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## **The Russian Revolution as a critical juncture in the traditions of language policies in Central and Eastern Europe**

### **Summary**

2017 is the year of 100 anniversary of two Russian revolutions (in February and October 1917). It is a good occasion to think about the meaning of these events for the history and traditions of establishing and developing language policies in some states of Central and Eastern Europe. It is important to ask, if, and if yes, to what extent, the collapse of the old regime and the offspring of bolshevik's era brought new patterns of understanding language policies which were further exercised especially in the European states created on the ruins of the empire of the tsars. It is also important to question the problem of the influence of these patterns and policies on the process of re-shaping national identities in the region mentioned above.

### **1. Introductory notes**

A look at the Russian Revolution of 1917 as a critical juncture for state traditions related to language policies in some countries of Central and Eastern Europe is not an easy and non-problematic task. First of all, when undertaking it, a question should be asked about its purpose as well as results that can be derived from its implementation.

Undoubtedly, attempts to use categories such as state tradition or critical juncture to analyse linguistic phenomena related to the Revolution of 1917 arise from conviction about advantages of comparative historical analysis (CHA) in opposition to the use of ahistorical approaches and explanations.<sup>1</sup> The latter should be understood as primarily oriented towards the identification of specific, objectively existing groups of interests that are somehow determined in their actions by having precisely such and not any other substantive needs and objectives.

As Giovanni Capoccia observes, in undertaking any task using critical juncture analysis, it is important remember about two initial assumptions:

„First, the *dual* model of historical development intrinsic to critical juncture analysis – shorter phases of fluidity and change alternating with longer periods of stability and adaptation – has been applied to a wide range of outcomes and entities, from individual life histories to the development of groups and organizations and the evolution of entire societies (...) Second, within CHA, the concept of critical juncture applies only to the analysis of path

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<sup>1</sup> G. Capoccia, *Critical Junctures and Institutional Change*, in: J. Mahoney, K. Thelen (eds.), “Advances in Comparative-Historical Analysis”, Cambridge 2015, pp. 149-160; L. Cardinal, S. K. Sonntag, *State Traditions and Language Regimes. Conceptualizing Language Policy Choices*, in: L. Cardinal, S. K. Sonntag (eds.), “State Traditions and Language Regimes”, London, Ithaca, pp. 3-26.

dependent institutions and not to all forms of institutional development. The analysis of critical junctures is a part of path dependence arguments, according to which institutional arrangements put in place at a certain point in time become entrenched because of their ability to shape the incentives, worldviews, and resources of the actors and groups affected by the institution”.<sup>2</sup>

Consequently, these assumptions will lead to main advantages of this approach, namely:

- focus on case study analysis that allows/facilitates identification of alternatives to the existing solution as well as identification of critical junctures in the process of development of specific institutions and interests as well as development of path-dependent legacy;

- focus on when something happens, not on why, what causes something happens (departure from the cause-effect model of explaining the historical process);

- sensitivity to a possibility that sometimes a very short period of time turns out to be extremely dense, bringing decisions that result in radical transformation of the existing mechanisms of functioning of particular institutions;

- sensitivity to the possibility that certain decisions, which do not affect major institutional changes in the short term, can strongly influence long-term socio-political changes (the past sometimes returns after a very long absence or lethargy)<sup>3</sup>.

Therefore, let us draw attention to changes in thinking about languages, their mutual relations, and the aims and methods of language policies that took place in Central and Eastern Europe, as a result of, inter alia, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the breakup of the Romanov Empire. One cannot disagree that at first glance they appear significant and profound. Moreover, it should be noted that they occurred suddenly, after a dozen or so years of uncertainty about the long-term linguistic model that could and should be implemented in the Romanov Empire after the revolution of 1905-1907. Finally, these transformations were a radical departure from the earlier, consistent, sanctified somewhat by its longevity, language policy of Tsarist Russia. As part of that policy, Russian authorities and elites favoured and sought to strongly promote the Russian language as one of the most important instruments of uniting the multicultural society of the Romanov Empire.

## **2. Language policy in the Romanov Empire in the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century**

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 149-160; L. Cardinal, S. Sonntag, op. cit., p. 3 ff.

It should be generally stated that the language policy pursued by the tsarism in the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century was part of a much wider and complex set of political and cultural phenomena, referred to as russification.<sup>4</sup>

This process concerned millions of people belonging to nationalities absorbed by the Russian Empire in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries as a result of its territorial expansion.

The complexity, multilevelness and multifacetedness of the phenomenon of Russification seem very accurately characterised by Bohdan Cywiński. According to his view:

“In the light of the historical observations of the past, the image of deliberate (by many independently thinking originators) and realised (by far more numerous and acting in uncoordinated manner doers) russification seems to me as a collection of activities that induce non-Russian populations living in the empire to become as much as possible similar to the Russians by: 1) acquiring the habit of using the Russian language not only in official situations and in public spaces but also in private life; 2) willing to participate in Russian educational processes and acquire knowledge solely through Russian education; 3) treating the works of Russian literary and artistic culture as the fruit of their native culture; 4) adopting a way of celebrating religious and secular values typical for the Russians; and finally, 5) accepting the Russian political system as a natural order of public life and a willingness to participate personally in the community formed by this system.

Each of these dimensions of integration with Russia and Russianness relates to a different area of life and effective propagation of such attitudes requires different ways of acting and other proportions of using propositions, persuasion, reference to reason, to ideas or quite the contrary - to opportunism, using orders or even violence. Therefore, the russification activity was very multiform and it was impossible to associate it with a clear ideological, and especially ethical qualification, encompassing all its aspects, although detaching man from the values of his native culture so as to bind him with the culture of others as well as using intimidation or violence must raise a fundamental moral protest”.<sup>5</sup>

Russification, according to B. Cywiński's viewpoint, had primarily a political goal. It was about the integration of a multicultural society inhabiting vast areas of the empire, which rapidly grew in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Russifiers assumed that the empire could last and continue to develop only if it was not torn apart by internal dissensions. This, in their opinion, however, required convincing masses of people inhabiting Russia that

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<sup>4</sup> See e.g. For more detailed information see e.g.: A. Pavlenko, *Linguistic russification in the Russian Empire: peasants into Russians?*, “Russian Linguistics” 2011, vol. 35, no. 3, pp. 331-350; B. Cywiński, *Szańce kultur. Szkice z dziejów Europy Wschodniej*, Warsaw 2013; B. Szordykowska, *Finlandia w polityce caratu w latach 1899-1914 : problemy rusyfikacji i unifikacji*, Gdańsk 1994; A. Topij, *Ludność niemiecka wobec rusyfikacji guberni bałtyckich 1882-1905*, Bydgoszcz 1997; Н. В. Пушкарева, Д. В. Руднев, *Языковая политика в российской империи в отношении западных окраин*, [http://rus-gos.spbu.ru/public/files/articles/Обзор\\_языковой\\_политики\\_в\\_Российской\\_империи\\_538c5fa0514b0.pdf](http://rus-gos.spbu.ru/public/files/articles/Обзор_языковой_политики_в_Российской_империи_538c5fa0514b0.pdf); Ю. И. Семенов (Сост., ред. и авт. прим.), *Национальная политика в императорской России: Цивилизованные окраины (Финляндия, Польша, Прибалтика, Бессарабия, Украина, Закавказье, Средняя Азия)*, Москва 1997.

<sup>5</sup> B. Cywiński, op. cit., pp. 594-595.

participation in Russianness is a guarantee of their prosperity, as well as an important source of pride in belonging to a community set up for great historical tasks.

This, in their opinion, not only entitled, but actually obliged them to favour, promote and even impose (in favourable circumstances) the Russian language among the non-Russian subjects of the Tsar. This policy, as already noted, in line with a wide range of russification efforts, was supposed to result in profound transformations of the identity of those who were subjected thereto.

As B. Cywiński notes:

“A short-term political goal of changing the sense of identity of the subjects and bonding them emotionally with the empire is to prevent possible manifestations of reluctance against the power imposed upon them, the attitude of passive resistance or even separatist rebellion of the population. In the long run, it is about making the conquered population convinced that its current political status is natural, the only right one, and that its unlimited endurance is desirable. Such attitudes should penetrate into the private way of thinking of people distant from politics, in neighbourhood and collective life, and finally - in the intergenerational family traditions of education, symbolised by a non-Russian mother, singing a baby a Russian lullaby. Achievement of such a degree of subconscious emotional bond with the empire implies enduring acceptance of the rule of the empire in the widest circle of people with the most diverse ethnic roots. The political goal has been achieved in the long run”.<sup>6</sup>

The policy of Russification, which lasted for decades, did not, however, lead to the fulfilment of the above mentioned political goals. On the contrary, the push of national and ethnic minorities towards the Russification increased, in many cases, their reluctance against the tsarism and sense of separateness. This resulted in numerous conflicts between the Russifiers and those subject to the Russification (though there are also various forms of cooperation between them).

What is important, however, is that the elites of national and ethnic minorities generally had the feeling of being harmed and treated the Russian language as a fundamental threat to their own language. All this placed language issues among the most often raised ones in the deep socio-political crisis, in which Russia entered in 1905.

### **3. Between the old and the new imaginations about language policy (1905-1917)**

In order to determine the end of the Russification policy in the Romanov Empire, it is necessary to reflect upon when the Russian nineteenth century ends. In trying to resolve this

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 596-597. Other opinion about this issue by R. Szul, *Język - naród - państwo. Język jako zjawisko polityczne*, Warszawa 2009, p. 215.

issue, one should choose between 1905 and 1917. The year 1905 could be a good solution, primarily because of the launch of a “constitutional experiment” in Russia as well as the moment of liberalisation of the tsarism policy, also in linguistic matters<sup>7</sup>. However, 1917 marks the events that brought about a more radical metamorphosis. The February Revolution abolished the tsarism, the October Revolution established the dictatorship of the proletariat. Thus there was a new opening and movement towards the creation of a completely new order.

As R. Pipes noted, big groups of interest did not openly oppose the tsarist before 1900 (although at the same time the phenomenon of resistance of various ethnic groups to the Russification policy was common).<sup>8</sup> The Revolution of 1905 revealed that the allegiance of the society to the tsar was very unsteady. After the events of 1905-1907, individual environments became involved or attempted to become involved in the state management process. These groups were constantly rivalling for competences and a favourable distribution of freedoms and burdens. Nevertheless, before 1917, the ruled ones in principle adopted a wait-and-see attitude. In general, it may be said that in the final phase of Nicholas II's rule, the extent and potential of the fledgling civil society continued to expand. At the same time, both the systemic and the anti-systemic forces continued to function and grow among the opposition.

Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin (1862-1911), acting as the prime minister in 1905-1911, is mostly associated with the policy of the authorities of this period. His program was to calm down social attitudes and then move cautiously to political and economic reforms. Implementation of these plans was hindered not only by a generally bad situation, but also a disagreement among some elites and the administrative apparatus whether to move in the new direction. It was also important that Nicholas II was convinced that the regime change in Russia did not happen according to his will, but under compulsion. Consequently, he believed that he was in fact not obliged to honour the promises made in the October Manifesto and the subsequent documents that created the new regime.

At the close of the Romanov era, the most important changes took place primarily in the symbolic space. In the light of Konstantin Tsimbaev's research, Russian society

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<sup>7</sup> This point of view was supported by, for instance, Aleksandra Porada who made insight into the process of “desertion of the elites” at the end of the Romanov rule. According to her characteristics, “1905 is the equivalent of the French year 1789, as a moment in which, as a result of the severe economic and political crisis, the monarch promises to meet the demands of a large proportion of the elites and announces the convening of a representative institution”. A. Porada, *Dezercja ideologicznych elit w sytuacjach prerewolucyjnych. Francja 1715-1789, Rosja 1856-1905, Imperium Osmańskie 1839-1908*, Kraków 2010, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> R. Pipes, *Rosja carów*, Warszawa 1995, p. 256.

experienced the time of the jubilee-mania, particularly intense after the defeat of Cushima<sup>9</sup>. The enormous number of anniversaries and jubilees reflected social conflicts, therefore it was treated highly competitively. Official anniversaries were contrasted with alternative ones, heroes honoured by the authorities with multitude of heroes worshiped by various opposition environments<sup>10</sup>.

According to K. Tsimbaev's characteristics, "all the official jubilees to which the State attaches great importance were intended to demonstrate its strength and capabilities and to lead to the unification of society around the symbols and ideas proposed by the government"<sup>11</sup>. Attempts were thus made to convince everyone that the concentration of social effort around the ruling dynasty had not lost its meaning and should produce significant benefits.

The greatest intensity of ceremonies took place between 1912 and 1913, with celebrations of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Patriotic War and the Battle of Borodino, as well as the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mikhail Romanov's enthronement as Tsar<sup>12</sup>. A then-released list of the most important events of the day of Nicholas II mentions, inter alia, Poltava battle and Borodino battle celebrations<sup>13</sup>. Huge celebrations were organised at the occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of creation of the Preobrazhensky Regiment and the Semyonovski Regiment, as well as frequent jubilees of other military units; 200 years of founding or joining by Peter I to Russia of Kronstadt, Narva, Tsarskoye Selo, Vyborg, Riga, Revla, St. Petersburg; the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Paseo Corps and the Imperial Alexander Lyceum in Tsarskoye Selo; 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of M.W. Lomonosov and death of A.W. Suvorov; 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the abolition of peasant serfdom in the Baltic States; 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Don and Ural Cossacks; the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of joining Georgia; the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of joining Estonia; the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Northern War; the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the State Council; the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Senate; and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the "Great Reform"<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Multiplication of feasts in imperial Russia was a timeless phenomenon, one of the important features of contemporary culture. The tendency to play, commemorate, celebrate jubilees was always sought to be ideologised and used for political purposes. However, after 1905, the intensity and variety of ceremonies was spectacular.

<sup>10</sup> К. Цимбаев, *Православная Церковь и государственные юбилеи Императорской России*, „Отечественная история” 2005, № 6, s. 42-51; B. Hordecki, *Rosyjskie jubileusze jako zjawiska retoryczno-ironiczne*, „Przegląd Politologiczny” 2012, nr 3, s. 125-134.

<sup>11</sup> К. Цимбаев, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>12</sup> About the celebrations see: „Нива” 1913, № 24-25; R.S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power. Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy, Vol. 2. From Alexander II to the Abdication of Nicholas II*, Princeton/New Jersey 2000, p. 439 ff.

<sup>13</sup> К. Цимбаев, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 43. It should be emphasised that the authorities avoided highlighting the last jubilee. According to K. Tsimbaev, the point was not to stir up social hopes and to suggest that the government wanted to liberalise its

Despite the efforts of the authorities and the Orthodox Church, official jubilees could not unite a highly diverse society. Thus, commemorations after commemorations were made, which facilitated the destruction of the mythical image of the 300-year-old Romanov rule in Russia. In opposition to the state-church jubilee-mania, the anniversaries of reforms and the jubilees of Pushkin, Gogol, Chekhov were emphasised. A nationwide appraisal campaign was also organised to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leo Tolstoy's birth. According to the enumeration by K. Tsimbaev, "The centenary jubilees of the birth of Herzen, Belinsky, Granovsky were openly opposed to the official holiday culture". In addition, "The initiative to organise jubilees relating to the abolition of the law of serfdom and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of judicial and land reforms was also wholly in the hands of the social opposition forces; the jubilees were accompanied with many anti-governmental initiatives"<sup>15</sup>.

The jubilee-mania can be read as a symptom of a specific escape from reality, realised on the threshold of the First World War by both the tsar and his opponents. Vladimir Kutyavin's words seem to support correctness of such interpretation: "It has long been recognised that an unhealthy attitude towards his past is demonstrated by one who does not appreciate and cannot use the present. The less positive thoughts about *how to rebuild Russia* (the famous question-challenge of Alexander Solzhenitsyn), the more eagerness to create and refine holiday dates, to the jubilee-mania, discussion on re-burials, restoration of names, monuments, etc."<sup>16</sup>.

Jubilee-mania went hand in hand with the already mentioned liberalisation of the rules concerning the use of non-Russian languages in the Grand Duchy of Finland, the Baltic Governorates and the former Congress Kingdom.<sup>17</sup> It was accompanied by increasingly

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policy. After 1905, it was quite readily stressed that Nicholas II had octroyed the Russian constitution and called the State Duma. At the same time, however, the anniversaries of Alexander II's subsequent reforms were not highlighted, as were not the jubilees related to the reforms of Ivan the Terrible and even Catherine II. The 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the transfer of the capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg was also ignored. The Orthodox Church, in turn, tried not to emphasise jubilees that could be read as a signal of loosening its relationship with the throne (for example, neither the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the Moscow Patriarchate nor the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stoglavny Synod were too much stressed). At the same time, according to K. Tsimbaev's account, the Orthodox clergy eagerly participated in state holidays: "All official jubilees, so different in scale and character, had one endeavour, permeating them like a red thread, to unite all nations of the empire around the throne". It was also about "cementing this unity in terms of ideology and giving it ecclesiastical sanction". The authorities, "having no effective tools to influence the masses, cast the whole weight of the ideological campaign for the raising of civic spirit and patriotic awareness on the shoulders of the Orthodox Church". Moreover, the rulers appreciated the fact that "In the festive liturgy, worship services and processions gathering thousands of people, there were always more participants than in academies, folk performances or war parades. Only the clergy was able to join the Tsar's family, the highest classes, soldiers and disciples, urban masses and peasants, prisoners and intelligence in one undertaking".

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>16</sup> W. Kutiawin, *Pamięć historyczna Rosjan. Między dziejopisarstwem akademickim a historiografią „ludową”*, in: S.M. Nowinowski, J. Pomorski, R. Stobiecki (eds.), „Pamięć i polityka historyczna”, Łódź 2008, p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> See e.g. A. Pavlenko, op. cit., pp. 343-344.

numerous and increasingly spectacular manifestations of attachment to national languages (singing religious songs in these languages, teaching in them, meetings with writers and poets writing in native languages, cult of great poets and national artists, etc.).

In the light of the above comments, the period of 1905-1917 appears to be a specific intermedium, when the hitherto russification policy in principle no longer convinces anyone, but there is not yet the strength and the faith to launch a new language policy. The period in question is a kind of preparation, a time of growing belief in the need for liberalisation or even a revolutionary change in government and elite politics in relation to the linguistic needs and aspirations of the various communities inhabiting the vast empire. In short, it is already known then that the old language policy is no longer valid but new rules are not yet in place and it is not known what they should be like.

#### **4. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and transformations in imagining and pursuing language policies in Central and Eastern Europe**

With the outbreak of the First World War, the linguistic issues in Central and Eastern Europe were pushed to the background. Main themes of discussions at the time were rather about the geopolitical shape of these lands, the details of future policies were not mentioned much, as everybody understood that the future was extremely uncertain, remaining in *statu nascendi*.

Only the revolution of 1917, then the Bolshevik successes in the civil war, as well as the process of creating new independent states as a result of the negotiations in Paris ending the First World War, and the Polish-Bolshevik war, brought radical changes in language policies in the lands of Central and Eastern Europe, which previously belonged to the Romanov Empire.<sup>18</sup>

The language policy of Soviet Russia and then the language policy of the USSR were obviously largely influenced by Lenin's views. One should remember that Lenin had a very elaborate theory of language, which involved an equally elaborate theory of knowledge<sup>19</sup>.

It is difficult at the same time to decide whether the decisions taken by the Soviet regime in the field of language policy in the first years after the revolution were fundamental or tactical.

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<sup>18</sup> See e.g. R. Szmul, *op. cit.*, p. 105 ff.

<sup>19</sup> *Lenin On Language*, <http://www.new.dli.ernet.in/bitstream/handle/2015/149462/Lenin-On-Language.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.



However, they coincided with Lenin's declarations made several times at the outbreak of the First World War.<sup>20</sup> The materials in question show that Lenin at least posed as a radical opponent of the Russification policy and maintaining the Russian language as the official language. He argued that the official language was a tool of oppression and restriction of liberty, which could not be accepted in the state of the proletariat.

As J. Szmul points out, after the Bolsheviks took power, such solutions were introduced as: organisation of Soviet Russia as a federation of union republics, with a complex system of national autonomous republics; development of education in languages chosen by certain nationalities, including those previously not recognised and persecuted (e.g. Belarusian, Ukrainian, Yiddish); recognition of many new languages; giving many nonliterate languages a literary form; standardisation of languages; alphabetical change for some languages (e.g. from Arabic to Latin); democratisation of literary languages by their approximation to colloquial speech and introduction of solutions facilitating their reading and writing; simplified spelling of selected languages, including Russian.<sup>21</sup>

The foreign language policy of the Bolsheviks corresponds to the above steps - being and used as a challenge not only for the determined supporters of maintaining Russian as an official language in Soviet Russia and then in the USSR. It was also a challenge for linguistic policies of newly established, non-socialist republics such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland or Finland, as it compromised these policies and accused them of being nothing more than just a response to long years of the Russification policy and in fact a repetition of this policy in microscale of a national state and in a somewhat lesser degree of intensity.

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<sup>20</sup> See, in particular, V. Lenin, *Liberals and Democrats on the Language Question*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/sep/07.htm> ("The national programme of working-class democracy is: absolutely no privileges for any one nation or any one language; the solution of the problem of the political self-determination of nations, that is, their separation as states by completely free, democratic methods; the promulgation of a law for the whole state by virtue of which any measure (rural, urban or communal, etc., etc.) introducing any privilege of any kind for one of the nations and militating against the equality of nations or the rights of a national minority, shall be declared illegal and ineffective, and any citizen of the state shall have the right to demand that such a measure be annulled as unconstitutional, and that those who attempt to put it into effect be punished.") and V. Lenin, *Is a Compulsory Official Language Needed?*, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/jan/18.htm> ("What we do not want is the element of *coercion*. We do not want to have people driven into paradise with a cudgel; for no matter how many fine phrases about "culture" you may utter, a *compulsory* official language involves coercion, the use of the cudgel. We do not think that the great and mighty Russian language needs anyone having to study it by *sheer compulsion*. We are convinced that the development of capitalism in Russia, and the whole course of social life in general, are tending to bring all nations closer together. (...)That is why Russian Marxists say that there must be *no compulsory* official language, that the population must be provided with schools where teaching will be carried on in all the local languages, that a fundamental law must be introduced in the constitution declaring invalid all privileges of any one nation and all violations of the rights of national minorities.")

<sup>21</sup> J. Szmul. op. cit., p. 217-219.

Nevertheless, all of them - as opposed to the Bolshevik policy - are subjected to coercion, which disqualifies them in moral terms.

The Soviet language policy in question allowed, e.g., criticising Polish language policy very conveniently, as is showed for instance by the law called *lex Grabski* of 1924.<sup>22</sup> This law expressed the aspirations of the newly created state to create minimal linguistic cohesion of the society. This, however, meant that some of the solutions proposed therein were far illiberal and widely criticised as contrary to the policy of non-discrimination of linguistic, national, and ethnic minorities (Poland committed itself to such non-discrimination under the so-called Little Treaty of Versailles and guaranteed it in the March Constitution of 1921).<sup>23</sup>

Yet after Lenin's death and along with the consolidation of Stalin's power, the USSR gradually departed from pluralistic concepts of the language policy. Stalin then decided that at the federal level, for unification purposes, only the Russian language should be used (and non-Russian languages should function at the level of the parts of USSR). Moreover, he claimed that it should not be forgotten that during the historical process languages were struggling among each other, resulting in the elimination of weaker languages by stronger ones. Ultimately, according to his opinion, with the triumph of socialism over capitalism, only one language will survive - all humanity will thus become one-language-speaking.<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, Stalinism proved to be an excess. Again, after Stalin's death, "the national and linguistic situation of the USSR became a result of national and linguistic

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<sup>22</sup> Ustawa z dnia 31 lipca 1924 r. zawierająca niektóre postanowienia o organizacji szkolnictwa (Dz.U. 1924 nr 79 poz. 766), <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19240790766>.

<sup>23</sup> Traktat między Głównymi Mocarstwami sprzymierzonymi i stowarzyszonymi a Polską, podpisany w Wersalu dnia 28 czerwca 1919 r. (Dz.U. 1920 nr 110 poz. 728) <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19201100728>; Ustawa z dnia 17 marca 1921 r. - Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Dz.U. 1921 nr 44 poz. 267) <http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19210440267>.

<sup>24</sup> See: J. Stalin, *Marxism and Problems of Linguistics*, <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/stalin/works/1950/jun/20.htm> ("As regards the other formula by Stalin, taken from his speech at the Sixteenth Party Congress, in the part that touches on the merging of languages into one common language, it has in view another epoch, namely, the epoch after the victory of socialism on a world scale, when world imperialism no longer exists; when the exploiting classes are overthrown and national and colonial oppression is eradicated; when national isolation and mutual distrust among nations is replaced by mutual confidence and rapprochement between nations; when national equality has been put into practice; when the policy of suppressing and assimilating languages is abolished; when the co-operation of nations has been established, and it is possible for national languages freely to enrich one another through their co-operation. It is clear that in these conditions there can be no question of the suppression and defeat of some languages, and the victory of others. Here we shall have not two languages, one of which is to suffer defeat, while the other is to emerge from the struggle victorious, but hundreds of national languages, out of which, as a result of a prolonged economic, political and cultural co operation of nations, there will first appear most enriched unified zonal languages, and subsequently the zonal languages will merge into a single international language, which, of course, will be neither German, nor Russian, nor English, but a new language that has absorbed the best elements of the national and zonal languages.")

policies as well as economic, social and demographic processes. The purpose of the national and linguistic policies was to *bring the nations of the USSR together.*<sup>25</sup> The Russian language was still preferred to some extent, but to some other extent, a return to the Leninist tradition was made, which was for the first time manifested in the revolution of 1917.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, the year 1917 in Russia turns out to be a critical juncture in the language policy, creating the Soviet tradition of thinking about the language and the Soviet tradition of using the language as a tool for achieving political goals.

To a large extent, in response to the Soviet model of language policy and thinking about it as a tool of class struggle, language policies of the Central and Eastern Europe countries newly created after the First World War were developed. As already mentioned, these countries had to face the language policy of the Bolsheviks. This challenge was primarily due to the fact that as young states, uncertain of their further existence, burdened by numerous internal conflicts, they could not afford such a degree of liberalisation of language policy as the young but powerful USSR. This, on the other hand, generated dissatisfaction with the linguistic minorities living in these countries, as well as serious criticism from the Western Europe and the US. Hence the nations of Central and Eastern Europe between the two world wars were somehow in a situation where they must think of the language policy as an important instrument for sustaining their independence and authenticity. The language very often was understood as a national redoubt and defence of it was usually perceived as an essential element of their vital interests.

In these circumstances, it was really difficult and frequently inappropriate to spread optimistic views on:

- mutual infiltration or crossing of languages as an opportunity to enrich human perception,
- multilingualism as a mean of developing sensitivity and quality of life,
- creation and promotion of the international language as a neutral tool to help find agreements on difficult issues or to maintain world peace.

In that reality, however, there was room for serious concern about the Russian language (the pre-revolutionary fear) and linguistic pluralism (post-revolutionary fear).

Moreover, these fears were somewhat related to a sense of disappointment with respect to one's own language. It stems from many sources, of which it is worth pointing out clearly two, closely related ones: 1. disappointment associated with the sense of weakness of

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<sup>25</sup> J. Szmul, op. cit., p. 220.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 220 ff.

one's own language, which must constantly defend itself and cannot seriously and persistently expand (even in the state in which its users prevail); 2 disappointment associated with the feeling that own language is no longer innocent (as it was in relation to the Russian language during the era of tsarist Russia), but represents a tool of oppression towards minorities, which in Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia do not want, but to some extent are forced and/or urged to speak Finnish, Polish, Lithuanian, Latvian or Estonian.