

HISTORY OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN CENTRAL ASIAN COUNTRIES

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SUMMARY

The article below provides a brief description of the triad of reforms in Central Asia of romanization. At the same time, special attention is paid to the goals and interests of both the political elites who initiated language reforms, as well as their supporters and opponents. The article analyzes the implementation of language policy and the transition to the Latin alphabet in Central Asia. An analysis of this problem indicates that the leadership of the Soviet Union is pursuing the task of switching to the Latin alphabet, providing a contradiction to the policy of «indigenization.» A clear confirmation of the negative consequences of the processes in this area was the conduct in Central Asia; they serve as excellent indicators of the degree of freedom or non-freedom of society from state control and from the manipulation of public opinion by political elites.

KEYWORDS: language policy, Uzbekistan, rights, ethnic minorities, diasporas, national cultural centers.

INTRODUCTION

In the 20th – early 21st centuries in Central Asia, during a compressed period of time by historical standards, the Latinization and Cyrillization of the alphabets of local languages was carried out, and in two cases, also the re-Latinization of writing, that is, a return to the Latin script. These language reforms were, to a greater or lesser extent, part of the world trends of the eras in which they were carried out, or a response to such trends. The reforms left behind many consequences in various spheres of public life; but first of all, the change in graphic principles entailed serious changes in the languages themselves: the creation of modern literary languages and changes in the lexical composition of languages - due to the introduction of a large number of neologisms (Sovietisms, internationalisms, etc.) and natural and/or forced transformation into archaisms words that were previously widely used.

There are situations in history when the interests of

various political and social forces coincide. This is how they coincided in the case of the Latinization of the languages of the peoples of Central Asia, carried out in the 1920s and early 1930s. But despite the coincidence of interests, the participants in the process saw different goals.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Union Center needed a translation into Latin script for the following reasons. Firstly, because Latinization fit into the general context of solving the national question and did not in any way contradict the policy of «indigenization.» Already in the first post-revolutionary years (1918–1924), the central union authorities took measures to expand the functions and improve the status of local languages and weaken the position of the Russian language as a single national language. Naturally, this required the creation of a written standard for local languages. Secondly, Latinization contributed to the rapprochement of the peoples of a huge state, but at the same time, along with the border drawn in physical space, it established a border in the space of the written word. Thus, it separated all «Soviet» peoples from all «non-Soviet» peoples - no matter how close the latter were to the former in linguistic and cultural terms, that is, it served the political goals of the authorities. Thirdly, for quite a long time the leadership of the Communist Party seriously expected the October Revolution to develop into a world revolution and prepared for this.

The question of the Latinization of the Russian language was even raised and considered - for the sake of the victory of the world revolution, the ruling party was ready for this too. The fourth reason, ideological, was that at that time there was an open struggle against religion, and here the reform was very useful. After all, it was carried out primarily among the Tajiks and Turkic peoples of the Volga region, Central Asia and the Caucasus who professed Islam. The Latinization of alphabets meant the undermining of the position of Arabic writing, and, consequently, of those people and institutions that from time immemorial were associated with its teaching and dissemination - Islam and Islamic clergy. Finally, there were two more reasons, not the most significant, but it was precisely them that the authorities sought to focus public attention on: the technical advantages of the Latin alphabet in printing and teaching and the inability of even the reformed Arabic alphabet to reflect the unique phonetic structure of a number of languages.

The political elites of the Central Asian region were of particular interest, seeking to consolidate their power in the newly formed union and autonomous republics. They needed language reform insofar as it contributed to the creation of more clearly distinguishable contours of new ethnic identities, giving legitimacy to new state

formations and their first established borders. At the same time, from the point of view of the possible impact on these identities, the Latin alphabet, unlike Arabic and Cyrillic, seemed neutral politically, ideologically, and ethnoculturally. Also in the Central Asian republics there was a sincere desire and not only among the elite, but also among part of the population, especially young people, to quickly overcome a significant cultural gap, and the experience of Albanians, Malays and Swahili seemed to indicate that the Latin alphabet really helps in this.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Generally speaking, the idea of switching to the Latin alphabet was neither completely new nor adopted suddenly and at once. Back in the second half of the 19th century, the Azerbaijani educator Mirza Fatali Akhundov developed a project for a new Turkic alphabet based on Latin and Greek script. The first practical attempt to introduce a Latinized alphabet was made in Yakutia: it was prepared in 1917, and officially adopted in 1920. True, due to the presence of a number of shortcomings in this alphabet, in 1929 Yakutia switched to a unified Latinized alphabet. Almost simultaneously, the Latinization of the alphabet began in Azerbaijan: in 1918, that is, even before the establishment of Soviet power, three projects of a Latinized alphabet were submitted to the Azerbaijani Majlis for consideration. During open discussions organized by the Soviet government of Azerbaijan in December 1921, the arguments of «Latinists» and «Arabists» were voiced. The authorities considered the arguments in favor of Latinization more convincing and began to carry out the reform. In 1922, a committee was created for the transition to the Latin alphabet, headed by Nariman Narimanov himself, chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the AzSSR and the Union Council of the Transcaucasian Federation. By decree of June 27, 1924, the new alphabet was declared state and mandatory for use on the territory of the AzSSR. Somewhat earlier, in 1923, North Ossetia, Ingushetia and Kabarda switched to the Latin script.

In 1926, the All-Union Central Committee of the New Turkic Alphabet (All-Union Central Committee of the New Turkic Alphabet) was established in Moscow. Baku was chosen as his place of residence, with the organization of a representative office in Moscow to communicate with the union bodies on organizational and financial issues. The committee included 39 members, they represented all the Turkic union and autonomous republics, the North Caucasus region, the Dagestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Turkic population of Armenia and Georgia. On June 1, 1927, the first plenum of the All-Russian Central Committee of the NTA took place; it was proposed to transform the committee from an advisory body into a governing and planning one. At

the same time, the committee selected the Azerbaijani project from 17 proposed projects for a unified Latin alphabet and approved it for further distribution. Thus, by 1926, when the campaign for mass Latinization of Turkic languages began, the USSR had accumulated considerable theoretical and practical experience in this area. Major linguists were involved, such as Samed-aga Agamaly-ogly, B.M. Grande, E.D. Polivanov, A.A. Reformatsky, L.V. Shcherba, N.V. Yushmanov, N.F. Yakovlev and others, the necessary large material and administrative resources were involved.

The decisive stage in the implementation of Latinization was the First All-Union Turkological Congress, held in Baku in February - March 1926. It was not by chance that the capital of Azerbaijan was chosen to host it: the Azerbaijani language had already been translated into Latin. The congress was attended by representatives of all Turkic autonomous regions and republics, as well as delegates from the academies of sciences of the USSR and Ukraine, from the All-Union and Transcaucasian associations of orientalists, scientists from Turkey, Germany and other countries, and the President of the Turkish Republic Mustafa Kemal. After discussion, the congress by a majority vote adopted a resolution recommending the transfer of the alphabets of all Turkic peoples of the USSR without exception from Arabic to Latin script. The voting results were as follows: «for» – 101 votes, «against» – 7 and 6 abstentions. Thus, the reform received legitimate grounds for acquiring an all-Union scale.

At the second plenum of the All-Russian Central Committee of the NTA, held in January 1928 in Tashkent, the stages of reform were determined: the immediate introduction of the Latin alphabet in second-level schools (secondary) and in vocational schools, and from the 1928/29 academic year – in first-level schools (initial). The third plenum took place in Kazan in December of the same 1928. At it, they agreed on the timing of the reform: five to six years is too long, one year, as in Turkey, is unrealistic; We agreed on a compromise: two, maximum three years. On August 15, 1930, the Presidium of the Council of Nationalities of the Central Executive Committee of the USSR decided to transfer the committee, whose activities had long gone beyond the borders of Azerbaijan, from Baku to Moscow. Its apparatus consisted of 29 people, divided into four sectors: Caucasian, Turkic-Tatar, Finno-Ugric languages and technological. In total, the committee supervised the work on the Latinization of 70 languages of the peoples of the USSR. From the beginning of the 1930s, its administrative functions came to the fore as the «struggle for early Latinization» unfolded. At the same time, the main task was no longer the creation of alphabets, but the development of the literary languages of the peoples of the USSR, which was impossible to

do in one or two years.

In 1926, at the Fourth Session of the Central Executive Committee of the Uzbek SSR, it was decided to abandon the Arabic alphabet and switch to Latin. The Central Committee of the New Uzbek Alphabet (CC NUA) is being created, consisting of 44 people, including Yu. Akhunbabaev (chairman). According to the initial plan approved by the Central Executive Committee of the Uzbek SSR, the transition to the new alphabet was to be completed in the republic by the end of 1932. But the «successes of socialist construction on all fronts» force these deadlines to be shortened (quite in the spirit and pace of the first five-year plans): the transition is declared completed at the end of 1929.

It is necessary to note the factors that significantly facilitated the transition to the Latin alphabet for the Central Asian republics. First of all, they had at their disposal the experience of other republics of the USSR, where Latinization began and ended earlier. Further, the level of illiteracy in the region was high, that is, there were relatively few people who needed to be reeducated. Courses were opened for them with the right to take an external exam to obtain a certificate of literacy in the new Turkic alphabet. In Central Asia it was much easier to replace the old Arabic alphabet with a new one than, for example, in Turkey, also because it was not in the interests of the Soviet government to translate a large number of books published in Arabic script into Latin. There were not many printing houses in the region that needed to be re-equipped.

CONCLUSION

It can be assumed that here we see the negative consequences of Latinization, although at the rate of liquidation of illiteracy set in those years, the quality of the education received would probably have fallen even without translation into the Latin alphabet. But if the question of the pros and cons of Latinization in education remains controversial, there is no doubt that other goals of the forces interested in reform, primarily political and ideological, have been achieved.

Language reforms carried out, carried out and planned for implementation in Central Asia serve as excellent indicators of the degree of freedom or non-freedom of society from state control and from the manipulation of public opinion by political elites. It is worth noting that relatinization has been carried out or is planned to be carried out in states that have chosen linguistic nationalism, monolingualism and re-traditionalization of the main spheres of public life as a strategic political course.

It can be said that the method of making decisions on carrying out linguistic transformations that was and is being used in the region is deeply symptomatic. Politicians

did not even always involve the expert community for preliminary discussion and planning. More often than not, everything was decided in a narrow circle of authorities, quickly and without a comprehensive discussion of the details of the reform or calculation of its possible

consequences. And then, through the media, people unexpectedly learned about the government's readiness to meet his «numerous and ardent wishes» to change the familiar alphabet to a new one.

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