Aims, Goals and Implementation of Soviet Education in Central Asia.

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Abstract

Education in the Soviet system from the 1920s was a primary agency of radical socio-cultural transformation. The strategy of the Communist Party of the newly formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (established 1922) was to mobilise the masses by co-opting them into the ideological project and vision. The Party management of intellectual, moral and social instruction was planned to ensure socialisation, social integration, and social order. Education also assisted in the formation of state and national identities. In Central Asia, as in the Russia, the aim of this policy was to create a new consciousness in the minds of the people which would be based on the collective model. This new worldview was to provide the populace with a reason for political obligation towards the Party. It also gave the regime legitimacy and authority. Soviet education was core in the secularization programme instigated to replace traditional and Muslim attitudes, values, beliefs, and social structures. Furthermore, education within Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan was designed to create patriotic industrious workers. Overall, the Soviet educational system was a social construction which under the circumstances improved the quality of life for the masses (especially the poor, young men, and urban women).

Keywords: Central Asia, Soviet education, socialisation, consciousness, state-identity, institution building

Introduction

In this study two themes shall be analysed in conjunction, Firstly, the significance of mass education in the socio-cultural transformation of society and building of a federal union. Secondly, I will explain the role of moral and political education (citizenship education) as a key element in creating the socialist citizen. The hypothesis of this work accepts the view that Soviet educational policy was ideologically driven. However, it will be explained that the development of education in the USSR was a fluid process which for the most part was an effective feat of social engineering. This process was adapted to changing social circumstances and the ideas of the Party elite. Education took place in schools and colleges, youth movements, and the workplace. This study highlights how the Soviet educational system was a source of social mobility for the Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmen, Tajiks and Kirghiz. In addition, a relationship was formed between the regime and the people which was mutually beneficial. Unlike the legacy of environmental and cotton monoculture problems in the region, the Soviet educational agenda was overall a success.

This paper is thematically structured into four parts. Each part investigates particular aims and goals of Soviet education. Following in succession is discussion on the implementation of educational policy. Most of the theoretical framework for this work is established in Parts One and Two. Part One commences with some key-terms which have been modified for this study. Part Two assesses the function of education (and learning institutions) in the process of social transformation. Part Three describes in loose chronological order the first stage of the educational process in Central Asia when the literacy campaign was instigated. This also highlights the fluidity of Soviet educational methodology. Part Four analyses moral and political education and the citizen-patriot. The aims and implementation of Soviet education are investigated over the seventy year history of the social and political phenomenon which was the USSR.
Part 1: Definition of Education in the Soviet Authoritarian System

Education (obrazovanie) and moral and political education (citizenship education) have a broad definition in this work, because in the Soviet form of authoritarian educational training, and systematic instruction for specific purposes, took place directly in schools and indirectly in the wider society. In this model the wider society consists of the workplace, factory, farm, trade union, construction site, army unit, and youth movements. Furthermore, education (and indoctrination) took place in the cultural sphere of the cinema, radio, television, newspapers, arts and sports. The aim of the Party elite was to get their ideas on educational policy and social intervention across to the public. They used the art of persuasion to influence the decisions of the masses whether they were at work or at leisure. The Soviets had an organic and holistic view of society as consisting of integrated parts. The education system was not an autonomous arena in the USSR, and moreover there was no civil society. The concept of Soviet education of children and teenagers was more comprehensive than found in Western societies, and was designed to construct a specific character type - in Russian this process was termed vospitanie (upbringing). Moral and political education was part of vospitanie.1

In attempting to understand the Soviet perception, Ro'i argues, that ‘...in totalitarian or authoritarian states such as the USSR the monopoly of political education is one of the regime's most treasured and closely guarded assets and it will seek ipso facto to make maximum use thereof.’2

The approach of Marxist-Leninist pedagogues to the acquisition of knowledge was not dissimilar to the 17th century theory of John Locke; the mind was viewed as a tabula rasa. Education is given importance because it teaches the individual talents and virtues. Under the Soviet system, these activities were to be utilised for the collective good of the community. The omnipotence of education was acknowledged by the regime.

Another factor at the disposal of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, CPSU (which was officially titled the Russian Communist Party until 1925), was the wide use of Party personnel such as cadres or political commissars. The Soviet system of centralization and collectivization entailed complete control of the economic, social and cultural spheres. However, the nature of the Soviet polity was ambiguous, and evolved from Stalin’s (d. 1953) totalitarian model to Khrushchev’s (d. 1964) and Brezhnev’s (d. 1982) authoritarian social model and, finally, Gorbachev’s (1985-91) perestroika (restructuring of the economic and social system). Medlin summarise the USSR as ‘...never completely authoritarian or totalitarian despite its aims and its dictatorial excesses, (it) can inspire models of careerism, of apathy, of compromise, of opposition.’3

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Cultural revolution

The term ‘cultural revolution’ is used in this work to denote the strategy of the Soviet political elite to reform the mind-set and values of the indigenous rural and urban Central Asians. This involved literacy and educational campaigns. It was intended to synchronize the political and cultural attitudes of the Muslim masses with modernization activities and radical socialist ideology. This has two implications. Firstly, deviance or dissenting views are somehow considered unsuitable, anti-Soviet (and not tolerated). Secondly, in Marxist philosophy, both thought and attitude are created by superstructural influences, which are in turn determined by the infrastructure.

In some instances the socio-cultural reform in Soviet Central Asia during the 1920s and 1930s was a forerunner to the model of cultural revolution carried out in China in the 1960s. The impact of education on what had been a non-technological society was radical. The utilization of the regions’ resources included that of human labour. Soviet patriotic values entailed men and women working for the common good. The educational system was instrumental in changing traditional social attitudes and fostering new civic norms.

In his theory on gender and education Mac an Ghaill remarks that ‘the school offers interpretations about what it means to be ‘male’ or ‘female’’, and, ‘...helps to form gendered identities.’ Some of the attributes of the Soviet mass education and equality programme (notably in urban areas) pre-date both second-wave Western feminism by about thirty years, and the inclusion of ethnic minorities in college education.

Marxist philosophy argues that, through class war, radical changes in material and legal conditions will bring about social equality and freedom for the proletariat. In attempting to build ‘full communism’ Leninist-Marxist doctrine utilised education as the device to reform the mentalities and lived experience of the people. In the 1920s and 1930s the goal was to eradicate bourgeois values (including political nationalism) and Islamic cultural practices. Lenin's interpretation of socialist ideology included a blueprint for action. Ideology was to be instrumental in bringing about social change. Education would be political and moral. Medlin explains that Soviet methodology was organic, and that its approach was not dissimilar to a ‘...development model of institutional and behavioural transition toward modern systems: (which is) social, cognitive, (and) functional.’ One area of agreement between Marxists and modernization theorists is that social improvements will modernize the consciousness of the people.

The effectiveness of the Party’s remodelling of Central Asian society is displayed by

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8 Medlin et al., Education and Development in Central Asia. A Case Study on Social Change in Uzbekistan. p. 211.
its extensive secularization programme. Soviet secularization commenced in the late 1920s and targeted religious leaders, superstitions, traditions and property. Subsequently young men, women, the landless and local intellectuals were targeted with atheistic education and promises of social mobility in a modern context. These were, in one form or another, the marginalised groups in society. This policy should be viewed as the regime attempting to enter into a social relationship with all groups for their mutual benefit. Yet, religious policy was flexible. To win hearts and minds during the Second World War (Great Patriotic War), Stalin had established an official Soviet Islam and Islamic leaders (ulema). Thereafter this religious body was used as a device to maintain social order, and to reach a consensus with the Muslim communities.

Before analysis on the aims of political and ideological education and modernization of Central Asia after 1920 begins, it is worthwhile discussing the fluidity of power in society. In the context of the USSR this clarifies the nature of social control, and, at times, the mutually beneficial arrangement between Party and citizen.

Part 2: Soviet Developmental Policy and Education in the Modernization Process

The effect of developmental policy on traditional society can be overwhelming. The Soviet development policy of Central Asia in the 1920s and 1930s had successes and failures. This was region that had not undergone industrialization and had no native working class. As a result the Soviet regime adopted a fluid approach. This enabled the central decision makers to respond to local resistance or poor local management, whilst highlighting the need to be flexible to local politics. Medlin evaluates the predicament of the early planners – suggesting that the Soviet regime was unable to ‘…arrive at a predictable, systematic design for bringing about rapid social change. Indeed, vacillation seemed to be more characteristic of these early periods than any sense of outright planning.’ Soviet development is best viewed as a process of transition, rather than an overnight revolution. Its implementation is often problematic and has to overcome traditional world views and local sensitivities. Neither is development always sustained. Financial mismanagement, corruption, and ideological policies which are not practical or suited to the requirements of the people can delay social change.

Medlin theorises that preconditions for developmental transition and nation state-building must exist prior to social change and the implementation of a new education system. Firstly, in Central Asia this occurred with the cultural impact of Europeanized - Russian penetration in the 19th century. This established a Russian core and a Central Asian periphery, in which ideas and economic and administrative policies were transmitted from the former to the latter. Secondly, marginal social groups (such as unemployed young men, women, minority ethnic groups and local intellectuals) have to be persuaded of the opportunities available to them and encouraged to join the project. In this case, groups might be attracted to opportunities which existed within or proposed by the Soviet socialist system. If these criteria are met then the education of the ‘colonised’ people can commence.

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Over the longer term the success of Soviet educational policy in Central Asia is on parallel with the modern Japanese experience (however, the latter were never a colonised people). Educational development was intended to be functional: it was to be an agency for social change. Underlying the transitional programme was the aim to make each republic an economically sustainable modern polity. The system was to be mutually beneficial for the CPSU and those who it trained to become managers, semi-skilled workers, administrators and professionally employed. Within the USSR institutions the idea of co-option and social mobility was an axiom. During the reign of Stalin, if the above strategy of influence and co-option failed the regime still had the monopoly on force (state violence) within all of its territorial control. However, during *perestroika* and the emergence of ethnic activism across the USSR the use of state force was not sufficient to retain the regime’s monopoly of political power.

The creation of a productive and dynamic socialist Central Asia had wider implications for international politics in the twentieth century. It was hoped that it could be used as a model for the Asian and African nationalists in colonial and post-colonial states. However this is a bit ironic considering that for Central Asians national self-determination or sovereignty (before late 1991) was little more than a paper right written into their constitutions (see Article 70 Brezhnev Constitution).

**Part 3: The Onset of Educational Reform - the Literacy Campaign**

The consolidation of the 1917 Revolution by the Communist Party commenced in the early 1920s. This involved a socio-cultural revolution in Central Asia via the implementation of policies which would end illiteracy and reform the education system (see Table A below).

**Table A: Literacy according to Russian census data from 1897**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (%)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turkmen</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirghiz</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uzbek</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakh</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both the urban and rural population centres were targeted for social transformation and integration into a multi-ethnic socialist union. Following the Russian civil war 1917-22, apologies from Lenin had been offered for the excesses of Russian Bolsheviks and their acts of chauvinism during this period. To temporarily placate the locals in 1920-22 lands seized

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13 Ibid. p. 235.
14 Ibid. p. 212.
15 Analysis of ethnic activism across the USSR during *perestroika* can be found in G. W. Lapidus, ‘From Democratization to Disintegration: The Impact of Perestroika on the National Problem’, *From Union to Commonwealth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 45-70.

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by the Russians was handed back to indigenous Central Asians.¹⁸

Economic development and reorganization in Central Asia began in 1921 when the New Economic Policy was introduced.¹⁹ This involved the privatization of small scale businesses, and the decentralization of select areas of industry. The national delimitation of 1924 was based on language, ethnicity and cultural history. The new republics and regions were Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan (both established in 1924), Tajikistan (1929), Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan (both established in 1936). Furthermore, the construction of republican identities in the social imagination of the nation was a pragmatic manoeuvre. A federal state would give the union constitutional legitimacy and imply ‘autonomy’ for each nation. In addition the CPSU sought to integrate each republic into the USSR. These actions gave importance to language and literacy in Soviet policy.²⁰

The organizational skills, dynamism and finances of the CPSU enabled them to take on the mammoth task of inculcating Marxist-Leninist ideology into the minds of the one hundred national groups found amongst the USSR. Socialisation and social control were two themes that underlay the development of the region. Ideological penetration of the masses was imperative in the formation of a new and fluid identity consisting of both national and state characteristics.

Likewise a shared language and bi-lingual population was deemed necessary for national and union-wide communication; though the notion of a multicultural polity was advanced by Moscow, it was the language of the ‘elder brother’, the Russians, that was increasingly instructed in all schools in the period 1940-1990. Akiner highlights the dilemma faced by the regime, when she reports ‘The new administration was faced with two pressing requirements: mass communication and mass education.’²¹ Furthermore, education had two distinct roles; to make the population literate, and to teach the mother-tongue language to all school children.²² The legitimacy of the regime depended upon the success of these projects.

One early method to instruct the populace in reading and writing was the ABC school model. This was a forerunner to the state institutions of education.²³ Further, in the factories Red corner literary schools were formed to educate the workers. In the late 1920s and particularly post 1930, literacy and education began to have a positive impact on Central Asian society.²⁴ Furthermore, in the 1930s school children, many Young Pioneers and Komsomol members were sent out into the community to help peasants learn to read.²⁵

²¹ Ibid. p. 104.
²² Ibid. p. 108.
Literacy (in the mother tongue)

The literacy rate in the Soviet population rose from about 2-5 per cent in the 1926 census to 52.5 per cent in the 1930 census, to 70 per cent in the 1970 census, and finally 97 per cent in the late 1980s. Indeed, the pre-independence average literacy in Kazakhstan and Kirghiz republic was about 98 per cent. These statistics come from Soviet sources and have not been independently verified. Akiner suggests that literacy in this period was higher than in the Middle East or South Asia. Bauer remarks that literacy rates and education were ‘...one of the more remarkable achievements of the former Soviet system. As part of the USSR, the Central Asian republics enjoyed very high educational standards...and the teacher-pupil ratios were among the highest in the world.’ The increase in literacy led to a demand for mass media, newspapers and books printed in the vernacular. This in turn could be used to impart patriotic and internationalist identity and propaganda.

However the interpretation of the literacy rate is more complex than these figures reveal. The physical location of the learner is a factor which had an effect on literacy because most of the early schools were situated in the urban areas. In the case of Uzbekistan in 1926 the literacy rate in urban areas was approximately 3.8 per cent, whilst for women in the rural areas it was less than 1 per cent. The majority of the Central Asians have always remained in the rural areas; this internal migration problem stalled the Soviet urbanization programme. Likewise this social factor accounts for the low number of Russian speakers in Central Asia; rural Central Asians had fewer socialisation channels available to them and infrequently communicated with Russians. The Central Asian rural population amounted to 80.2 per cent in 1959, and in 76.5 per cent in 1970. In the case of Uzbekistan, the urban population was 18.3 per cent in 1926, and 23 per cent in 1970.

Implementation of Soviet education

Following the effects of the 1914-1918 world war and civil war the Bolsheviks had little finance for teacher training, text books and school buildings. In spite of this, by the mid-1920s the Party began to implement its Central Asian education project. Indigenous teachers who spoke the vernacular language of the republic were graduating from Central Asian training colleges in the early 1940s. To summarize, in 1930 compulsory universal primary education was introduced in the USSR. (In the same year the Latin script replaced Arabic; thereby distancing Soviet Muslims citizens from their cultural heritage.) Indeed, the potential of Islam emerging as a counter-hegemonic power was dealt a further set-back during 1927-30 when the last 250 Muslim schools were forced to close. To further union-wide integration, in 1939 Cyrillic replaced Latin. At this time a campaign was launched to put Russian on the curriculum. In 1966 the Party Central Committee standardized the curriculum for primary

31 Ibid. p. 115.
and secondary education. In Central Asia during the 1960s and 1980s: free education for boys and girls, from 1-15 years old, was achieved. About 10 per cent of Central Asians graduated from university (where instruction was in Russian). Boarding schools existed for rural children. Specialist schools existed for able students in sports, arts, music and military studies. Adults who lacked qualifications could attend night-school, or study correspondence courses. Talented students could enter the academic world of Moscow's universities. Lastly, acclaimed scientific institutions had been constructed in Central Asia during World War II. Ultimately, a level of education was achieved in the 1970s and 1980s which today's independent republics cannot match.35

Fluidity of approach to instruction varied with different leaders. Lenin preferred to continue with the Czarist curriculum. In contrast V.N. Shulgin theorized that schooling should be adapted to the new society. This would include emphasis on vocational skills and work-placements. Post 1929 Shulgin's method was implemented. Upper secondary schools were required to teach the students work skills. This became problematic, because the children were used by factory bosses as cheap labour. In Central Asia, children when required were made to pick cotton. Those critical of this system argued that the students were not learning a skill, nor being educated. In 1931 a new curriculum was devised which gave more emphasis to academic studies.36

A failure of the educational system was the small number of Central Asians who learnt Russian - except for urban males who worked for state enterprises and, to some extent the Kazakhs (see below). Correspondingly, only a small number of ethnic Russians living in Central Asia ever became fluent in the majority language. For example in Uzbekistan the 1979 census showed only 5.9 per cent of Russians in the urban area, and 17-18 per cent in the rural area learnt (some) Uzbek.37

When the state modernization programme was first instigated during the pre-war period (1920-1940) ethnic Russians held the better jobs in Central Asia. Russians have always been well catered for in education in the urban areas.38 However post 1960 the Central Asians received a standard of education and training which began to put them on par with the Russians (this includes higher education). By the 1970s -1980s the level of education and social mobility of the Central Asians in rural and urban areas had caught up with the Russians. This was assisted by Soviet policy in the 1970s which placed indigenous citizens in positions of authority (korenizatsiaa, indigenization and positive discrimination). Yet Chylinski notes that improvements were still required in employment, because people in the age group 20-29 ‘...are not occupied in skilled mental and physical labour to the same extent in Soviet Central Asia as in RSFSR.’ Central Asians are now competing with Russian settlers for employment in urban and industrial sectors.39

Knowledge of Russian was fundamental for social mobility in politics, the military, and in work. Moreover a critique of the educational system by Ro’i includes discussion on the solely abstract nature of instruction. For example by the 1970s and 1980s economic problems

38 Ibid. p. 115.

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were becoming obvious. Yet the application of new ideas learnt in educational institutions was not evident until Gorbachev became General Secretary. His policies would need time to take effect, and the support of the citizens. Fluidity of educational practice is evident in the USSR, however the fossilization of Party ideology meant that political and pedagogical innovation was lacking. This occurred despite Soviet General Secretaries declaring that ‘creativity’ in youth upbringing and socialisation was necessary.

Furthermore, social mobility was the pathway for those with aspirations. Hobsbawm reports that across the USSR, the Soviet elite (the political managers of the CPSU), the large group of educated and technically schooled middle class and the academics / technical experts benefited most from the education system and social mobility opportunities. Even access to Party power had evolved. For example Gorbachev had advanced via law school, whilst cadres in Stalin’s regime tended to be factory workers with a degree in a science.

The aim of state planners in Moscow for economic sustainability required a proactive workforce which was imbued with the socialist consciousness. Similarly the Party and pedagogues wanted to construct a universal state identity to ensure social order and so that policy implementation could be standardized across all republics. The ideal political identity expressed in Soviet nationalities policies was the elusive ‘Soviet man’.

**Part 4: Moral and Political Education and Civic Identity**

*The Philosophy*

Since 1917 moral and political education had been designed to influence the consciousness and norms of young citizens. Young citizens were being instructed to participate in a new society and take on the responsibilities of adulthood. The fostering of Soviet values and patriotism through moral and political education took place in schools and colleges, in the workplace, in farms, on construction sites, in the media and arts. Educationalists, cadres, youth workers and cultural producers were mobilized to assist in the dissemination of socialist values and culture.

A major goal of Soviet nationalities policies was to construct both state and national (ethnic) identification for each national group. Education was used to assist Soviet nationalities policies. Elements of moral and political education had been designed to influence the consciousness and norms of young citizens. Young citizens were being instructed to participate in a multicultural society and take on the responsibilities of adulthood. Moreover patriotic and internationalist education strands promoted shared interests and a common vision across plurality and diversity. Systematic instruction of political and moral education consisted of socialist values which young citizens were expected to acquire. It was a mass psychology experiment to indoctrinate the youth with a

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common consciousness and influence behaviour. It consisted of a moral social outlook, collectivism, self-discipline, love of the mother country (patriotism), love of work, socialist internationalism, and scientific atheism. The principle was the better the understanding of the socialist values the greater the application in work and in civic life. However Brezhnev (1966-82), placed patriotism before all else. Different leaders had different ideas about core values and the content of the union-wide curriculum, with further curriculum revision occurring during perestroika.

Fluidity of state and national identities allowed a Bukharan to be an Uzbek national, a Central Asian, and a Soviet citizen. It was possible to be a nominal Muslim and a socialist. This outlook is not dissimilar to the conception of a Glaswegian also being a Scot and British (at least until the devolution of 1999!). Nonetheless, identity formation was part of a hierarchical scheme in which Soviet citizenship had primacy. It was Soviet identification that was the main focus of patriotic education.

The implementation of moral and political education (including patriotic education) took place in schools, the workplace, and in leisure time (at the Pioneer meeting room and within Soviet sports culture). During Brezhnev's leadership, youth movements such as Komsomol and the volunteer Society of the Army and Navy (DOSAAF) mobilised school children for future military conscription. The importance of war heroes and industrial workers was reinforced in the ritual and ceremony of Party managed civic events. Participation of the masses in such events was expected. Indeed patriotic education was incorporated into all levels of society. This included the bureaucracy and the military.

The content and function of state patriotism in the curriculum changed over time. Initially Gorbachev (1985-91) was more concerned with glasnost and economic restructuring than with ethnic issues. Gorbachev termed this the ‘era of stagnation’ (zastoi). Patriotic education had somewhat less emphasis during this period, indeed the whole teaching methodology was under critique from the leadership. The Baltic republics were agitating for independence. There had also been social tension in Alma Ata (Kazakhstan) in 1986/7, yet this was not anti-state action but rather protest about social problems and unemployment. Discontent was expressed within the parameters of the state. Aware of this situation Gennadii Kolbin, the First Secretary of the Kazakhstan Party (1986), condemned the poor quality of instruction by the political cadres. He declared that political education needed to be rejuvenated. Furthermore Kolbin criticized the lack of moral education for the youths in state institutions, as well as nepotism, and corruption of the exam system.

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46 Brezhnev, Report of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. To the X.X.V.I. Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy. p. 82.

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The fluidity of the approach to education was again demonstrated by Party during the 1970s. It was at this time that Brezhnev was reappraising the outcome of moral and political education. The success of state socialisation was questioned because negative attitudes seemed to be prevalent amongst some young people and local intelligentsia. Ro’i suggests that many of the young Central Asians, (like others found elsewhere in the USSR), displayed the following negative social traits: ‘...greediness, bribery, wastefulness, drunkenness, hooliganism, red tape, callousness and violations of work discipline and public order.’\(^{51}\) Consequently a Soviet version of back to basics was implemented. Social and economic stagnation would be overcome if citizens had meaning and purpose in their lives. Likewise the mid-1980s Gorbachev continued to reform education system (including moral and political education). During the period of perestroika his concern had been with economic recession and international politics.\(^{52}\) Yet, with the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan in 1988 the regime tolerated a new relationship between state and Islam, after all both the socialist and Islamic values were critical of ‘...alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution, bribery, fraud, (and) embezzlement.’\(^{53}\)

**Bilingualism**

The logic of a state identity also required the Central Asians to learn Russian as the language of inter-ethnic communication. This is problematic because the level of fluency in Russian increased very gradually. For example, the army required personnel who could understand commands in Russian. University education and middle and executive management positions expected applicants to have some knowledge of Russian. Akiner reports that since the 1930s a bilingual policy was in operation; non-Russians would benefit from greater social mobility if they learnt Russian.\(^{54}\)

**Table B: Percentage of Islamic peoples with good knowledge of Russian (as second language)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>1979</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uzbekks</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhs</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>52.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajiks</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmen</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirghiz</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A reinvigorated Russian language programme was launched in the 1970s. In 1979 the Uzbek First Party Secretary Sharaf Rashidov declared that Russian should be the language of the Soviet citizen.\(^{56}\) (During 1989 making Uzbek the national language of Uzbekistan became

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\(^{51}\) Ibid. p. 45.

\(^{52}\) Ibid. p. 56.


\(^{56}\) Ro’i, ‘Political Education in Soviet Central Asia’. p. 52.
a key cultural rights issue.) In Table B above the 1979 census figures show an almost 35 per cent increase in Uzbeks speaking Russian (in society were nearly 40 per cent were aged 10 or younger). The accuracy of these Soviet statistics are a source of dispute. One region with an acknowledged high level of bilingualism was multi-ethnic Kazakhstan.

**Conclusions.**

It has been claimed in this work that the core of Soviet education was ideologically driven and that it was a primary agency of social transformation. The Soviet modernization project utilized education in order to construct a homogenous, centralised society. In addition the model socialist citizen was proactive and morally aware. The CPSU had specific goals for the development of state institutions. They set the parameters of social order, socialisation, and, quite literally, social attitudes. The logic of this policy was to develop the natural and human resources in Central Asia for the collective good of the union. Also the self-development of the individual encouraged social mobility within the society. Anxiety and negativity from the Central Asians towards social change was lessened by the co-option of all social groups into the socio-political programme.

The educational methodology applied to the Central Asian republics (and the wider USSR) displayed a fluidity. Educational policy was an arena of experimentation for different leaders. The aim was to create modern socialist nations which had the capability to be economically viable (until full communism could be achieved). Furthermore the teaching of the mother tongue in primary and secondary education enabled each republic to form a national identity. Equally the union curriculum ensured the penetration of universal patriotic and internationalist values. This assisted the integration of the Central Asians into the USSR.

Ideally, no official language that would be hegemonic, still Russian culture was to permeate Central Asian society and consciousness. In order that the one hundred nationalities of the USSR could communicate with each other at university it was decided to use the Russian language. The legitimacy of the socialist vision was increased via the participation of the masses in this project. Distribution of the union’s finances occurred from the 1920s onwards. In Central Asia the poor, the landless, and women benefited from this strategy. On one hand the natural resources were extracted from Central Asia for wider USSR economy, whilst on the other hand the peripheral regions of the union underwent a comprehensive Russian-Europeanization and modernization programme. The quality of general life for the Central Asians was improved. Indeed most citizens had never experienced any other form of political system. Overall the success of Soviet education in Central Asia is evident in the outcome of the literacy and educational campaigns. School teachers and political cadres were an interface between the target audience (the masses) and the CPSU.

The statistics of the USSR on learning outcomes have been disputed, sometimes rightly so, by Western historians, yet evidence in this paper clearly shows the increase in the numbers of Central Asians who have received a modern education. Consequently, the diffusion of new ideas in society enabled a modern worldview to be formed. Potentially labour mobility, social mobility, urbanization, and Sovietisation, Russification would allow for a dynamic and progressive society. Party membership was required for social mobility.

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58 Krag, 'The Language Situation in Central Asia - between Integrity and Soviet Integration '. p. 61.
Nevertheless, Soviet educational policies (and moral and political education) required trained and motivated teachers, appropriate textbooks and modern classrooms. Ineffective classroom discussions and learning experiences, and generational change resulted in domestic criticism of the Soviet education model. During the 1980s social issues involving education and socialisation became points of national debate, and even more so under perestroika. The Party-state made all chief decisions on the content of education policies, and how they were to be implemented in society. Application of new methods within the state or society was problematic because the CPSU forbade reinterpretation of Marxist-Leninist ideology. For good or for bad, after seventy years of social and cultural transformation, it was the Central Asians who accepted benefits of the educational renaissance, and in general the notion of civic identity proffered by moral and political education. Due to political and economic forces largely outside of Central Asia the USSR dissolved in December 1991, this led to the end of the transfer of budgets from Moscow to the periphery - and moreover a radical change in the provision of mass education across Central Asia.