



## **Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization**

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# SOVIET FEDERALISM AND ETHNIC MOBILIZATION

By PHILIP G. ROEDER\*

A CENTRAL element of the Soviet developmental strategy was the creation of political institutions that expanded the control of the regime over the processes of social mobilization associated with modernization. This strategy was noteworthy for providing a considerable measure of interethnic peace as the Soviet regime began the process of industrialization. And yet seven decades after the Soviet regime assumed power, with the industrialization of the economy and urbanization of society well under way, this developmental strategy instead fuels a divisive and destructive ethnopolitics.

The Soviet developmental strategy seems to turn around a pattern familiar in the Western developmental experience. As Ernest Gellner notes: "The age of transition to industrialism was bound" also to be "an age of nationalism."<sup>1</sup> But the Soviet strategy delayed the political reckoning with the "age of nationalism" to a much later stage of industrialization. In the short term this was a prudent means to avoid the simultaneous crises that can overtax the capabilities of a new polity: the Soviet regime did not confront a crisis of identity as it sought to build the foundations of Soviet power and initiate the economic transformation of society.<sup>2</sup> This strategy nonetheless contained the roots of its own longer-term dysfunction and in the past three and a half decades has given rise to new ethnic assertiveness and protest.<sup>3</sup>

The Western experience with peripheral nationalism has differed more significantly from the Soviet pattern in a second respect. In the West—regardless of macroeconomic conditions that occasion the rise of peripheral nationalisms—it has been most pronounced among the less

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<sup>1</sup> Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983), 40.

<sup>2</sup> Sidney Verba, "Sequences and Development," in Leonard Binder et al., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 283–316; Dankwart A. Rustow, *A World of Nations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings, 1967), 120–32.

<sup>3</sup> I make a parallel argument concerning the relationship between the Soviet developmental strategy and political participation; see Philip G. Roeder, "Modernization and Participation in the Leninist Developmental Strategy," *American Political Science Review* 83 (September 1989), 859–84.

advantaged. In nineteenth-century Western Europe, according to Joseph Rudolph and Robert Thompson, "the most common causal element giving rise to the urge for autonomy" was the aggravation of a peripheral ethnic group's "marginality in, or exploitation by, the state system to which it belongs."<sup>4</sup> During periods of economic prosperity in the more recent rise of peripheral nationalisms, Peter Gourevitch has found that those most likely to support ethnic political movements are disadvantaged ethnic groups drawn by the opportunity or promise of expanded resources.<sup>5</sup>

In the Soviet Union the rise of ethnopolitics has been most significant in the Caucasian and Baltic republics. It is there that local leaders have pressed the most ambitious legislative agendas for change (see Table 1) and that citizens have mounted the largest and most frequent demonstrations (Table 2). Yet, as Figure 1 shows, these nationalities—particularly the Armenians, Georgians, and Estonians—are among the most successful ethnic groups in terms of educational and occupational attainment, in many instances reporting rates even higher than those for the numerically predominant Russian population. Even in the area of Party membership, Georgians report far higher rates among the adult population than do the Russians, and the Armenians report rates above the average for all nationalities. Far less inclined to mount this form of political action in recent years have been the least advantaged nationalities, such as those in Central Asia. Thus, it is the nationalities with the highest levels of educational, occupational, and often political attainment, rather than the disadvantaged or marginal ones, that have advanced the most ambitious agendas for change and engaged in the most extensive protest.

The new Soviet ethnopolitics is structured by the federalism of nominally autonomous ethnic homelands. Appreciating the strategic value of organizational weapons, political entrepreneurship, and mobilizational resources, the architects of the Soviet regime came to understand that federal institutions could expand their control over the politicization of ethnicity. Within each homeland the regime created a cadre of party and state officials drawn from the indigenous ethnic group but dependent

<sup>4</sup> Rudolph and Thompson, "Ethnoterritorial Movements and the Policy Process: Accommodating Nationalist Demands in the Developed World," *Comparative Politics* 17 (April 1985), 292. See also Ernest Gellner, *Thought and Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 147–78; Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

<sup>5</sup> Gourevitch, "The Reemergence of 'Peripheral Nationalisms': Some Comparative Speculations on the Spatial Distribution of Political Leadership and Economic Growth," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 21 (July 1979), 303–22, at 319–21. See also Donald L. Horowitz, "Patterns of Ethnic Separatism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23 (1981), 165–95.

TABLE 1  
MAJOR UNION-REPUBLIC LEGISLATION ON ETHNIC RELATIONS  
(SEPTEMBER 1, 1985–DECEMBER 31, 1989)

<i>Republic</i>	<i>Sovereignty<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Language<sup>b</sup></i>	<i>Other Legislation<sup>c</sup></i>
Estonian SSR	Constitutional amendment (11/16/88) <sup>d</sup>	Law (1/18/89)	Republican economic accountability (5/18/89) Voting residence requirement (8/8/89) <sup>d</sup> Deputy residence requirement (11/17/89)
Lithuanian SSR	Constitutional amendment (5/18/89) <sup>d</sup>	Law (11/18/88) Presidium decree (1/26/89) Supreme Soviet decree (5/18/89)	Republican economic independence (5/18/89) Law on citizenship (11/3/89) <sup>d</sup> Military service (9/29/89) <sup>d</sup>
Latvian SSR	Constitutional amendment (7/29/89) <sup>d</sup>	Supreme Soviet resolution (10/6/88) Law (5/5/89)	In-migration restrictions (2/14/89) Voting residence requirement (7/29/89) <sup>d</sup>
Azerbaijan SSR	Constitutional amendment (9/23/89) <sup>d</sup>	[Article 73] <sup>e</sup>	
Georgian SSR	Constitutional amendment (11/19/89)	[Article 75] <sup>e</sup>	
Armenian SSR		[Article 73] <sup>e</sup>	Annexation of Nagorno-Karabakh (12/1/89)
Tadjik SSR		Law (7/22/89)	
Moldavian SSR		Law (9/1/89)	
Uzbek SSR		Constitutional amendment (10/21/89)	

SOURCES: *Izvestiia*, January 20, 1989, July 23, 1989, November 5, 1989, November 13, 1989, November 20, 1989; *Kommunist* [Erevan], December 3, 1989; *Pravda*, October 7, 1988, November 28, 1988, May 6, 1989, May 20, 1989, July 30, 1989, August 10, 1989, August 17, 1989, September 1, 1989, September 3, 1989, October 6, 1989; *Sovetskaiia Estoniia*, November 19, 1988; *Sovetskaiia Litva*, November 19, 1988, January 27, 1989; *Sovetskaiia Latvija*, February 17, 1989.

<sup>a</sup> Declarations of sovereignty and right of nullification. In parentheses: date of adoption.

<sup>b</sup> Declaration of state language. In parentheses: date of adoption.

<sup>c</sup> Language provision previously adopted with 1978 union-republic constitution.

<sup>d</sup> Portions subsequently declared unconstitutional by all-union Presidium of the Supreme Soviet.

<sup>e</sup> In parentheses: date of adoption.

TABLE 2  
MAJOR PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS  
(SEPTEMBER 1, 1985–AUGUST 31, 1989)

<i>Ethnic Group</i>	<i>Estimated Number of Demonstrations</i>	
	<i>Over 100,000 Participants</i>	<i>Over 10,000 Participants<sup>a</sup></i>
Armenians	25	30
Azeris	9	19
Lithuanians	4	9
Latvians	3	7
Georgians	2	4
Estonians	2	4
Moldavians	1	6
Uzbeks	1	1
"Exclave" Russians	0	3
Belorussians	0	1
Ukrainians	0	0
Kazakhs	0	0
Kirgizes	0	0
Tadjiks	0	0
Turkmen	0	0

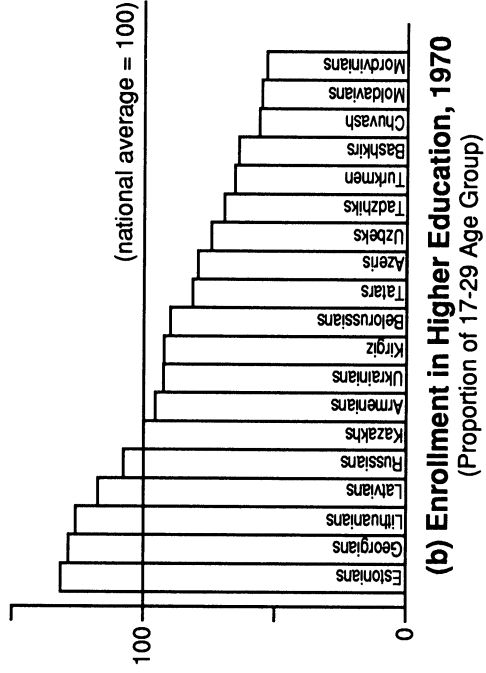
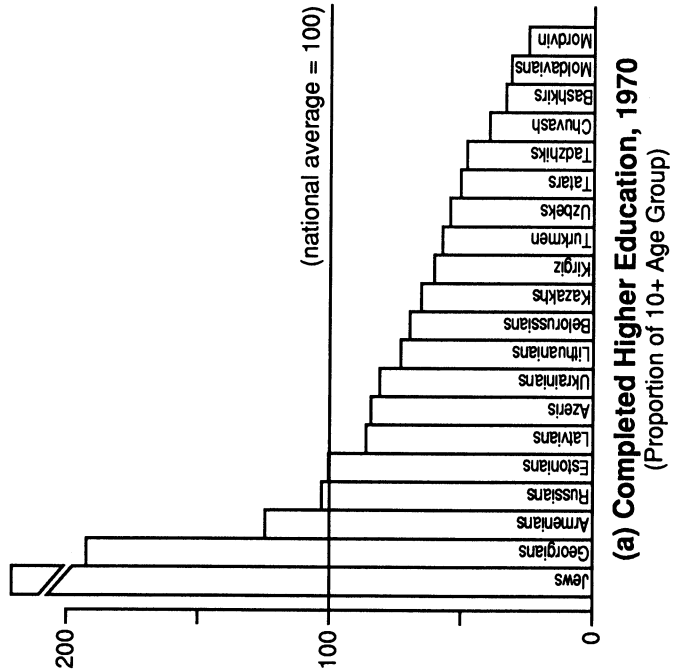
SOURCES: *New York Times*; *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin*; *Report on the USSR*.

<sup>a</sup> Number includes those over 100,000.

upon Moscow for its members' positions. As this cadre was assigned a monopoly over the mobilizational resources within the ethnic community, it determined when the ethnic group would be mobilized to action. It was a strategy that achieved interethnic peace not so much by removing the root causes of ethnic grievances as by eliminating mobilizational opportunities for independent ethnic protest.

It is therefore an ironic twist that after the transition to industrialism these federal institutions and indigenous cadres became instruments of the new ethnic assertiveness. Institutions that were designed to expand Moscow's control over ethnic groups (and that were generally thought in the West to be moribund as federal guarantees of ethnic rights) have taken on a new life. Autonomous homelands provide essential resources for the collective mobilization of ethnic communities, and both federal institutions and indigenous cadres shape ethnic agendas.

Central to what we have witnessed in the Soviet Union is an expanding and increasingly public politics of *ethnofederalism*. This is not a new phenomenon initiated by the policies of Mikhail Gorbachev but the continuation of a trend that began to unfold as early as the rule of Nikita



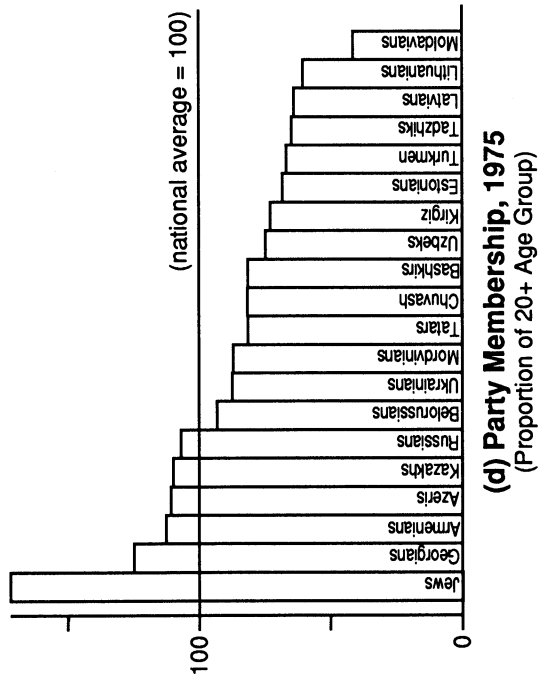
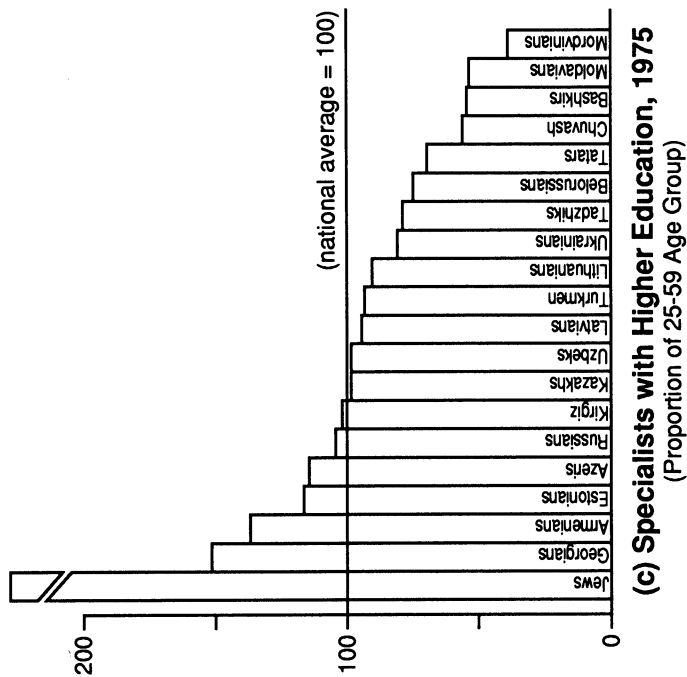


FIGURE 1  
EDUCATIONAL, OCCUPATIONAL, AND POLITICAL ATTAINMENT  
BY ETHNIC GROUP<sup>a</sup>

SOURCES: Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, *Itogi vseroizuznoi perepisi naseleniia 1970 goda* (Moscow: Statistika, 1972-73), 2:12-75, 4:360-82, 393-433; *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka, i kul'tura v SSSR* (Moscow: Statistika, 1971), 196; *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka, i kul'tura v SSSR* (Moscow: Statistika, 1977), 296; *Partiinaiia zhizn'*, no. 10 (1976), 16.

<sup>a</sup> These figures show the most recent data available for ethnic groups with a population over one million.

Khrushchev. As examples below will show, demands for expanded autonomy, protests over language policy, pressures to reduce Russian migration, and intercommunal violence have surfaced in every decade since the mid-1950s. Gorbachev's policies are clearly not sufficient explanation for a pattern that predates Gorbachev and the introduction of his reforms.

The key to three questions raised by the present ethnic crisis lies within the Soviet developmental strategy that created those homelands and cadres. First, *origins*: Why have institutions that fostered interethnic peace during the transition to industrialization later become the vehicles of protest? Second, *incidence*: Why have the relatively advantaged ethnic groups been the most assertive, whereas ethnic groups near the lower end of most comparative measures of socioeconomic and political success have been relatively quiescent? And third, *agendas*: Why have the most important issues of contention between center and periphery focused to such a large degree upon the details of the Soviet developmental strategy and upon federalism in particular? As is argued in the conclusion, the answers to these questions point up the centrality of Soviet political institutions to the politicization of ethnicity.

#### THE SOVIET DEVELOPMENTAL STRATEGY AND ETHNICITY

Political entrepreneurs play a critical role in the mobilization of protest, the politicization of ethnicity, and in many cases even the creation of ethnic identities.<sup>6</sup> In the European experience, for example, regional intellectuals who felt their aspirations to elite status frustrated by the status quo were often the pioneers of ethnic revival. Anthony Smith contends that these intellectuals sought to create a separate, ethnically distinct system of stratification within which the "professional and bureaucratic apparatus would naturally satisfy the career aspirations of a multitude of hitherto excluded diploma-holders."<sup>7</sup> These regionally oriented intellectuals were a necessary, although not sufficient, ingredient in the rise of peripheral nationalisms.

Political entrepreneurs in ethnic communities have available to them two mobilizational strategies: *primordial* and *instrumental*. The primor-

<sup>6</sup> William Bernard, "New Directions in Integration and Ethnicity," *International Migration Review* 5 (Winter 1971), 464-73; Michael Hechter, Debra Friedman, and Malka Appelbaum, "A Theory of Ethnic Collective Action," *International Migration Review* 16 (Summer 1982), 412-34; Phillip M. Rawkins, "An Approach to the Political Sociology of the Welsh Nationalist Movement," *Political Studies* 27 (September 1979), 440-57; Joseph Rothchild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 27.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, *The Ethnic Revival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 87, 126.



dial strategy focuses on ethnic revival—in Smith's words, "communal regeneration through self-discovery and self-realization."<sup>8</sup> The mobilization of the ethnic community for political action often centers on an assertion of the ethnic group's identity, usually in the context of issues of culture, identity, or belief and in reaction to threats to the identity from assimilative policies. The instrumental strategy focuses on the pursuit of social and economic interests. The mobilization of ethnicity, according to Rothchild, is "a highly conscious, political, and new mode of interest articulation."<sup>9</sup> The ethnic group itself, in the words of Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan, is "defined in terms of interest, *as* an interest group."<sup>10</sup> Political entrepreneurs may also seek to mix these strategies.

The Soviet developmental strategy sought to control ethnopolitics by prohibiting all but sanctioned political entrepreneurs from mobilizing their communities and by deterring these entrepreneurs from pursuing any but the regime's instrumental strategies of plan fulfillment and social transformation. The Soviet strategy achieved this control through a threefold policy of (1) creating within each ethnic homeland an indigenous cadre assigned a monopoly over the mobilizational resources of the community, (2) constraining the behavior of this new ethnic cadre by creating an incentive structure that deterred the expression of unsanctioned, particularly primordial ethnic agendas, and (3) assigning the cadre the responsibility for creating an ethnically distinct stratification system within official institutions and for impeding the emergence of alternative ethnic entrepreneurs outside these institutions. Let us examine each in turn.

#### CREATING AN ETHNIC CADRE

The Soviets have labeled the structural foundations of their "nationalities policies" socialist federalism and indigenization (*korenizatsiia*). The socialist federation, in the formulation of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia*, "differs radically from the bourgeois federation," for the former is "the state form for solving the *national question* . . . [and] is based on the national-territorial principle."<sup>11</sup> Thus, at present fifty-three of the territorial administrations of the Soviet Union are based on designated ethnic homelands—fifteen as union republics, twenty as autonomous republics,

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 105; James McKay, "An Exploratory Synthesis of Primordial and Mobilizationalist Approaches to Ethnic Phenomena," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 5 (October 1982), 395–420, at 399.

<sup>9</sup> Rothchild (fn. 6), 30.

<sup>10</sup> Glazer and Moynihan, *Ethnicity: Theory and Experience* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 7.

<sup>11</sup> *Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia entsiklopediia, 1977), 27:255.

eight as autonomous oblasts, and ten as autonomous *okrugs*.<sup>12</sup> Indigenization has sought to tie the minorities to the Soviet regime by drawing national cadres into the political and administrative posts of Party and state in these territories. In 1920 then People's Commissar of Nationality Affairs Joseph Stalin explained that to make Soviet power "near and dear" to the minorities would require

that all Soviet organs in the border regions . . . should as far as possible be recruited from the local people acquainted with the manner of life, habits, customs, and language of the native population; [and] that all the best people from the local masses should be drawn into these institutions.<sup>13</sup>

Federalism and indigenization came at the expense of simple economic rationality and assimilation. The national-territorial principle has not always led to optimal administrative units. In some instances, particularly among less modernized groups, it perpetuated or strengthened ethnic differences that might otherwise have disappeared. In the case of the Ukraine, Alexander Motyl can ask, "Why . . . did the Soviet state . . . discourage Little Russianization [i.e., assimilation] by pursuing *korenizatsiia*?"<sup>14</sup> The answer would appear to be the primacy the Soviet regime placed on checking the mobilizational sources of ethnopoltics and the critical role it assigned the ethnic cadres in this strategy.

These policies provided opportunities for nationalities representing over 93 percent of the non-Russian population to create ethnically distinct political elites within formally autonomous homelands. Grey Hodnett's extensive data show that by the early post-Stalinist period (1955–72), indigenization in eleven of the fourteen non-Russian republics led to proportionate overrepresentation of the titular nationality in Party and state leadership posts at the republic level. By the 1980s indigenization extended well beyond the most visible posts, such as each republic's Party first secretary, chairmen of its Presidium and Council of Ministers, first secretary of its Union of Writers, president of its Academy of Sciences, rectors of its principal universities, and chair of its council of trade unions. The data compiled by Ellen Jones and Fred W. Grupp show that it also reached such sensitive and less visible areas as internal security, including each republic's Ministry of Internal Affairs, Committee on

<sup>12</sup> A new (eleventh) autonomous *okrug* was created for the Even-Batagai district in Yakutia in October 1989; *Pravda*, October 30, 1989. Other changes are likely to follow.

<sup>13</sup> Stalin, "The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia," in *Works* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1953), 4:370–71.

<sup>14</sup> Motyl, *Will the Non-Russians Rebel?* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1987), 104. See also Grey Hodnett, "The Debate over Soviet Federalism," *Soviet Studies* 18 (April 1967), 458–81; Daniel C. Matuszewski, "Nationalities in the Soviet Future: Trends under Gorbachev," in Lawrence C. Lerner and Donald W. Treadgold, eds., *Gorbachev and the Soviet Future* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1988), 95–96.

State Security, and the Party's Administrative Organs Department. It also touched lower levels of administration. In 1988, for example, in each union republic with oblasts the indigenous nationality held a greater proportion of oblast Party committee first secretaryships than its proportion of the republic's population.<sup>15</sup>

The indigenous cadre was given an institutionalized monopoly on the public expression of ethnic identity, that is, it defined the ethnic markers that distinguish the nationality. These markers were then central to communicating the socialist message in national cultural forms and propagandizing populations being brought into the modern sector. For many Soviet citizens undergoing social mobilization the first sustained contact with the great traditions of their own ethnic group was in the form of this national-Soviet hybrid. In the extreme, the markers identified by these elites defined new ethnic groups, such as the Tadjiks, that had not previously been communities with which elites and the masses had identified. Yet, as the recent political activism by Tadjiks attests, even these markers became the basis for the mobilization of the population in political action.<sup>16</sup>

More importantly, within each republic this cadre was assigned the role of gatekeeper, to determine when the ethnic group would be mobilized politically. Insofar as anyone within the homeland had access, this cadre monopolized the mobilizational resources essential to sustained, large-scale political action. The means of communications, particularly the indigenous-language press and broadcast media, were monopolized through the republican institutions controlled by this cadre.<sup>17</sup> Access to meeting places, such as auditoriums and public squares within the re-

<sup>15</sup> Hodnett, *Leadership in the Soviet National Republics* (Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 1978), 101-3, 377-78; Jones and Grupp, "Modernisation and Ethnic Equalisation in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* 36 (April 1984), 159-84, at 174; *Deputaty verkhovnogo soveta SSSR, odinadsatyi sozyv* [Deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, eleventh convocation] (Moscow: Izvestiia, 1984); Gavin Helf, comp., *A Biographical Directory of Soviet Regional Party Leaders*, 2d ed. (Munich: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 1988). For long-term trends in indigenization within specific republics, see John A. Armstrong, *The Soviet Bureaucratic Elite: A Case Study of the Ukrainian Apparatus* (New York: Praeger, 1959), 15-17; Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988), 209-318; Martha Brill Olcott, *The Kazakhs* (Stanford, Calif.: Hoover Institutions Press, 1987), 199-246. See also Steven L. Burg, "Russians, Natives, and Jews in the Soviet Scientific Elite: Cadre Competition in Central Asia," *Cahiers du Monde Russe et Soviétique* 20 (January-March 1979), 43-59; Nancy Lubin, "Assimilation and Retention of Ethnic Identity in Uzbekistan," *Asian Affairs* 12 (October 1981), 277-85, at 283; J. W. R. Parsons, "National Integration in Soviet Georgia," *Soviet Studies* 34 (October 1982), 547-69, at 554.

<sup>16</sup> Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, *Russia and Nationalism in Central Asia* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 76; *Izvestiia*, July 14, 1989; *Kommunist Tadzhikistana*, June 28, 1989; *Pravda*, June 25, 1988.

<sup>17</sup> Alex Inkeles, *Public Opinion in Soviet Russia: A Study in Mass Persuasion* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950); Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917-1929* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

public, was at the discretion of this cadre. And public protests could avoid violent suppression only with the cadre's approval.

#### THE DETERRENCE OF PRIMORDIAL STRATEGIES

These cadres were encouraged to pursue the regime's instrumental strategies and deterred from primordial strategies by the offer of material rewards and status, which were tightly tied to the regime's goals.<sup>18</sup> Particularly after Stalin's purge of traditional native elites and the sovietization of indigenous institutions, the cadres enjoyed access to these rewards only by virtue of Soviet institutions. Their privileged positions would not be improved in alternative (even independent) institutions. Indeed, the collapse of Soviet power within their homeland would mean their own fall from power—or perhaps worse. Cadres thus had a strong incentive to resist the articulation of agendas that might be subversive of existing federal institutions.

Rewards were tightly tied to the norms and goals of the Soviet developmental strategy. Soviet federalism embedded these cadres within the all-union Soviet administrative hierarchy. Cadres could only succeed within an incentive system that defined individual and collective success in instrumental terms of quota fulfillment and socioeconomic growth. By integrating the cadres into Party and state hierarchies, Soviet federalism made the “normal” politics of competitive appeals for resources the norm among ethnic elites as well. Much of the politics between Moscow and the nationality-based territorial units came to involve the petitioning for funds from above; beginning with the last years under Khrushchev speeches by leaders of the republics appealing for funds and projects to benefit their people came to be an increasingly prominent feature of meetings of the Party Congress, the Central Committee, and the Supreme Soviet.<sup>19</sup>

Those who engaged in unsanctioned mobilizational strategies could be punished with total deprivation of these rewards by being removed from their positions of authority. The monopoly of official institutions meant that a purge at the very least threatened one's access to these rewards; cadres could not return to a prosperous private life. Purges of ethnic leaders charged with articulating particularistic, primordial agendas also deterred others from making such appeals. Since 1960 over a dozen first secretaries of union republics have been removed under cir-

<sup>18</sup> Seweryn Bialer, *Stalin's Successors* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 216. See also Motyl (fn. 14), 104–5, 119–22.

<sup>19</sup> Donna Bahry, *Outside Moscow: Power, Politics, and Budgetary Policy in Soviet Republics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 1–5; Jerry F. Hough and Merle Fainsod, *How the Soviet Union Is Governed* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), 510–17.

cumstances that suggest the cause was either their own endorsement of primordial agendas or their unwillingness to silence others who articulated such agendas. For example, after an official reception in 1962 the chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh Republic was apparently removed for making unguarded comments while intoxicated—comments that were just too nationalistic. In 1966 the first secretary of the Armenian Party was removed for failure to curb anti-Turkic protests on the fiftieth anniversary of the massacre of the Armenians. And in 1972 the Ukrainian and Georgian secretaries were both removed for “national narrow-mindedness” and overzealous promotion of local interests.<sup>20</sup>

#### CREATING AN OFFICIAL INDIGENOUS ELITE

A major responsibility assigned this new cadre by Moscow's all-union authorities was to block the emergence within the ethnic community of counterelites that might challenge Soviet institutions. Within their autonomous homelands the cadres implemented policies that extended the institutional and personnel strategies of the center. These policies sought to (1) create a new, open indigenous elite of professionals and intelligentsia within official institutions, (2) tie professional and material rewards to membership in this elite, while denying these rewards to those outside the elite, and (3) limit access to the mobilizational resources of the community to these official institutions.

The ethnic cadres enacted affirmative action policies during a period of rapid economic growth and modernization in order to expand opportunities for mobility for those aspiring to positions within the professional strata and intelligentsia. Extension of the policy of indigenization opened career opportunities throughout the administrative apparatus of the homeland. Programs of collectivization and industrialization offered opportunities for mobility in management. And the creation of universities and academies of sciences in the republics dramatically expanded the number of professional positions reserved for the minorities.

These affirmative action policies in the institutional context of Soviet federalism elevated titular nationalities to privileged positions in higher education and professional employment within their homelands. For example, whereas Georgians constituted 67 percent of their republic's population in 1970 (and approximately the same proportion of the college-age cohort), they constituted 83 percent of the student body of the republic's institutions of higher education.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, although Mol-

<sup>20</sup> Robert Conquest, *Soviet Nationalities Policy in Practice* (New York: Praeger, 1967); Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, “The Dialectics of Nationalism in the USSR,” *Problems of Communism* 23 (May–June 1974), 1–22, at 13.

<sup>21</sup> Parsons (fn. 15), 558–59.

davians constituted under two-thirds of the total population of their republic in the mid-1980s, they were at least 80 percent of the student body in the law and business schools of Kishinev State University, the republic's leading educational institution. Commenting on the rapid upward mobility of the Uzbek population within their republic, Nancy Lubin contends that the Central Asians "tend to hire 'their own' first."<sup>22</sup>

It is probably true—as critics have charged—that these opportunities have been opened by crudely implemented quota systems. These have apparently lowered standards in higher education and employment and discriminated against "minority" ethnic groups living within the homelands of other ethnic groups. Mark Popovsky alleges that in the universities of Uzbekistan, for example,

young men and women from primitive villages with scarcely any education . . . are given scholarships and free lodging, and are assured passing marks whether they study or not. The philosophy behind this strange proceeding is that all nations in the brotherly family of the USSR are equal, and that all of them therefore can and must have their own intelligentsia, their own doctors, engineers, writers, and scholars.<sup>23</sup>

And Soviet officials themselves have warned that favoritism in appointments toward the titular nationality of a republic often discriminates against other nationalities. In 1986, for example, the all-union Party leadership chastised Kirgiz leaders for favoring Kirgiz candidates among new recruits to the republic's Party organizations and for discriminating against other nationalities (notably Uzbeks) residing within the republic.<sup>24</sup>

Nonetheless, these policies, to expand the opportunity for mobility, represent a particularly astute accommodation with ethnicity. From 1950 to 1975, for example, among the fourteen titular nationalities of union republics (other than Russians) the annual growth in scientific workers with either a candidate of science or a doctor of science degree was 9.6 percent—a rate 54 percent higher than among Russians.<sup>25</sup> While demanding political loyalty to the Soviet regime, the mobility opportunities did not require denial of ethnic identities. Indeed, ethnicity became a condition for success, since the positions of status within homelands were often reserved for specific minorities. Soviet federalism offered minori-

<sup>22</sup> Lubin (fn. 15), 283.

<sup>23</sup> Mark Popovsky, *Manipulated Science* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), 118.

<sup>24</sup> John Soper, "Nationality Issues under Review in Kirgizia," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 49/88 (January 29, 1988).

<sup>25</sup> USSR Tsentral'noe Statisticheskoe Upravlenie, *Narodnoe obrazovanie, nauka i kul'tura v SSSR* [Popular education, science, and culture in the USSR] (Moscow: Statistika, 1977), 308–39.

ties the opportunity to realize their aspirations to create separate stratification systems—but within the Soviet Union.

To block the emergence of counterelites *within* this official elite, the cadres presided over a dense network of parallel institutions that controlled all aspects of professional life.<sup>26</sup> Research of significance to the ethnic group and its homeland was controlled by indigenous academies of sciences and universities. Creative professionals such as writers, artists, or architects who sought to disseminate their work under the cultural monopoly of the regime were required to join the official unions of the homeland for their respective professions. Members of the new scientific and creative elite were dependent upon the official institutions, and most could not hope to improve their lot in an alternative ethnic elite created outside and in opposition to these institutions. This was particularly true for those in positions of power such as leaders of professional unions, those with academic positions in fields heavily encumbered by ideology, and creative artists who depended upon the hegemony of socialist realism for their success. The purge threatened deprivation of both rewards and the means to practice one's profession.

To block the emergence of counterelites *outside* the new professional elite and intelligentsia, the cadre denied those outside official institutions access to mobilizational resources. The ethnic cadre prohibited independent association, severed unofficial lines of communication between the intelligentsia and the populace, and deprived incipient dissident movements of their leadership by "decapitating" them—that is, threatening, imprisoning, or executing exemplary figures. Those outside were limited to the inefficient means of illegal associations, samizdat, and underground dissemination. Muslims opposed to the official religious hierarchy in the mid-1980s, for example, still had to rely upon religious tracts—many of them handwritten—smuggled across the borders from Afghan resistance groups. And Muslims of the Sufi underground borrowed a technique from dissidents in the European parts of the Soviet Union: they distributed their religious texts by chain letters.<sup>27</sup> Soviet policies punished severely those who attempted to articulate primordial agendas outside the official institutions. For example, in an attack on what *Kommunist Ukraïny* labeled the "belching of debilitated national-

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Dietrich A. Loeber, "Administration of Culture in Soviet Latvia," in Adolf Sprudz and Armin Ruis, eds., *Res Baltica* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1968), 133–45; Nicholas P. Vakar, *Belorussia: The Making of a Nation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), 150–51.

<sup>27</sup> Timur Kocaoglu, "Muslim Chain Letters in Central Asia," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 313/83 (August 18, 1983); Alexandre Bennigsen, "Mullahs, Mujahidin, and Soviet Muslims," *Problems of Communism* 33 (November–December 1984), 28–41, at 36–37.

ism," the KGB in August–September 1965 arrested over twenty intellectuals who had attempted to lead a Ukrainian cultural renaissance.<sup>28</sup> In order to crack down on nonofficial Muslim preaching, a 1982 decree of the Turkmen Supreme Soviet Presidium authorized sentences of up to two years imprisonment and corrective labor for the crime of "social vagabondage."<sup>29</sup> And in Armenia arrests in late 1988 and early 1989 sought to decapitate the protest movement by targeting its leaders (such as the Karabakh Committee).<sup>30</sup>

#### CONSEQUENCES FOR ETHNIC POLITICAL ACTION

As a consequence of the monopoly over mobilizational resources held by the official institutions, in most circumstances only instrumental political action behind the objectives of the cadre could muster the mobilizational requisites for sustained large-scale action. There were, of course, spontaneous incidents of primordial ethnic protest. In Tashkent in September 1969, for example, an Uzbek crowd assaulted Russian bystanders after a match between the local "Pakhtar" soccer team and visitors from the Russian Republic.<sup>31</sup> And many individual participants in officially sponsored political action harbored private primordial agendas. Nevertheless, aspiring counterelites were handicapped in their attempts to form and mobilize effective political action in support of primordial agendas; and when it occurred, primordial protest was more likely to be expressed in isolated, ineffective, small-scale events.

Even in the period of perestroika, in republics where these cadres exercise decisive control over mobilizational resources, they can determine whether protest will be on a sustained large scale or simply sporadic. This is illustrated by the differing fortunes of popular fronts in the Ukraine and the Baltic republics during 1988 and 1989. In the Ukraine, according to an American correspondent, "the hard line of the [union-republic] Communist leadership here is one reason the rise of Ukrainian self-consciousness has been slower than the surge of nationalism in the Baltic republics."<sup>32</sup> In the Baltic republics, by contrast, the cadre made

<sup>28</sup> Ludmilla Alexeyeva, *Soviet Dissent* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), 31.

<sup>29</sup> Bennigsen (fn. 27), 40.

<sup>30</sup> *New York Times*, November 25, 1988, November 26, 1988, December 22, 1988, January 2, 1989. See also *Pravda*, January 26, 1990.

<sup>31</sup> Michael Rywkin, *Moscow's Muslim Challenge* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1982), 121; B. Brown, "Kazakhstan in 1987: The Year after Alma Ata," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 5/88 (December 23, 1987), 2. See also Ronald Grigor Suny, *Armenia in the Twentieth Century* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 78–80.

<sup>32</sup> *New York Times*, March 9, 1989; see also June 20, 1988, August 24, 1988, August 25, 1988, October 10, 1988, November 30, 1988, December 2, 1988, December 7, 1988, February 5, 1989, April 9, 1989, April 14, 1989, April 22, 1989; Bohdan Nahaylo, "Baltic Echoes in the



available to the popular fronts the mobilizational resources of the Party and state. Thus, the founding of the Latvian Popular Front was attended by the republic's Party leadership, which applauded its call for autonomy. Statements by the national fronts were published by the official press. Their newspapers were printed by the official publishing houses. Their programs appeared on state-run television, including two full days of live coverage of the Sajudis Conference in 1988. Their meetings were sanctioned, including the assembly of the three Baltic popular fronts held at the Estonian Central Committee's House of Political Enlightenment. Their demonstrations received permits. As the chairman of the Sajudis Assembly, Vytautas Landsbergis, stressed in a 1989 interview with *Tygodnik Powszechny*, the ability of his movement to conduct its activities depended upon its close relationship with the republic's Party authorities.<sup>33</sup> The importance of these cadres is further illustrated by the republic's elections of 1990: the cadres in the Baltic republics permitted a choice among candidates with alternative ethnic agendas, whereas in other republics, such as Belorussia, cadres blocked this.<sup>34</sup>

The ethnic cadres have actually instigated many of the protests of the past few years. In the Baltic republics demonstrations have been orchestrated to support legislative initiatives on state languages and republican sovereignty. In November 1988 the Estonian Party leadership reportedly pressed members of the republic's Supreme Soviet for a unanimous vote and then orchestrated demonstrations on behalf of legislation to grant itself the power of nullification over all-union legislation. Similarly, in May 1989 Lithuanian Party leaders mobilized demonstrations in Vilnius to support legislation giving the republic power of nullification and then claiming exemption from the new all-union highway tax.<sup>35</sup> In Nagorny Karabakh and Armenia demonstrations on behalf of Armenian annexation of the Karabakh began in early 1988 with the support of the local Party and state leadership—including formal legislative endorsement of their cause by local soviets. And apparently even much of the violence to force Azeris from Armenia (and Armenians from Azerbaidjan) that began in late November 1988 took place with the support of local Party and state officials.<sup>36</sup> Where leaders of a republic take decisive action to

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Ukraine," *Report on the USSR* 1 (January 13, 1989), 18–20; idem, "Confrontation over Creation of Ukrainian 'Popular Front,'" *Report on the USSR* 1 (March 3, 1989), 13–17.

<sup>33</sup> *Tygodnik Powszechny*, February 5, 1989. See also *Izvestiia*, May 15, 1989; Saulius Girnius, "Unofficial Groups in the Baltic Republics and Access to the Mass Media," *Report on the USSR* 1 (May 5, 1989), 16–19.

<sup>34</sup> *New York Times*, March 5, 1990, March 6, 1990, March 31, 1990.

<sup>35</sup> Moscow TASS, November 20, 1988, reported in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, November 21, 1988, pp. 42–43; *New York Times*, November 17, 1988, November 27, 1988, December 8, 1988, May 19, 1989, May 25, 1989.

<sup>36</sup> *Kommunist* (Baku), October 14, 1988; *Izvestiia*, January 5, 1989.

block protests (as in the Ukraine until mid-1989) or to silence them (as in Georgia after five days of protest in April 1989), future political action is usually sporadic and small-scale.

The ability of different ethnic groups to mount large-scale, sustained political action has thus been closely tied to the resources controlled by their cadres. The mobilizational opportunities are greatest among those cadres in control of a union republic or even an autonomous republic or oblast. At the other extreme, ethnic groups without an autonomous homeland or living outside it suffer a major handicap, though they may still find local mobilizing cadres and elites, as the Gagauz found among town and village authorities in southern Moldavia. "Exclave" Russians in Estonia and Moldavia have found these cadres among factory managers and subordinate Party officials in those republics.<sup>37</sup> Nationalities lacking even these resources suffer the greatest handicap in attempting to express their protest in any sort of sustained large-scale manner. Thus, the protests by Jews have been sporadic and small-scale: in 1988 and 1989, for example, the largest demonstrations by Jews drew only several hundred, and most demonstrations, only two to three dozen.<sup>38</sup>

#### ORIGINS: THE RISE OF ETHNOFEDERALISM

Over the past three decades three changes have transformed Soviet developmental strategy into a source of ethnofederalism. First, with the trimming of the terror apparatus under Khrushchev and the policy of "respect for cadres" under Brezhnev, that is, the relaxation of Moscow's deterrent threat, these cadres had greater leeway in pressing their particularistic agendas.<sup>39</sup> Second, as the cadres built institutional and even popular support within their ethnic communities, their dependence upon the center declined. These new power bases enabled the cadres to take more assertive policy stands against Moscow. Third, these cadres encountered mounting difficulties in securing resources to continue the expansion of mobility opportunities within their homelands. In response, they often resorted to a strategy of mobilizing their elites behind legislative agendas

<sup>37</sup> *New York Times*, March 15, 1989; Vladimir Socor, "Politics of the Language Question Heating Up in Soviet Moldavia," *Report on the USSR* 1 (September 8, 1989), 33-36; *Pravda* July 29, 1989.

<sup>38</sup> See, for example, *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 43/88 (January 29, 1988), 5, RL 167/88 (April 15, 1988), 9, RL 177/88 (April 22, 1988), 10, RL 258/88 (June 17, 1988), 7; *Report on the USSR* 1 (May 19, 1989), 33.

<sup>39</sup> H. Gordon Skilling, "Group Conflict in Soviet Politics: Some Conclusions," in H. Gordon Skilling and Franklin Griffiths, eds., *Interest Groups in Soviet Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 399-405; Robert E. Blackwell, Jr., "Cadres Policy in the Brezhnev Era," *Problems of Communism* 28 (March-April 1979), 29-42.

and their populations in ethnic protest in order to secure additional resources from Moscow and to maintain their hegemony within their homelands. Ironically, the last two of these factors are natural consequences of the very means by which these cadres had previously controlled their ethnic communities on behalf of the center.

Policies of affirmative action permitted these cadres to build more secure political bases within their ethnic communities, for these policies created a loyal clientele. The creation of this clientele was also fostered by the post-Stalinist decentralization. As many administrative tasks were transferred from all-union to union-republic or republican ministries and as the cadres' discretion in personnel matters was expanded, the cadres' control of patronage opportunities was enlarged. Efforts to cement loyalties with the indigenous elite were aided—particularly during the Brezhnev years—by the lengthening term of office of these elites and by the reduction in the amount of rotation of personnel among homelands.<sup>40</sup> These power bases blunted the deterrent threat of the purge, for they made removal of a republic's first secretary more costly for Moscow. The removal of Dinmukhamed Kunaev brought two days of riots to Kazakhstan, for example. The ethnic constituencies developed by these ethnic elites became resources in showdowns with the all-union leadership over key policy choices.<sup>41</sup>

The cadres' motivation to mobilize their ethnic constituencies rose in recent decades as their monopolistic leadership within the ethnic community came under increasing threat. One threat has been the indigenous professional elite and intelligentsia itself. The very success of previous affirmative action policies created a large group with the skills to constitute themselves as independent political entrepreneurs. A second threat has come from the disparity between the increasing demands for rewards and mobility opportunities and the diminished capability to meet those demands. Given the large size of this elite and its already

<sup>40</sup> For example, the average term of union-republic first secretaries nearly doubled from 4.5 years on January 1, 1960, to 8.7 years ten years later, it then rose again to 12.0 years ten years after that. Grey Hodnett, *Leaders of the Soviet Republics, 1955–1972* (Canberra: Australian National University, 1973); Central Intelligence Agency, *Directory of Soviet Officials: Republic Organizations* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1980); Hodnett (fn. 15), 63–65.

<sup>41</sup> Mark Beissinger, "Ethnicity, the Personnel Weapon, and Neo-Imperial Integration: Ukrainian and R.S.F.S.R. Provincial Party Officials Compared," *Studies in Comparative Communism* 21 (Spring 1988), 71–85; Patrick Cockburn, "Dateline USSR: Ethnic Tremors," *Foreign Policy* 74 (Spring 1989), 174–75; Suny (fn. 15), 301–5; Suny (fn. 31), 73–75; Joel Moses, "Regionalism in Soviet Politics: Continuity as a Source of Change, 1953–82," *Soviet Studies* 37 (April 1985), 184–211; Martha Brill Olcott, "Gorbachev's Nationalities Policy and Soviet Central Asia," in Rajan Menon and Daniel N. Nelson, eds., *Limits to Soviet Power* (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1989), 77–81.

high levels of material rewards, it has become more difficult to provide the still larger material rewards necessary to ensure their continuing loyalty. And a third threat has resulted from the increasing difficulty encountered in further expanding the ethnic elite to accommodate new aspirants to this elite. The rapid growth of a large professional elite and intelligentsia has virtually saturated some ethnic communities with elite positions. Declining economic growth has compounded these problems over the past two decades. This threatened, first, the cadres' capacity to continue expanding the rewards of the elite and the mobility opportunities for new aspirants to elite positions and, second, their ability to offer the improved living standards necessary to keep the population tied to themselves rather than to alternative leaders. In short, the last three decades brought increasing threats to some of the very means by which the cadre had previously blocked the growth of counterelites and prevented the mobilization of the population behind primordial agendas. It is an irony of the Soviet developmental strategy that some of these threats are products of the very success of the means previously used to control ethnic assertiveness.

A crisis developed over the past decade as the number of ethnic groups experiencing this threat increased. Ethnic cadres were forced to intensify their pressure on Moscow to gain additional resources, and consequently, competition for the same scarce resources grew among ethnic communities. But declining growth rates left Moscow with even fewer resources to respond to rising demands. Faced with this crisis, ethnic cadres have found they must press Moscow still harder for investments and must devise strategies that are more clever yet to underscore the urgency of their agendas. For example, in pressing Moscow for expanded autonomy, Baltic Party leaders have turned to legislative showdowns and have mobilized popular demonstrations to support the position of the republics' elites.<sup>42</sup> Ethnic cadres have found enthusiastic allies in these strategies among their dependent elites and among aspirants to elite positions. Even aspiring independent political entrepreneurs pursuing primordial strategies often joined the political action mobilized by the cadres, viewing it as the best or only vehicle to press their own agendas in public. The cadres often have a strong incentive to make common cause with members of potential counterelites such as popular fronts in order to increase the pressure on Moscow. Thus, the late 1980s witnessed both

<sup>42</sup> See Bahry (fn. 19), 2-3, 25-31, 77-85; Steven L. Burg, "Muslim Cadres and Soviet Political Development: Reflections from a Comparative Perspective," *World Politics* 37 (October 1984), 24-47, at 33, 36.

dominant elites and potential counterelites making common cause to mobilize the ethnic community.

#### INCIDENCE: FLASH POINTS OF ETHNOFEDERALISM

The pattern of ethnofederalism in the Soviet Union contains yet a further ironic twist: the incentive to mobilize their ethnic constituency is greatest for those ethnic cadres that have previously been most successful at the Soviet developmental strategy—notably in the Caucasus and the Baltic republics. The pressure of potential counterelites, the difficulties of further expanding elite positions and material rewards, and so the threat to their positions are greatest for those cadres that were previously most successful at engineering affirmative action and creating an indigenous elite.

This pressure on the cadres of the more developed ethnic communities has been piqued by the redistributive consequences of these affirmative action policies. With declining growth rates, the redistributive consequences of these policies have been transformed: policies that had once involved transfers between titular nationalities and minorities within ethnic homelands came to involve instead transfers between the principal titular nationalities of union republics. These transfers are now adversely affecting the more modernized ethnic communities

In building an indigenous cadre and intelligentsia within each ethnic group, the Soviet developmental strategy had a powerful leveling impact on ethnic groups. The growth of mobility opportunities has been highest among the nationalities with the lowest levels of socioeconomic attainment.<sup>43</sup> Thus, as Figure 2 shows, in the post-Stalinist years differences among nationalities in levels of elite occupational status (measured by per capita employment as specialists with higher education) narrowed.<sup>44</sup>

This redistribution has in part been a consequence of Moscow's allocation of resources among republics. For example, the Unified State Budget, which includes the budgets for each union republic, transfers funds from more developed to less developed republics. In the 1989 bud-

<sup>43</sup> USSR (fn. 25), 308–9.

<sup>44</sup> Ellen Jones and Fred W. Grupp, "Measuring Nationality Trends in the Soviet Union: A Research Note," *Slavic Review* 41 (Spring 1982), 112–22. This is not to say that equalization has brought equality or status reversal, see Rakowska-Harmstone (fn. 20), 12; Peter R. Zwick, "Soviet Nationality Policy: Social, Economic, and Political Aspects," in Gordon B. Smith, ed., *Public Policy and Administration in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1980), 159. Moreover, as Figure 2 shows, the slowdown in economic growth has slowed (but not stopped) this leveling process.

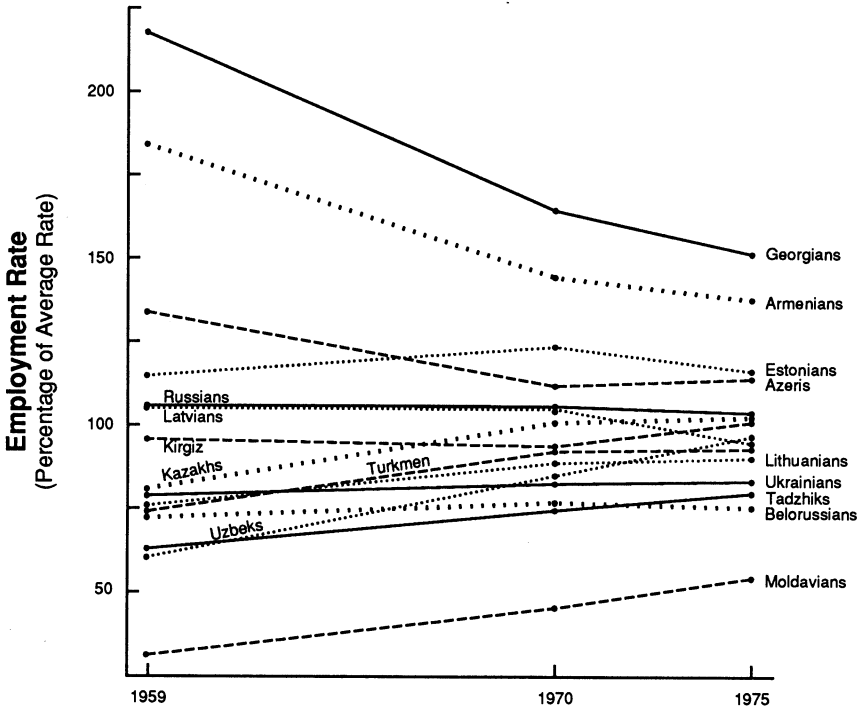


FIGURE 2

EQUALIZATION AMONG ETHNIC GROUPS, 1959-75:<sup>a</sup>

EMPLOYMENT OF SPECIALISTS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION PER 1,000 ADULTS  
(AVERAGE FOR 15 NATIONALITIES = 100)

SOURCE: Calculated from data in Ellen Jones and Fred W. Grupp, "Modernization and Ethnic Equalization in the USSR," *Soviet Studies* 36 (April 1984), 159-84.

<sup>a</sup> This figure tracks elite employment in the Soviet economy in those years for which data are available for all titular nationalities of union republics.

get only the five Central Asian republics were permitted to retain 100 percent of both the turnover and income taxes collected within their borders; they were to receive, in addition, subsidies ranging from 321 million rubles for the Tadjik Republic to 2.7 billion rubles for the Kazakh Republic. Conversely, the Latvian Republic was to retain the lowest proportion of its turnover tax (56.8 percent), and both the Armenian Republic (with 76.7 percent) and the Estonian Republic (with 79.4 percent) were to retain only slightly over three-quarters.<sup>45</sup> Although these official statistics appear to overstate the extent of this phenomenon, less developed republics have received higher rates of investment than their level

<sup>45</sup> *Pravda*, October 29, 1988.

of economic development would predict. And per capita expenditures on health and educational programs have been relatively equal among republics even though revenues have been far lower in the less developed republics.<sup>46</sup>

It is, indeed, inherent to a policy of promoting the growth of indigenous elites and engineering equality under circumstances of tighter constraints on resources that some previously advantaged groups will suffer relative stagnation in their life chances. One of the most visible examples of this restriction on life chances for a previously advantaged group has been the imposition of quotas on Jewish admissions to Soviet universities. Although in 1970 Jews represented 2.3 percent of the students in institutions of higher education (a proportion that is above their official proportion of the population—0.89 percent in 1970), this, nonetheless, represents a significant decline since 1935, when the figure stood at 13.3 percent of these students. Against the general trend toward higher rates of educational attainment in the Soviet population, the proportion of Soviet Jews aged eighteen to twenty-three who attend college full-time remained constant at 30 percent or at most increased only marginally to 36 percent between 1935 and 1965. Thus, many have been blocked in their aspirations for higher education and the elite employment it would make possible.<sup>47</sup> And as economic growth has slowed, more ethnic groups have felt this pinch in life chances. In Central Asia, according to Lubin, "Russians are beginning to sense they are being denied access to jobs for which they are equally if not more qualified than their Asian counterparts."<sup>48</sup> And Popovsky complains that in Uzbekistan "it is almost impossible for non-Uzbeks with a higher education to get jobs."<sup>49</sup>

In the geographically segmented multiethnic society of Soviet federalism the redistributive consequences of these policies remained a less

<sup>46</sup> Martin Spechler, "Regional Development in the USSR, 1958-1978," in *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), 145. See also Donna Bahry and Carol Nechemias, "Half Full or Half Empty? The Debate over Soviet Regional Inequality," *Slavic Review* 40 (Fall 1981), 96; Elizabeth Clayton, "Regional Consumption Expenditure in the Soviet Union," *ACES Bulletin* 17 (Winter 1975), 35-43; James W. Gillula, "The Economic Interdependence of Soviet Republics," in *Soviet Economy in a Time of Change*, 629; Gertrude Schroeder, "Soviet Regional Policies in Perspective," in *The USSR in the 1980's* (Brussels: NATO Directorate of Economic Affairs, 1978), 131; Brian Silver, "Levels of Sociocultural Development among Soviet Nationalities: A Partial Test of the Equalization Hypothesis," *American Political Science Review* 68 (December 1974), 1637.

<sup>47</sup> William Korey, "The Legal Position of Soviet Jewry: A Historical Enquiry," in Lionel Kochan, ed., *The Jews in Soviet Russia since 1917* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 94-95; Alec Nove and J. A. Newth, "The Jewish Population: Demographic Trends and Occupational Patterns," in Kochan, 147.

<sup>48</sup> Lubin (fn. 15), 228, 283-84.

<sup>49</sup> Popovsky (fn. 23), 138.

contentious issue in federal politics as long as economic growth permitted the continued expansion of mobility opportunities for all titular nationalities within their homelands. With their high growth rates the titular nationalities of union republics could escape the consequence of interrepublic transfers by shifting the brunt of their impact to their minority populations—that is, by discriminating against them. Under these circumstances the minorities within the homelands of other nationalities (including the “exclave” minorities, such as Jews or Russians) were the greatest losers from interrepublic redistribution. The economic slowdown, however, made it more difficult for the titular nationalities to escape the effects of interrepublic transfers, which made redistribution a highly contentious issue among the cadres. The effect of the Soviet developmental strategy in a period of tight constraints on resources has been to limit the growth of mobility opportunities in the more developed ethnic communities in order to permit continued expansion in those that are less developed.

As a consequence, cadres of ethnic communities with higher levels of socioeconomic attainment (particularly in the Baltic and Caucasus) have led the way in pressing their ethnic legislative agendas, while cadres in less advanced communities (notably in Central Asia) have been less inclined to do so (see Table 1). As continuing beneficiaries of the developmental strategy enforced by the center, the latter cadres have often been harsh critics of the decentralization proposed by their peers in the more developed communities; for example, at the meeting of the all-union Supreme Soviet Presidium to veto Estonia's act of nullification, the chairmen of the Presidia of Uzbekistan (Khabibullaev) and Tadjikistan (Pallaev) voiced strong criticism of the Estonian move and support for centrist policies.<sup>50</sup> Also as a consequence, protest has been more common in the more developed communities. The rank-order correlation between number of demonstrations (Table 2) and levels of educational attainment (Figure 1a) is 0.67.<sup>51</sup>

#### AGENDAS: THE FEDERAL POLITICS OF RESOURCES AND LIFE CHANCES

The policy concerns of the ethnic cadres shape the public agendas of ethnofederalism by controlling the way dominant themes will be framed in legislation and by determining which issues are to be supported by sustained large-scale political pressure. Cadres must define the agendas

<sup>50</sup> Moscow Television, November 26, 1988, reported in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, November 28, 1988, p. 50. See also James Critchlow, “How Solid is Uzbekistan's Support for Moscow?” *Report on the USSR* 1 (February 10, 1989), 7.

<sup>51</sup> See also Philip G. Roeder, “Electoral Avoidance in the Soviet Union,” *Soviet Studies* 41 (July 1989), 478–80.



of ethnopolitics so as to permit as many as possible in their ethnic communities to join the "official" ethnic bandwagon. Often this requires redefining the dominant popular concerns, particularly where they are primordial. The cadres must deny these constituents and issues to potential counterelites, even as they use them to put pressure on Moscow. A test of the success of the entrepreneurship of the cadres is the extent to which they can insert the most important material and symbolic concerns of their constituents into the public agendas in ways that protect or promote their own power base. The dominant themes on the cadres' agendas reflect the threats that confront them within their own communities: these themes concern resources and life chances. Specifically, this politics of mobility opportunities is expressed in a number of recurring policy issues that go to the very foundations of the Soviet developmental strategy that created and sustain these cadres: federalism, indigenization, language, economic development, and migration.

#### FEDERALISM

The most volatile issue of federalism has been the balance of power between center and periphery, since at stake are the resources controlled by the cadres and the mobility opportunities within their communities. Party leaders have used this issue to co-opt primordial concerns for independence to instrumental demands for expanded republican autonomy within Soviet federalism.<sup>52</sup> Expanded autonomy is one way for ethnic cadres to enlarge the resources within their control. Autonomy increases their discretion in the allocation of positions of power within the republic and in the administration of educational and occupational policies. And for cadres within the more developed republics that have felt most severely pinched by affirmative action, autonomy is a way to retain resources at home.

The cadres in the more developed union republics have been particularly quick to raise the banners of autonomy and sovereignty in order to blunt the redistributive consequences of all-union policies. Thus, for example, in 1989 Lithuanian leaders sought exemption from the all-union highway tax since the tax was levied on vehicles (which are more common in the relatively wealthy Baltic region) but spent disproportionately to build and repair roads in the less developed republics.<sup>53</sup> In all three Baltic republics calls for "regional economic accountability," "territorial

<sup>52</sup> *New York Times*, September 24, 1989; see also March 25, 1988; *Pravda*, November 2, 1988; *Sovetskaiia Estoniia*, November 29, 1988.

<sup>53</sup> Moscow TASS, November 20, 1988, reported in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, November 21, 1988, pp. 42-43; *New York Times*, November 17, 1988, November 27, 1988, December 8, 1988, May 19, 1989, May 25, 1989.

cost accounting," and "self-financing" have supported the attempts on the part of republican cadres to wrest control of industries from the centralized ministries. These plans envision the isolation of their markets from the larger economy of scarcity by such mechanisms as *export* barriers to other union republics, identity cards to limit purchases by visitors from other republics, prices determined at the republic level to improve the terms of exchange among republics, and even separate currencies for some republics.<sup>54</sup>

For ethnic cadres of "minorities" subordinate to the union republic of another nationality, the issue of autonomy has often taken the form of demands over the "status" of their homelands within the federal hierarchy—that is, whether a homeland is a union republic, an autonomous republic, an oblast, or an *okrug*. The control of resources by the cadres of a nationality increases with this hierarchy. Thus, in a 1988 report on the mounting pressure and public rallies on behalf of the elevation of the Tatar Autonomous Republic to union-republic status, the writer Rafail Mustafin asked in the pages of *Pravda*:

After all, what prompted the proposals for the creation of a new union republic? The existing inequality in social, political, and economic rights between union and autonomous formations. Tataria surpasses some union republics in both population and industrial potential. Yet, we don't have a feature-film studio of our own, we have only one publishing house (which is not very big), and there is an acute shortage of paper for publishing books, newspapers, and magazines.<sup>55</sup>

With similar objectives the Party leadership in Abkhazia has sought elevation of their autonomous republic to union-republic status, leaders of Moldavia's Gagauz minority have demanded creation of their own autonomous republic, and Polish leaders in the Shalchinin district of Lithuania have asked for autonomous status. In the last case, according to *Izvestiia*, "perhaps the sorest point was the impossibility for Poles to obtain higher education in their native language" within Lithuania.<sup>56</sup>

Taking a different tack, the cadres of other "subordinate" minorities

<sup>54</sup> *Izvestiia*, September 11, 1988, August 3, 1989, August 15, 1989; *Sovetskaia Industriia*, March 2, 1989; *Sovetskaia Litva*, October 7, 1988. See also *Izvestiia*, May 19, 1989; *Sovetskaia Litva*, May 19, 1989; *Pravda*, July 30, 1989; Dzintra Bungis, "A Comparison of the Baltic Declarations of Sovereignty," *Report on the USSR* 1 (September 15, 1989), 13–16; Kestutis Girnius, "The Lithuanian Communist Party and Calls for Sovereignty," *Report on the USSR* 1 (February 17, 1989), 18–20.

<sup>55</sup> *Pravda*, January 25, 1989.

<sup>56</sup> *Izvestiia*, September 7, 1989, November 14, 1989; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, March 9, 1988. See also *New York Times*, April 8, 1989, April 9, 1989, April 16, 1989, August 7, 1989; and the interview with G. A. Pogosyan of the Nagorny Karabakh, ArmenPress International Service, August 16, 1988, reported in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, August 23, 1988, p. 43.

have mobilized their populations to demand changes in the lines of authority among homelands. A nationality subordinate to the republic of a different titular nationality may find its resources and life chances limited. In Nagorny Karabakh, Armenians protested that even though their autonomous oblast had the second-highest industrial production per capita within the republic, the leadership of the Azerbaijan Republic allocated it lower than average per capita investments. G. A. Pogoyan, the first secretary of the autonomous oblast, is reported to have told the all-union Supreme Soviet Presidium that as a consequence, "even today, the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast does not have its own flour mill, nor its own concentrate-feed plant, nor its own reinforced-concrete structures plant, nor its own housing-construction combine." These investments lagged particularly in the social sphere. The Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians complained that inadequate investment in institutions of higher education within the oblast and Baku's opposition to letting Armenians attend institutions in the Armenian Republic meant that the Armenians within the oblast were denied access to higher education and career advancement.<sup>57</sup> Reassigning the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast to the Armenian Republic would put an end to the discrimination by Azeris and also open up union-republic mobility opportunities to its Armenian majority.<sup>58</sup> (Similar complaints and demands for removal from the jurisdiction of the Georgian Republic have come from the leaders of the Adzhar Autonomous Republic and the South Osetian Autonomous Oblast.)<sup>59</sup>

#### INDIGENIZATION

Cadres of titular nationalities have also mobilized political action in order to preserve the results of indigenization. Cadres have found that this issue harnesses both the instrumental interests of those in their ethnic community who aspire to elite positions and the primordial sentiments of those who see ethnic similarity as a requisite of legitimate authority. At stake for union-republic cadres are the very means by which they

<sup>57</sup> *Pravda*, July 20, 1988.

<sup>58</sup> On December 1, 1989, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian Republic and the National Council of Nagorny Karabakh jointly passed a resolution annexing the autonomous oblast to Armenia; *Kommunist* [Erevan], December 3, 1989.

<sup>59</sup> *Bakinskii Rabochii*, March 11, 1988; *Izvestiia*, March 25, 1988; *Krasnaia Zvezda*, February 28, 1989; *Moskovskie Novosti*, March 20, 1988; Roman Solchanyk and Ann Sheehy, "Kapitonov on Nationality Problems in Georgia," *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 125/78 (June 1, 1978), 1-5; Elizabeth Fuller, "How Serious are Inter-Nationality Tensions in Georgia?" *Radio Liberty Research Bulletin* RL 444/83 (November 25, 1983), 1-9; idem, "Abkhaz-Georgian Relations Remain Strained," *Report on the USSR* 1 (March 10, 1989), 25-27; Rasma Karklins, "Ethnic Politics and Access to Higher Education: The Soviet Case," *Comparative Politics* 16 (April 1984), 277-94, at 278.

have built their supporting clientele and popular constituencies. In Kazakhstan the removal of First Secretary Kunaev and the purge of the republic party apparatus in 1986 threatened the clientele network drawn disproportionately from the first secretary's own tribal group; it threatened the career prospects of the indigenous nationals who had tied their careers to the local leadership; and it brought a wave of violent protest.<sup>60</sup> More recently, Georgian leaders have mobilized protesters to challenge Moscow's intrusion in the republic's personnel policy—particularly the efforts to challenge discrimination by the Georgians against minorities.

"Minority" cadres within the national territories of others have mobilized their constituencies for the opposite end—to criticize abuses of indigenization by the titular nationalities and to call for Moscow's intervention against the practice. The creation of an ethnic elite and intelligentsia by the titular nationality often denies minorities within its national territory comparable opportunities. In a recent roundtable held under the auspices of the Research Council on Nationality Problems of the Academy of Science, E. V. Tadevosian complained that indigenization in some national republics has "often led to an artificial overrepresentation of the indigenous nationalities at the expense of other nationalities residing in those areas in the state organs, the administrative apparatus, the students and faculties of higher educational institutions, etc."<sup>61</sup> Gagauz in Moldavia and Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians in Azerbaijan have demonstrated to protest discrimination in political appointments and career opportunities. The chairman of the presidium of the Abkhaz Supreme Soviet claims that such grievances led to violent disturbances in his republic not only in 1989, but also in 1957, 1967, and 1978.<sup>62</sup>

#### LANGUAGE

To preserve the foundation on which ethnic affirmative action was built, cadres have mobilized political action to raise or preserve the status of the language of their respective communities. Mobility opportunities are inextricably tied up with the status of indigenous languages. At stake for the constituents is their instrumental interest in privileged access to economic, social, and political power. For example, the language used in

<sup>60</sup> Brown (fn. 31), 1–4.

<sup>61</sup> I. D. Koval'chenko et al., "Natsional'nye protsessy v SSSR—itogi, tendentsii, problemy" [National processes in the USSR: Results, tendencies, problems], *Istoriia SSSR* (November–December 1987), 5–120, at 63, 73, 74, 79–80. See also Erwin H. Epstein, "Ideological Factors in Soviet Educational Policy towards Jews," *Education and Urban Society* 10 (February 1978), 227–28; Rasma Karklins, *Ethnic Relations in the USSR* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1986), 142, 146, 219.

<sup>62</sup> V. Kobakhia, Pis'mo [Letter], *Argumenty i fakty* (October 7–13, 1989), 8.

universities influences the admissions as well as later career opportunities of different ethnic groups within a republic. But language is also one of the most important primordial markers defining an ethnic community.

Through legislation that their languages supplant Russian as the language of communication within their republics, ethnic leaders in the union republics have sought to strengthen indigenous control over political and economic institutions. An article declaring the language of the titular nationality to be the state language of the republic was included in the 1978 constitutions of Armenia, Azerbaidjan, and Georgia. On April 14, 1978, an estimated five thousand Georgian demonstrators took to the streets to protest Moscow's attempt to amend this article in their republic's constitution. Indigenous cultural, educational, and scientific elites were particularly eager to maintain Georgian as the language of discourse in their professions. Georgian students joined the protests, as Ronald Suny notes, since the language clause ensured that "higher education in Georgia had become the prerogative of Georgians, and other nationalities found it difficult to enter schools of higher learning."<sup>63</sup> In 1988 and 1989 six other republics adopted legislation establishing a state language.

Minority cadres within national territories of others have mobilized political action to protest exactly this form of preference for the language of the titular nationality. At stake for the leaders of these minority communities is often the control of mobility opportunities, the future of the constituency on which they have built their power, or even their own positions. Protests against new language laws that would place them at a disadvantage have come from the Abkhazians in Georgia, "exclave" Russians and Poles in Lithuania, and both the Turkic Gagauz and the "exclave" Russians in Moldavia. Non-Estonian cadres in Estonia have called strikes to protest a law requiring that those who do not learn the language of the republic within four years be dismissed from their jobs: on March 14, 1989, as many as sixty thousand Russians and other "minorities" (according to *Izvestiia*'s count) took to the streets of Tallinn to protest "creeping counterrevolution endangering socialism in Estonia." Russian Party officials and factory managers within the republic reportedly mobilized their constituencies because they feared that the law of January 18, 1989, would cost them their positions.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>63</sup> Suny, "Georgia and Soviet Nationality Policy," in Stephen F. Cohen, Alexander Rabinowitz, and Robert Sharlet, eds., *The Soviet Union since Stalin* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 213, 219. See also *Izvestiia*, February 25, 1989; Charles E. Ziegler, "Nationalism, Religion and Equality among Ethnic Minorities: Some Observations on the Soviet Case," *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13 (Summer 1985), 9-32, at 27.

<sup>64</sup> *Izvestiia*, March 17, 1989. See also *Izvestiia*, March 10, 1989, August 31, 1989; *Pravda*,

## DEVELOPMENT AND MIGRATION

To preserve the ethnically exclusive institutions on which their power rests, ethnic cadres have mobilized political action to oppose all-union economic development and migration policies. Although two different issues, they have become closely connected in public discussions since rapid industrialization has become the principal magnet for workers of other nationalities. For the population this threatens dissolution of the ethnic community, heightened competition for the leading political and economic positions in the republic, and loss of their affirmative action advantage in life chances. For the cadres this migration threatens the ethnic community on which their political power is based. It increases the pressure on the cadres to incorporate these other ethnic groups into the elite of the republic—pressure, that is, to dilute the ethnic homogeneity of the elites on which the cadres base their power. Failure of a titular nationality to maintain its numerical predominance within a republic might lead to the replacement of the ethnically exclusive cadre by one of more diverse ethnic composition; it might bring demotion to the status of an autonomous republic (as happened to the Karelo-Finnish Republic) or even outright dissolution of its autonomous homeland. Thus, in the early 1960s Georgian and Latvian officials opposed Khrushchev's plans for further expansion of heavy industry in the republics precisely because they feared it would bring still more Russian workers.<sup>65</sup> Armenian officials reportedly excluded Russian workers from permanent housing during the construction of the Erevan subway in order to prevent them from remaining. In the late 1980s protesters in the Baltic republics and Armenia demanded that their republics be given control of industrial and agricultural policy in order to slow the influx of outsiders. And Estonian cadres have attempted to blunt the effect of migration on their ethnic constituencies in future elections: legislation of the Estonian Republic disenfranchised those not resident in a district for two years (or in the republic for five years) and barred from office those not resident in a district for five years (or in the republic for ten years).<sup>66</sup>

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August 17, 1989; *Sovetskaiia Litva*, February 14, 1989; Karklins (fn. 59), 290–91; Roman Solchanyk, "Russian Language and Soviet Politics," *Soviet Studies* 34 (January 1982), 23–42; *New York Times*, June 21, 1988, June 22, 1988, July 23, 1988, September 2, 1988, January 19, 1989, July 27, 1989, July 28, 1989, August 7, 1989.

<sup>65</sup> Suny (fn. 63), 213; Juris Dreifelds, "Latvian National Demands and Group Consciousness since 1959," in George Simmonds, ed., *Nationalism in the USSR and Eastern Europe in the Era of Brezhnev and Kosygin* (Detroit: University of Detroit Press, 1977), 136–56; Jaan Pennar, "Nationalism in the Soviet Baltics," in Erich Goldhagen, ed., *Ethnic Minorities in the Soviet Union* (New York: Praeger, 1968), 206. See also *Pravda*, March 1, 1989.

<sup>66</sup> *Pravda*, July 29, 1989, August 10, 1989. See also *New York Times*, June 21, 1988, June 22,

## THE RISKS OF ASSERTIVE FEDERALISM UNDER PERESTROIKA

With perestroika the homeland cadres press their agendas of ethnofederalism in a more complex environment. Within their homelands they are increasingly called upon to control and balance three very different forms of political action that draw together different sets of actors behind three often diverging agendas. Alongside the assertive federalism of the cadres is a second arena—the organizing activity and popular demonstrations of the popular fronts. Drawing particularly upon students, the intelligentsia, and the professional elite, the programs of the fronts often give expression to many of the primordial concerns of these ethnic communities. In a third arena communal violence draws heavily from the unemployed and from displaced refugees. Intercommunal violence has pitted Armenians against Azeris, Georgians against Abkhazians, and Georgians against Osetians in the Caucasus; young Uzbeks have attacked Meskhetis in the Fergana region, and Kazakh youths have attacked immigrants in the Novyi Uzen region of Central Asia (see Table 3).<sup>67</sup> The ethnic cadres in a number of republics have sought to use the political pressure of the second set of actors to support its showdowns with Moscow. Even without endorsing all the particulars of the fronts' agendas, the cadres have found that the fronts strengthen their own

TABLE 3  
DEATHS FROM COMMUNAL VIOLENCE  
(SEPTEMBER 1, 1985–AUGUST 31, 1989)

<i>Ethnic Groups</i>	<i>Estimated Total Dead</i>
Armenian-Azeri	>110
Uzbek-Meskheti	>100
Georgian-Abkhazian	14
Kazakh-Non-Kazakh	5
Tadjik-Meskheti	2

SOURCE: *New York Times*, June 21, 1989, June 25, 1989, June 26, 1989, July 17, 1989, September 5, 1989, September 17, 1989.

1988, June 23, 1988. After this was nullified by the All-Union Supreme Soviet Presidium, Estonia adopted new legislation requiring that candidates for republic positions must have been residents of Estonia for at least ten years; *Pravda*, November 18, 1989.

<sup>67</sup> *Izvestiia*, June 9, 1989, June 10, 1989, June 20, 1989, June 23, 1989, December 1, 1989; *Pravda*, June 5, 1989, June 6, 1989, June 7, 1989, June 10, 1989, June 12, 1989, June 20, 1989, June 25, 1989, January 17, 1990; Annette Bohr, "Violence Erupts in Uzbekistan," *Report on the USSR* 1 (June 16, 1989), 23–25; Ann Sheehy, "Interethnic Disturbances in Western Kazakhstan," *Report on the USSR* 1 (July 7, 1989), 11–14.

hands in negotiations with Moscow by permitting them to argue convincingly that their hands are tied at home. In some instances cadres have even encouraged the third form of political action in order to solidify their hold within the homeland and to press Moscow. In Azerbaidjan, for example, local Party leaders reportedly encouraged the growth of the popular front and helped found the more militant and violence-prone National Defense Committee.<sup>68</sup>

The ethnic cadres run immense risks, for these strategies may undermine their positions or even unleash forces they cannot control. Moscow, for example, could respond with coercion, as it did in 1988 and 1989, when the all-union leadership removed over twenty-five hundred officials (including the union-republic first secretaries) accused of abetting the intercommunal violence in Armenia and Azerbaidjan.<sup>69</sup> Cadres with strong ethnic constituencies may gamble that Moscow will be unable to remove them or will hesitate to pay the costs associated with such actions. The extensive power base of Vladimir Shcherbitskii in the Ukraine made his removal in 1989 a slow and complicated process requiring elaborate institutional maneuvering by Gorbachev. The protests in Kazakhstan were the costly consequence of Kunaev's removal. Nonetheless, Moscow has been willing to pay these costs in many instances; in 1988 and 1989 the first secretaries in ten of the fourteen union-republic parties were replaced. And in at least eight of these instances the secretaries were removed because of displeasure with republic policies.<sup>70</sup>

The cadres run a second risk: that those threatened by assertive federalism will initiate counteraction. Indeed, it was Moldavian pressures for new language legislation that ignited protests by the republic's Gagauz minority; but the agenda of the Gagauz went beyond language to include complaints of discrimination in economics and politics. The mobilization of Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, and Moldavians brought the countermobilization of their "exclave" Russians behind *Interdvi-zhenie*, the Committee for Defense of Soviet Power in Lithuania, and *Edinstvo* (Unity). In the future, similar counterprotests may be mobilized by cadres of the less developed republics of Central Asia in order to blunt the political impact of mass demonstrations in the Baltic and Caucasus against the allocation decisions made in Moscow.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> This is not to say, as some have alleged, that the motive of the Party leaders was to instigate violence as a pretext for a military crackdown; *New York Times*, February 19, 1990. See also *Izvestiia*, January 15, 1990, January 16, 1990.

<sup>69</sup> *Report on the USSR 1* (January 27, 1989), 29.

<sup>70</sup> *Pravda*, January 13, 1988, May 21, 1988, June 17, 1988, October 5, 1988, October 21, 1988, April 15, 1989, June 23, 1989, June 24, 1989, September 29, 1989, November 17, 1989.

<sup>71</sup> *Izvestiia*, March 17 1989, May 25, 1989, August 23, 1989; *Pravda*, July 29, 1989, August



A third risk to cadres is that political action mobilized by them may actually facilitate the creation of counterelites and their mobilizational activities. Much of the apparent "bandwagoning" the cadres seek to promote may actually be used as opportunities for "piggybacking" by potential counterelites; that is, aspiring independent political entrepreneurs maintain their particular agendas while using "official" political action as a cover for their own mobilizational activities and as an opportunity to publicize their agendas.<sup>72</sup> Rather than depriving these potential counterelites of support, the cadres' gambit may provide their opponents with the opportunity to expand it. In some republics the political action mobilized by the cadres has become self-sustaining and has slipped from their control, only then to provide counterelites with a ready-made movement. In Armenia the cadres appear to have lost control over the Karabakh protest by the late summer of 1988. According to a TASS report: "Taking advantage of the fact that the former leaders of the central committee of the Communist Party of Armenia let the initiative slip from their hands and retreated step-by-step, members of the [Karabakh] committee created ramified organizational and political structures."<sup>73</sup> In 1989 the initiative in Azeri protests over the status of Nagorny Karabakh apparently passed from the cadres to counterelites within the popular front. By early 1990 the Azeri popular front was complaining that the initiative in the communal violence had even slipped from its control and passed to radicals in the National Defense Committee.<sup>74</sup> In Lithuania, Party First Secretary Algirdas Brazauskas was reportedly surprised when Sajudis deputies he had helped elect to the republic's Supreme Soviet rejected him as the republic's chief of state and elected their own leader, Landsbergis.<sup>75</sup>

Finally, the cadres' gambit may encourage unwanted primordial violence. The mass demonstrations in Erevan and Baku in 1988, 1989, and 1990 were catalysts for waves of violence across the republics. Small groups of Armenians and Azeris attacked minorities in their republics by intimidating many into emigration and by simply killing others.

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10, 1989, August 11, 1989, August 23, 1989, August 25, 1989, September 5, 1989; *Sovetskaiia Estoniia*, March 1, 1989, March 7, 1989.

<sup>72</sup> *Izvestiia*, July 13, 1989; *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, March 3, 1989; *Sovetskaiia Litva*, February 25, 1989.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Cockburn (fn. 41), 178.

<sup>74</sup> See *Pravda*, April 9, 1989, August 23, 1989, August 24, 1989, September 10, 1989, February 2, 1990; *Zaria Vostoka*, April 12, 1989, April 14, 1989; *New York Times*, August 28, 1989, August 29, 1989, August 30, 1989, September 1, 1989, September 17, 1989; Saulius Girnius, "Sajudis' Parliament Statement on Independence," *Report on the USSR* 1 (September 15, 1989), 17-18.

<sup>75</sup> *New York Times*, March 13, 1990.

## POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICIZED ETHNICITY

The rise of assertive ethnofederalism in the Soviet Union since the mid-1950s points up how political institutions shape the mobilization of ethnic communities. On the one hand, Soviet federalism delayed the *origins* of politicized ethnicity, but on the other hand, it distributed mobilizational resources such as entrepreneurial skills and means of communications in a manner that eventually shaped its *incidence* and *agendas*.

This emphasis on institutions offers an amendment to those studies that explain the rise of politicized ethnicity by emphasizing attitudes rather than the resources needed to mobilize an ethnic community. These studies have introduced at least two alternative paradigms for the study of ethnopolitics, which are distinguished from one another by alternative views of the nature of ethnic identity, the sources of cohesion, and the objectives of politicized ethnicity and protest. The *primordialist* paradigm sees ethnic identities as one of the givens of social existence, shaped by historic memory, language, religion, and geographic compactness. The politicization of ethnicity is communal self-discovery; protest, often an expressive act affirming communal solidarity.<sup>76</sup> The *instrumentalist* paradigm sees ethnic identities as contingent and changing self-ascribed roles. The politicization of ethnicity and protest are goal-oriented behaviors—often focused on the pursuit of socioeconomic gain. According to the instrumentalist paradigm, an ethnic identity becomes a basis for collective action when there are comparative advantages to be gained from that specific ethnic identity over alternative ethnic, class, or other identities.<sup>77</sup>

The prevailing paradigm in Sovietology has been primordialist. In explaining the *origins* of Soviet ethnopolitics, it focuses our attention on attitudes such as assimilation rather than on incentives and constraints on action.<sup>78</sup> Certainly these attitudes are important ingredients of the

<sup>76</sup> Smith (fn. 7), 105. See also Walker Connor, "Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?" *World Politics* 24 (April 1972), 319–55; Milton Esman, ed., *Ethnic Conflict in the Western World* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977); Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in *Old Societies and New States* (New York: Free Press, 1963), 105–57; Edward Shils, "Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties," *British Journal of Sociology* 8 (June 1957), 130–45.

<sup>77</sup> Crawford Young, *The Politics of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976), 43. See also Frederick Barth, ed., *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1969); Glazer and Moynihan (fn. 10); Robert Melson and Howard Wolpe, *Nigeria: Modernization and the Politics of Communalism* (East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1971); Ronald Rogowski, "Causes and Varieties of Nationalism: A Rationalist Account," in Edward A. Tiryakian and Ronald Rogowski, eds., *New Nationalisms of the Developed West* (Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 87–108.

<sup>78</sup> Arend Lijphart, "Political Theories and the Explanation of Ethnic Conflict in the Western World," in Esman (fn. 76), 46–64.

current crisis. Yet there is little indication that these alone can account for the rise of ethnopolitics—little indication that assimilation has become any less advanced, assimilative pressures any more intense, or national consciousness any higher in the decades since 1955 than in those before. The failure of Soviet policies of ethnic fusion (*sbliizhenie*) to reduce cultural barriers among ethnic groups and to bring about the merger (*sliianie*) of nations cannot account for the *rise* of ethnic assertiveness over the past three decades.

In predicting the *incidence* of ethnic assertiveness, the primordial paradigm argued that the most extensive resistance to the policies of the Soviet regime would be mounted by those minorities that were culturally remote from the Russian majority.<sup>79</sup> In particular, it focused our attention on Islam, arguing that this provides a cultural bond among Soviet Muslims and, in the words of Kemal Karpat, “creates an invisible barrier separating them from the ruling Slavs.”<sup>80</sup> Moreover, as Alexandre Bennigsen and S. Enders Wimbush argue, “the critical issue determining the extent and degree of long-term commitment of Soviet Muslims to the Soviet Russian state is not ‘socio-economics’ but identity.”<sup>81</sup> Contrary to these expectations, however, those nationalities most remote in culture from the Slavs have been among the most quiescent. There is little evidence to suggest that it is the relative strength of their primordial sentiments that distinguishes the minorities that have engaged in sustained, effective political action from the more quiescent minorities. The primordial paradigm had not predicted the pattern of *flash points*.<sup>82</sup>

The primordial paradigm had also predicted that protest would mobilize behind *agendas* of cultural expression. Yet Soviet ethnofederalism has raised many issues that are poorly explained by this paradigm. For example, the recommendation by leaders of the Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians, Abkhazians, and South Ossetians to transfer jurisdiction over their homelands to the Russian Republic evinces an acceptance rather than rejection of Soviet federalism and of its institutional protections for minority interests. The terms in which they have cast their legislative

<sup>79</sup> Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, “The Soviet Union,” in Robert G. Wirsing, ed., *Protection of Ethnic Minorities: Comparative Perspectives* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1981), 127. For a fine critical discussion of this approach, see Gail Warshofsky Lapidus, “Ethnonationalism and Political Stability: The Soviet Case,” *World Politics* 36 (July 1984), 555–80.

<sup>80</sup> Karpat, “Moscow and the ‘Muslim Question,’” *Problems of Communism* 32 (November–December 1983), 79.

<sup>81</sup> Bennigsen and Wimbush, *Muslims of the Soviet Empire* (London: C. Hurst, 1985), 3, 31.

<sup>82</sup> The paradigm might be “saved” by claiming that assertiveness of ethnic leaders in the Baltic, followed by such assertiveness in the Caucasus, is evidence of the relative levels of ethnic awareness in these lands. But in this sense the concept of relative levels of national consciousness is not a predictor of politicized ethnicity or part of a causal relationship; it is, rather, a description or definition.

agendas concerning autonomy, indigenization, language, development, and migration suggest that the public agenda for most ethnic cadres is less a primordial assertion of cultural identity than an instrumental pursuit of other interests. Thus, the predictions of the prevailing paradigm concerning the *agendas* of ethnopolitics were inaccurate.

Alternatively, an analysis that draws solely upon the instrumentalist paradigm would lead to significant misprediction as well. It would miss the constraint of primordialist sentiments in the population that must be co-opted into the agendas of Soviet ethnic entrepreneurs. It would dismiss the possibility that cadres might switch to primordial agendas as incentives and institutional constraints change. It would be unable to explain the willingness of some counterelites such as Landsbergis to sacrifice socioeconomic benefits for symbolic issues of self-expression.

These mispredictions point up the narrow or incomplete nature of a paradigm, such as the primordialist or instrumentalist, that focuses on attitudes. These paradigms fail to take two facts into consideration. First, the attitudes that sustain either primordial or instrumental agendas exist side by side in many Soviet ethnic communities and often within the same individual.<sup>83</sup> They coexist among Soviet cadres as well as in the general population. Second, the politicization of either primordial sentiments or instrumental interests and the mobilization of ethnic communities in sustained, large-scale action has required the conjunction of these attitudes with resources that can mobilize an ethnic community. The attitudes cited by one or the other paradigm are necessary, but not sufficient, for the explanation of ethnopolitics.

Political institutions like Soviet federalism play a critical role in this conjunction and so in shaping ethnic communities, politicizing ethnicity, and mobilizing protest. They empower entrepreneurs and constrain their choice of either primordial or instrumental strategies.<sup>84</sup> The politi-

<sup>83</sup> Suny (fn. 63), 220. This may also be true in many Western societies; see Anthony Mughan, "Modernization and Ethnic Conflict in Belgium," *Political Studies* 27 (March 1979), 21-37; Rogowski, "Conclusion," in Tiryakian and Rogowski (fn. 77), 374-76.

<sup>84</sup> Karl W. Deutsch has noted that political systems also differ in the degree to which their institutions influence ethnic attitudes (particularly assimilation); see Deutsch, *Political Community at the International Level: Problems of Definition and Measurement* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954), 33, 39-40. The "new institutionalism" argues a more general case for the "endogeneity" of preferences; for example, James P. March and Johan P. Olsen argue that traditionally "political theory has treated political institutions as determining, ordering, or modifying individual motives"; see March and Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions: The Organizational Basis of Politics* (New York: Free Press, 1989), 4-7, 154-56. For additional motives that incline ethnic elites toward intercommunity conflict regulation, see Eric A. Nordlinger, *Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Center for International Affairs, 1972).

cization of ethnicity has been the work of political entrepreneurs created by Soviet federalism.<sup>85</sup> In the three decades before 1990 the most significant pressure on Moscow for ethnic interests was orchestrated by the Party and state leadership of ethnic homelands. By assigning a monopoly over mobilizational resources, Soviet federalism delayed the rise of ethnofederalism but at the same time made it likely and possible that ethnic cadres of more developed ethnic communities would later mobilize their constituents. By constraining their choice of strategies, Soviet federalism made it likely that cadres would mobilize their constituents behind instrumental rather than primordial agendas. Since January 1990 the magnitude, patterns, and agendas of ethnic assertiveness have evolved most in those areas in which institutional changes have transformed the incentive structures of cadres or empowered new elites (notably in the Baltic republics).<sup>86</sup>

Where political institutions neither establish monopolistic ethnic entrepreneurs nor constrain their choice of strategies in this way, political institutions distribute mobilizational resources and shape ethnic strategies differently.<sup>87</sup> This is illustrated poignantly by the changes in Soviet political institutions. In some republics the cadres' control over their communities has been weakened by the loss of their monopoly over the mobilizational resources of the ethnic community. The policies of *demokratizatsiia* and *glasnost* have undermined the ability of cadres to contain the protest they have mobilized as well as to suppress autonomous ethnopolitics. Where threats to their control have grown, their strategies have often changed. Cadres in some republics now engage in competitive efforts to mobilize different segments of elite and popular constituencies behind competing agendas reflecting different balances of primordial and instrumental concerns.<sup>88</sup> By early 1990 competition had led to an outright split in the Communist parties of the republics of Latvia and

<sup>85</sup> Illustrations of this approach include Edward Allworth, "Restating the Soviet Nationality Question," in Allworth, ed., *Soviet Nationality Problems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971); Helene Carrere d'Encausse, *Decline of an Empire* (New York: Newsweek Books, 1978); Rakowska-Harmstone (fn. 79).

<sup>86</sup> Gorbachev's initial response to new elites such as Landsbergis and his Sajudis government has been consistent with the Soviet ethnic strategy that has emphasized institutional constraints to shape ethnic agendas. Using deterrent and compellent constraints, he has sought to induce the Lithuanian government to abandon its primordial agenda and pursue the instrumental objectives of *perestroika* within the context of Soviet federalism.

<sup>87</sup> Sidney Tarrow described how in democratic systems as well the strategies of regional leaders acting as brokers between center and periphery are shaped by bureaucratic institutions; see Tarrow, *Between Center and Periphery: Grassroots Politics in Italy and France* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 7-8, 43-44.

<sup>88</sup> *Sovetskaia Latvija*, March 19, 1989.

Lithuania. Alternative leaderships have articulated competing ethnic agendas, and Party assets including buildings have been divided.<sup>89</sup>

Lithuania before and after January 1990 provides an excellent diachronic study of how changes in the Soviet electoral system can empower new political entrepreneurs in the homeland and shift the emphasis in ethnic agendas from instrumental to primordial issues. The pragmatic leadership of Brazauskas was replaced by that of Landsbergis, which immediately emphasized symbolic issues of sovereignty even if they did not impart real autonomy. Pressed by Moscow, the new leadership quickly agreed that all instrumental issues were negotiable but not the primordial ones—that is, the symbolic declaration of independence.<sup>90</sup> Because Soviet institutions have not changed evenly in all republics, the contrast between Lithuania and certain other union republics after January 1990 offers a cross-sectional comparison of the consequences of changed institutions. In Belorussia, for example, the elections of early 1990 did not offer an open contest of elites and failed to empower alternative political entrepreneurs. The Belorussian political agenda remained much more instrumental and supportive of Moscow, so that in Moscow's confrontation with the Sajudis government, the Belorussian leadership announced it would demand renegotiation of its borders with Lithuania should the latter secede from the Soviet Union.<sup>91</sup>

The Soviet experience with ethnofederalism illustrates the importance of bringing institutions back into the analysis of ethnopolitics—for Sovietology, for comparisons of Leninist with non-Leninist polities, and possibly for comparisons of Soviet politics before and after 1990. Within the institutions of Soviet federalism may be keys to the future of the Soviet system. In particular, the direction the Soviet Union takes will depend on the ability of ethnic cadres to adapt to the role of entrepreneurs in a competitive arena as well as the ability of Soviet institutions to constrain the cadres' choice of strategies to those that do not threaten the unity of the Soviet polity.

<sup>89</sup> *Pravda*, February 8, 1990, February 9, 1990; *New York Times*, March 24, 1990. In Lithuania, sensing the consequences of these institutional changes for their power, members of the republic Politburo, such as the prime minister of the Sajudis government, have also begun to resign from the Communist Party.

<sup>90</sup> *New York Times*, March 30, 1990.

<sup>91</sup> *New York Times*, March 5, 1990, March 6, 1990, March 31, 1990.