not "younger brothers" but a type of "fifth column" in the midst of the USSR.

Marr and scores of his followers, or those who could be affiliated with him directly or indirectly, had shared a philo-Semitic inclination, quite popular in the early years of the Soviet regime. And now these feelings and intellectual affiliations became liabilities. This was criticized in the context of new ideological paradigms. Those who had been Marr supporters quite recently had recanted their views with special vigor (Zhinkov) and implied that Marr's attempt to find an important role for the Semitic languages was an ideological blunder. It also was discovered, of course, that Marr's statement that the Georgian language and the Semitic languages are quite close was absolutely wrong. Marr's wrong vision of the Semitic languages and their relationship with the languages of the wholesome minorities of the USSR/Russia was directly connected with the discarding of the role of Jews and Judaism in the territory of Russia/the USSR.[7]

The anti-Semitic drive of the late Stalinist era and, of course, the later period of the Soviet regime could not be understood out of the context of the Soviet ideology of that period. The official Soviet anti-Semitism had a clear specific. While openly anti-Semitic jokes and statements were quite common in private conversation and since the beginning of the post-WWII period the authorities had engaged in a relentless drive to limit the number of Jews—seen, of course, here, as a purely ethnic category and defined by the famous "fifth clause" (*Piatyi punkt*) in the internal Soviet passport—in what authorities regarded as sensitive jobs, the official propaganda had never attacked Jews openly. From this perspective, the Soviet propaganda was quite different from that of the Nazis; and this created an illusion among quite a few foreign observers that anti-Semitism was foreign to official Soviet discourse. When Soviet official propaganda engaged in an anti- Semitic drive, it usually did this indirectly. This was the case with the late Stalinist era. Certain historical images and the interpretation of the events of the past were among the ways for Soviet authorities to convey their views and interpretation of the Khazar Kingdom, was her a quite important.

Khazars were Turkic people who created a strong state in the Volga region in the early Middle Ages. The peculiarity of the Khazars was that they, at least their elite, had professed Judiasm; and this made it possible to relate the Khazars with Jews and their contribution to Russian history, broadly defined. This made the Khazars the target in the late Stalinist Russia/USSR; and attacks against the interpretation of Khazar history were, implicitly, connected to critics of Marr and those who were close to him. While attacks against the Khazars clearly had anti-Semitic implications and were related to Stalin's drive against "rootless cosmopolitats," (e.g., Russian Jews, in this case), the official interpretation of denigrating Khazars was of a different nature and was disguised as a scholarly or, at least, quasi-scholarly critique. Moreover, implicitly anti-Semitic statements could be made by Jews themselves, which should underscore the supposed impartiality of the statements. It was emphasized by N. Ia. Merpet, the Soviet scholar and a Jew, judging by his family name[8] that Khazars were glorified by reactionary pre-revolutionary historiography.

The Soviet scholars should have moved in a different direction. They should have understood that the wrong interpretation of Khazar history had serious political implications; and it is not surprising that *Pravda* criticized Mikhail Artamonov's work on the Khazars (Merpet, pp. 130). The very fact that the state's major newspaper

[7] The attacks against Jews and Judaism in connection with Marr's theory apparently enhanced the face that quite a few of Marr's supporters were Jews for whom the Bolshevik Revolution provided the opportunity for social mobility. One of them was a certain V. B. Aptekar,' who worked in the Communists Academy. See: Golubeva (2002, pp. 68).

[8] One might add that those Russian Jews who were not ready to emphasize their love for Russia/Russians and who were—in addition to their ethnicity guilty in other respects, e.g., were seen as followers/friends of Marr—could well be purged from their jobs during the late Stalinist drive against "rootless" cosmopolitans. This was, for example, the case with Ol'ga Freidenberg (1890–1955), a Jewish scholar and chair of the Department of Classical Languages and Literature at Leningrad State University. Not only was she Jewish but Marr was her mentor. It was not surprising that she lost her job during the drive against "rootless cosmopolitans." On Freidenberg's fate, see Nina Perlina, 1992.

regarded the critique of books on what seems to be an abstract subject of a bygone era indicated the clear political sensitivity of Khazar study and shows that those who approached the Khazars in the wrong way committed not just scholarly but, actually, quite serious political transgressions by presenting the Khazar Kingdom as a progressive force (Predisolovie, 1953, pp. 6). Artamonov's mistake was that he emphasized too much the cultural and social-economic development of the Khazar state. He did not reveal the low level of Khazar culture (Merpet, pp. 166–168.). Still, not only was the Khazar state much more culturally inferior in comparison to the Kievan state, but it actually had no culture at all and lived by plunder.[9] Merpet directly connected the criticism of Artamonov and other Soviet scholars of the pro-Khazar view with the criticism of Marr. The very fact that Marr had paid so much attention to the Khazars and overestimated their role, ignoring their predatory character, was one of the strong indications of how wrong he was in his theory (Merpet, pp. 170, 177–178). It was also implied in this connection that Marr and those who followed him in interpretations of the Khazars made not just serious scholarly blunders but also political mistakes. As a matter of fact, both were interrelated. The political implications of Marr and his followers' approach to the Khazars was related to the fact that Pokrovsky was also attacked for his wrong approach to the Khazars. Pokrovsky had supported Marr's views; and his pro-Khazar, actually Judophilic stances, were related with a despise of Russian history, bordering on "Russophobia," which was quite in vogue in the beginning of the Soviet regime. It was not just the glorification of the Jewish Khazars at the expense of Russians that created serious problems; but also Marr and related scholars' praise of a nomadic people also became unacceptable.

The very fact that some ethnic minorities of the USSR/Russia were nomadic people in the past or were still nomadic was not actually a problem for the late Stalin's period ideologists. Quite a few nomadic people were fully accepted in their role of benign "younger brothers" of the Russian/Soviet family. The others, mostly extinct, could be plainly ignored or mentioned only in a cursory way. Still, others should be scrutinized and cast in the category of alien and harmful forces in a way similar to the Jews were judged. And, here, the images of nomads had been placed in a different ideological context, which one could find in the early Soviet era.

In the beginning of the Soviet regime, the image of the nomads had been shaped by an intrinsic "Eurasianism" of the early Soviet ideology. The ideologists in Russia/the Soviet Union saw as being more close to the revolutionary, or potentially revolutionary East than to the West. The image of nomads who struck the oppressive and outdated Roman Empire, destroying Rome and, thus, the slave owners "mode of production," and the slave owners' Roman Empire subsequent replacement by a more progressive feudalism was supported by the Marxist vision of history. The hordes of invading, vandalizing, barbarians were, implicitly, related here with images of the Russians—in fact, of worldwide revolutionary masses—that through violence and anarchic disorder brought to the world a new, progressive, order. This image of the nomads that could be found in the words of Russian writers and poets inside Russia (Aleksandr Block with his *Scythians*) and in emigration (one could point here to Yvegeny Zamiatin's *Attila*).

This image of Russians as Asiatic nomads in Russian thought was reinforced by similar images in the West, which had quite a long history and could be traced back at least to 19th century French and Polish thought and even before. In the late 19th century-early-20th century, these images received an additional boost. Kaiser Wilhelm developed the image of the "Yellow Peril; " and, later, Spengler saw the "declining West," quite similar to the Roman Empire, breathing its last under the invasion of a vigorous East, with Russians similar to Mongols and Huns. Hitler, following in Spengler's footsteps, while appreciating the Mongol's ruthless brutality and drive for worldwide conquest, which he tried to emulate, still regarded the East as being a dangerous neighbor. While deeply suspicious of the Japanese, despite the alliance, he definitely saw Russians as Asiatic barbarians incarnated, the mortal threat of the Nazi Reich, identified here with the Roman Empire. The very fact that it was the western enemies of the regime—the intellectuals from the capitalist states of Europe—who looked at Russians as similar to Asiatic barbarians provided the additional rationale for the Soviet ideologists to look at these barbarians with approving eyes. And it was not surprising that this image of Asian nomadic people, such as the Huns, as a force that could be equated with the revolutionary proletariat, was quite poplar not just in Soviet literature but also in Soviet historiography; and it was carried on until the late Stalinist era. This was the case, for example, with A. N. Bershtam, the author of a book on the Huns. Marr was also implicitly connected with this glorification of the Nomadic people, for Marr saw them as a legitimate part of the Japhetic family and representative of the downtrodden masses, who fought against the oppressive order. Their destructive waves on agricultural/sedentary societies and their states were regarded in this context as a manifestation of revolutionary exuberance and, implicitly, quite progressive.

By the late Stalinism, Marr's ideological emphasis was quite different from that of the early Soviet period. Anarchical violence and vandalism under any pretext were out of fashion; and the state, as was noted before, had reemerged as an essential part of discourse. It was praise not of anarchical exuberance of the revolutionary masses but of order and power. Indeed, even revolutionary workers and soldiers and sailors who emerged in the visual presentation of the Bolshevik Revolution were an orderly force that strictly followed the orders of the party and its leader—Lenin. The turnaround, when the praise of anarchical disorder was replaced with the glorification of a strong state, certainly was not a unique Russian/Soviet phenomenon. The same could be seen in Mao's China when, upon the end of the Cultural Revolution, Mao immediately started to praise the First Emperor of Qin who, along with many other deeds, imposed strict order in the state.

[9] Tret'iakov (1953, pp. 48); on the criticism of M. I. Artamonov's views on the Khazar Kingdom, see also: Kiselev, pp. 130.

Following the changes in the ideological trends, the Soviet ideologist changed their views of the many nomadic people. While before, in the early periods of Russian history, they were praised, now they were actually viewed as a reactionary force. Therefore, they were seen now as the mortal enemies of the Kievan state. Moreover, even those nomadic people who were not directly responsible for attacking Russians in any period of its history still were blacklisted. The Huns, for example, could easily be related with the Pechenegs, the Polovtsy and the Mongols, the enemies of the Kievan state, at least in this interpretation. They could also be related with the Nazis; and, indeed, in the minds of most Russians—and not just ideologists of the regime—the recent war with Germany was in a certain natural way connected with the calamities of the past in which nomadic Asians, such as the Mongols, had played the leading role. It is not surprising that the views of those historians (such as Bershtam) who found a positive aspect in the Huns' invasion were rejected. At the same time, their defeat by coalition forces of a sort (which included Romans) were implicitly praised.[10] Bershtam was definitely not alone in facing the problems with the state. This was also the fate of those historians who were accused of finding positive aspects in the Mongol conquerors of Russia (Krupnov; Tret'iakov, 1953, pp. 48) or of the Turkic people in general, who were also seen as basically primitive nomads (Chikobava, 1951–1952b). These attacks on Turkic people could well be explained if one would remember that since the beginning of the Cold War, Turkey, had become a member of NATO; and Turkey, with which the USSR had a lot of problems, was definitely on Stalin's black list. This provided a reason for Soviet ideologists to look at the Turkic peoples' contribution to world civilization with skepticism. The very fact that Marr believed the Turkish language as having been possibly one of the most ancient of languages—and that Turkey's long linguistic pedigree provided the Turkish language and culture with certain cultural/political respectability—provided the authorities with an additional reason to blast Marr.[11] This criticism of Marr and those who could be seen as loosely affiliated with his ideological allies struck on several fronts. All of them were connected by the undercurrent of an idea—the importance of the Russian state and ethnic Russians as the major builders of the state. This required not just upholding the notion about the uniqueness of the Russian language tightly connected with ethnic Russians, and the praise of ethnic Russians, but also required downplaying the role of ethnic minorities, even those who were indigenous people of Russia/the USSR. One should add that Soviet ideologists weren't consistent in their criticism of Marr and his ideological position in general. While for most Russian critics, Marr's major problems were implicitly his discard of the importance of the Russian language and of Russians as an ethnic group, for others Marr's problems were of a different nature. For example, he did not pay much attention to the study of the languages of those people of the USSR who belong to the Turkic and Ugro-Finnic linguistic groups (Sebriakova).

7. Conclusion

One could see from this study that what seems to be the abstract linguistic construction of Marrism—e.g., the notion of the essential sameness in the matrix of practically all languages and their easy transformation to each other, was clearly connected with the early dreams of the Soviet regime about the coming worldwide revolution and the unity of the global proletariat, toilers in the broad meaning of the word. As no revolutionary wave was in sight by the 1920s, the authorities started to insist not on the unity of the global proletariat but on the unity of the people of the USSR. Still, the early ideological trends had their own momentum; and, because there was no direct call from the above, many Soviet linguists continued to develop an early form of universalistic Marrism. Still, after WWII, when Russian nationalism became the most essential component in the official "National-Bolshevism" of the regime, where universalistic Marxism was just a fig leaf, the direct message was sent by no one but Stalin. At that point, the grave mistakes of Marrism and related phenomenon were revealed. This direct connection of the evolution of Marrism in the USSR with the general political arrangements of the regime possibly explains the approach to Marrism in the West.

It seems that Marrism should have fascinated generations of Western post-modernists, especially linguists. This would have been the case not just due to the importance of Marr in Soviet linguistics, but also to the general operational framework of post-modernists linguists;[12] and it would also have been due to the popularity of Russian/Soviet linguists when Russia/the USSR was a focal point of discussion in academia. Indeed, Roman Jakobson and Prince Trubetskoy, with their Eurasian and post-modernist slants, are seen as two founders of modern linguistics. Still, Marr has been almost forgotten; and little has been published about him, both in the USSR[13] and in the West.[14]

One of the possible explanations is that Marrism showed how strongly abstract theories seem to be shaped by societal restraints, often by direct application of power in this or that form, and punishment, either through paycheck or direct repression. Marr's case also shows how brazenly these restraints are used to shape intellectual activities. One should be fair here. Societal restraints and the punishment of troublemakers could be found in the "West" where checks and jobs—or, to be precise, not providing checks and jobs—is one major way of influencing intellectual trends in an acceptable direction. Still, only in the totalitarian regime, which does not just deprive those who dissent from livelihood—and it does this with much

[10] Tret'iakov, 1953, pp. 44; On the criticism of A. N. Bershtam's work, *The Notes on History of the Huns*, (*Ocherki po istorii gunov*), see also Kiselev.

[11] On Marr's approach to the Turkic language, see Tetik, 2002.

[12] On the explanation of Marr's theory in the context of postmodernism, see, Reznik, 2007.

[13] The first article fully elaborated on Marr seems to have been published only in 1997, more than 60 years after his death. See "Marr et Marrisme, 1997".

[14] On the few publications on Marr in English in the last 40–50 years, see Slezkine (1996).

more efficiency than in any Western societies—but plainly eliminates them in the jaws of the gulags, the societal/state control over intellectual activities has reached absolute perfectedness. Moreover, open application of force and the role of raw power in the production of intellectual output not only reveals the essential essence of the totalitarian regime but also implicitly the role of force in others, e.g. Western societies. This application of power as shaping the direction of intellectual inquiry is pretty much understood by Soviet and late-post Soviet scholars, including those who touch upon the fate of Marr.[15] Still, this intellectual construct could hardly please the majority of Western intellectuals. They might agree that an intellectual trend could be the result of social/economic dynamics. Some of them might accept this notion, but add that not only are these Marxist explanations outdated but also simplistic and intellectually non-engaging. At the same time, they would definitely recoil from the notion that all discursive sophistication is often just a response to the needs of the authorities, especially in totalitarian regimes or strongly influenced by the desire to see their works in print in respectable journals or even plainly related with quest for a good job. They firmly believe that it is not that discourse follows the crack-up of power but it is power that so much depends on discourse. And since Marr and his followers' saga demonstrates that this was not the case, it provides a good excuse to forget quickly about their existence.

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[15] See, for example, Alpatov (1988, pp. 90–100). Ilizarov (2003).