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## Tungus Literary Language

### Abstract

Writing slightly over fifty years ago, the author describes the background to the construction of a literary language, argues against the policy, procedures, and results of the Soviet authorities and their collaborators, and damns the new artificial language on scientific grounds. An introduction by Inoue, who discovered the article, and a bibliography of Shirokogoroff's works accompany this trenchant criticism of the use of language for ideological ends.

**Key words:** Tungus — artificial language — cultural politics  
Shirokogoroff, S. M.

### INTRODUCTORY NOTES by INOUE Kōichi (*Chūbu University, Kasugai*)

The following is a posthumous publication of S. M. Shirokogorov's article titled "Tungus Literary Language," one of those articles of which only titles are known to us but which have never been published. In this respect, we dare say that it is the publication of a long-awaited bequest from Shirokogorov to the scholarly public.

Sergei Mikhailovich Shirokogorov (Shirokogoroff, according to his own transcription) was a Russian ethnologist famous for his Tungusic studies, including *Social Organization of the Manchus* (1924), *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* (1929), and *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (1935).<sup>1</sup> Here we are not going to deal with his biography in detail, for it should be, we believe, the theme of quite another work. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to touch upon his life, even though briefly.

Shirokogorov was born in 1889 near an old town, Suzdal', in Central Russia. After being educated at home in the classics, he went to France in 1906, where he studied first in l'Université de Paris, and then at l'École d'Anthropologie. When he came back to Russia in 1910, he began his academic career at St Petersburg University and also in the Imperial Academy of Sciences. In 1912 he tried a field expedition for the first time to Zabaikalia, and from 1913 to 1917 traveled widely in Siberia (Zabaikalia, Amur, and Yakutsk provinces) and also in the northeast of China, engaging in ethnological, archaeological, and linguistic field surveys. After the Russian October Revolution, he lived in Vladivostok (1918-1922), taking care of the anthropological division of the Far Eastern University. Thence he emigrated to China, where he taught at the universities of Shanghai, Amoy, and Canton (1922-1930); from 1930 onwards he lived in Peking, teaching at the universities of Fujen (輔仁大学) and Tsinghua (清華大学), while engaging in scientific research in Fukian, Canton, and Yunnan provinces, as well as in the northeastern district of China. He died in Peking on 19 October 1939.<sup>2</sup>

Generally speaking, Shirokogorov was not only a field ethnographer but also a scholar of theoretical ethnology and linguistics (cf. his publications concerning the "ethnos" or "ethnic units," as well as a series of academic polemics with leading authorities). Nonetheless, we might say that he was one of the greatest "Tungusologues," one of the "Pleiad" in Tungusic studies (see the appended list of his scientific works).

The typescript of "Tungus Literary Language" is preserved in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków (in the archival section, registered as < Syg. 4605 >, where it comprises 19 sheets of old, poor-quality paper, paginated by the archivist from 56 to 74).<sup>3</sup> I came across it quite by chance when I was looking for the materials of Bronislaw Piłsudski, among papers which had been in the possession of the late professor W. Kotwicz.

This typescript seemed to be ready for printing, even though it had several irregular handwritten and typed insertions. However, on the attached sheet (p. 75) I found a registered-mail direction, addressed to S. M. Shirokogorov in "Pekin, China," and the sender's address stamped as "Polskie Towarzystwo Orientalistyczne, Lwów" (The Polish Society of Orient Studies, Lwów). Moreover, in the right margin is written in faint pencil: "Drukowane nie było, MK" (It was not printed, MK). What seems to have happened is the following.

In 1939<sup>4</sup> Shirokogorov sent this typescript to W. Kotwicz to be published in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny*, the journal of the "Polskie Towarzystwo Orientalistyczne,"<sup>5</sup> since Kotwicz was then editor-in-chief of this journal. However, the editor-in-chief decided for some reason not to print and to send it back to the author. Nevertheless, the typescript was not sent out but left with Kotwicz, perhaps because of the author's death, or perhaps because of the outbreak of war, but most probably for both reasons. But why did Kotwicz determine not to publish the Shirokogorov article in his journal?

First, I suppose that Kotwicz might have been worried about possible Soviet reactions toward Poland if he published an article that concluded by saying "the Literary Tungus Language has no scientific value, nor any future." Shirokogorov's conclusion is, it is true, far more academic than political; nevertheless, this article could scarcely be printed in Poland even now. This is why, I presume, Shirokogorov's typescript has not been published for half a century. Second, Kotwicz might have judged that the typescript was not finished yet, from rhetorical as well as stylistic points of view; in other words, Shirokogorov's English left room for much editing and polishing. The author presumably wrote his English text quite hurriedly.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the editor-in-chief might have, I believe, found it impossible to put the manuscript into print as it stood. (As a matter of fact, exactly the same question confronted me. At first I thought that my task would simply be to re-edit the typescript with minor modifications, but eventually I was obliged to modify the original text considerably, so that a reader with no knowledge of the Russian language might make sense of it. Although I have done my best to preserve his thought, I must be held responsible for its final form. I hope only that I have not distorted the author's meaning.)

Meanwhile, the existence of "Tungus Literary Language" was not only known to us, there even existed in Japan another typescript with the same title. According to the postscript of the Japanese translation of *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, the translators had obtained from Mrs E. N. Shirokogorova (Shirokogorov's widow) a detailed list of her husband's published works, as well as a list of those which were left unpublished. The latter contained six items, among which was "2) Tungus Literary Language (1939, 19 typewritten pages)." Judging from the identical title and number of pages, I feel safe in concluding that both typescripts are in principle the same and even were prepared at the

same time, though slight differences are conceivable owing to later retouchings. What is more important is the indication that this article was completed in 1939, the last year of the author's life.

In the spring of 1943 a Japanese scholar, Yasumoto Tokunaga, received from Mrs Shirokogorova in Peking three typescript items and a manuscript copy of "A Tungus Dictionary," to be published in Japan. Tokunaga (now professor in Kansai University of Foreign Studies) managed to bring them to Japan. Although he says that he can no longer tell exactly how those typescript items were titled, it is almost certain that they consisted of the following three items: 1) "Vocalic Harmony and Vocalic Associations in Tungus," 2) "Tungus Literary Language," and 3) "Ethnographic Investigation of China." This is because Prof. Tokunaga explains that Mrs Shirokogorova did not deliver the remaining items to him, since they were too voluminous, and she was in the process of typing them. The manuscript was printed photostatically by the Ethnological Society of Japan in 1944 (2nd ed. 1953). All the typescripts, regrettably, were lost in the postwar turmoils in 1945. They were, according to Prof. Tokunaga, kept in the desk of his cabinet in the Institute of Nationalities (Minzoku Kenkyūsho), but when the Occupation Army suddenly requisitioned the building, they went out of his control. The S. M. Shirokogorov typescripts, including that of "Tungus Literary Language," have been missing ever since. Were they simply destroyed in the course of requisition, or confiscated by the Occupation Army in view of their scientific value? I prefer the latter possibility to the former, since it leaves room to hope for their rediscovery somewhere in the United States of America. As for the two remaining unpublished items, which Mrs Shirokogorova did not give Tokunaga because of their voluminousness, it is hoped that a serious search will be made for them.<sup>7</sup> So far my inquiries in Peking have borne no fruit.

Needless to say, bringing to light an elusive article by Shirokogorov may have value by itself.<sup>8</sup> But the significance of its publication goes beyond this, for three reasons.

First, his article is a sort of contemporary documentary on the Tungus language of Siberia for a decade beginning from 1924. This corresponds to the era of "Latinization" in Soviet history, on which too little light has been shed so far. Later, as is well known, Soviet authorities switched their language policy to "Russification," i.e., replacement of Latin with Cyrillic letters for all the newly created literary languages. Therefore, he was a very rare

and valuable observer of this short-lived, poorly documented period.

Second, his arguments are relevant to quite a vivid question of today: whether literary languages should be constructed for the minority language groups, or not. If the answer is affirmative, the next question is how? Although he sharply argues against the policy, procedures, and results of the Soviet authorities and their collaborators, it is true that his arguments are not always objective. Moreover, we find it rather difficult to determine what his own answer would be to the above question. It seems that he intentionally chose the stance of antagonist, since as a matter of fact he had nothing to do with policy- and decision-making in the actual process. One must remember that he wrote down his thoughts as he contemplated the problem of faraway Siberia from his study in Peking. Nevertheless, his burning protestations are well worth careful attention.

Third, some of his predictions are worth seeing again. He forecast the inevitable denationalization of the Tungus and the extinction of the "Tungus Literary Language." It appears that he did not want the former to happen but was in favor of the latter, even making bold to declare that "Literary Tungus" had no "future." If he were to witness the present state of both, what would he say? One thing can be said: what Shirokogorov described as an artificial, simplified, and children's language still survives as the "Tungus Literary Language," although "Cyrilized" once more "owing to the personal energy of G. M. Vasilevič." According to a Soviet source, there were 3,370 Tungus (Evenki) speakers who declared Evenki their mother tongue (13.7 per cent of the whole Evenki population, 24,600 in 1959).<sup>9</sup> Is it on the way to extinction, or to development?

I have for several years been visiting Hulunbuir in north-eastern China, engaging in field surveys of the Tungus (Evenki) population there. Whenever the Chinese Evenki showed a keen interest in establishing a writing system for their speech (the Solon dialect), I couldn't help but recall Shirokogorov's emphasis on the initiative and participation of the speakers concerned. If Shirokogorov were alive now, he could be the best consultant for their enterprise. What this means is that he passed away more than half a century too early.

On the 50th anniversary  
of the death of S. M. Shirokogorov,  
19 October 1989

## NOTES

1. See the attached bibliography of Shirokogorov's works prepared by me on the basis of the one Mrs Shirokogorova herself compiled, which was published in the Japanese translation of *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* (Tokyo, 1941; pp. 87-91). I was able to add several titles to it. Furthermore, I have tried as far as possible to confirm the data in Mrs Shirokogorova's list. It is a happy coincidence that the article "Tungus Literary Language" should appear in *Asian Folklore Studies*, where the first posthumous publication of a work by Shirokogorov, "Ethnographic Investigation of China," also appeared 49 years ago (it was the lead article in the initial number of *Folklore Studies*, the forerunner of *Asian Folklore Studies*).

2. This information is taken mainly from the translators' postscript (written by Katsumi Tanaka and Teirō Kawakubo) to *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* (713-14).

3. I received official permission to publish this manuscript from the director of the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków, to whom I want to express my sincere gratitude.

4. I was unable to confirm the year when Shirokogorov or his wife dispatched the typescript to W. Kotwicz. But, if we accept the information from Mrs Shirokogorova that it was completed in 1939 (see p. 37 above), then its dispatch could occur only in 1939. Moreover, in his endnote 33 Shirokogorov cited "'Vocalic Harmony and Vocalic Associations in Tungus,' in *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. IV, 1939, Peking." This article did not appear in the journal, however. In addition, a typescript of the same title is found in the widow's list of unpublished works (see note 6 below). It means for some reason it was not published in *Monumenta Serica*. Taking everything into account, then, perhaps we should not rule out the slight possibility that "Tungus Literary Language" could have been dispatched in 1938.

5. Shirokogorov had already published articles in *Rocznik Orientalystyczny*, vols. IV (1928), VII (1931), and X (1934). For details, confer the Bibliography. Of W. Kotwicz, Shirokogorov states in his foreword to *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus* (v), "Before setting forth on these investigations [the expeditions of 1912-13], I received very valuable advice in linguistic field work from W. L. Kotwicz, Professor of the Lwow University (Poland), at that time connected with the St. Petersburg University, and Member of the Russian Committee for the Exploration of Middle and Eastern Asia." It appears that their friendly relationship (see p. x of the same work) had its start then.

6. His English text is a clear witness that he not only wrote it "hurriedly," but also omitted having it checked by native English speakers, a process his other texts, such as the monographs on the Manchus and on the Tungus, underwent (he expresses "sincere thanks" to them in the forewords).

Moreover, he clearly speaks about his reluctance to publish his ideas in English: "Another objection to publication was that my material must be published in English, which for me was a language neither native nor even sufficiently well studied to enable me to express myself with desirable clarity and in a style not offending the feeling of language among the English-speaking people. Indeed, I would be in a much more advantageous position if I could use my own language in this study" (*Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, viii).

7. For the sake of the completeness of the Bibliography, I cite here the whole list of Shirokogorov's unpublished works, compiled by his wife (see note 1 above).

- 1) Vocalic Harmony and Vocalic Association in the Tungus Languages (58 typewritten pages, 1939).
  - 2) Tungus Literary Language (19 typewritten pages, 1939).
  - 3) Ethnographic Investigation of China (35 typewritten pages, 1939) [an article under the same title was published in *Folklore Studies* in 1942; see Bibliography and note 1].
  - 4) Growth and Ethnos (a huge volume, ca. 1931).
  - 5) Linguistical Materials, Vol. II (a Tungus-Russian dictionary, containing approximately 30,000 words, and a folklore collection) [it appears that the dictionary was printed in 1944, reprinted in 1953].
  - 6) Ethnology (a monumental work, written from 1936 onwards and completed [?] in 1939, consisting of 2 volumes (7 parts, 35 chapters) [this appears to be Shirokogorov's lifework].
8. According to Prof. Jirō Ikegami, a leading Japanese Tungusologue, it was expressly stated in the Twenty-third Meeting of PIAC, held in Austria in 1980, that Shirokogorov's missing works should be seriously searched for (cf. Jirō Ikegami's "The Twenty-third Meeting of the Permanent International Altaic Conference (PIAC)" [in Japanese], *The Toyo Gakuho* (東洋学報) 62/3-4, 1981 : 233). While editing "Tungus Literary Language," I received valuable comments from Prof. Ikegami, and I want to express here my heartfelt gratitude.
9. *Население земного шара. Справочник по странам* (Moscow, 1965), p. 57.

[SHIROKOGOROFF'S TEXT]

**I**N 1924 the Soviet Government decided to introduce written languages for all the peoples of the former Russian Empire, putting an essential condition that only the Latin alphabet might be used for this purpose.<sup>1</sup> A year later, in 1925, the official organs of this government took upon themselves a new task of bringing the Tungus into the cycle of educational Sovietization. There was organized for this aim a "Department of Northern Peoples"<sup>2</sup> attached to the "Workmen Faculty" of the Leningrad State University (formerly the St Petersburg Imperial University), which began to accept a certain number of Tungus with the modest aim of teaching them the Russian language. The next year this department was renamed the "Northern Faculty."<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, the number of Tungus enrolled in this department kept on increasing, and there appeared a new demand for being taught their own language. In 1928, a kind of rudimentary transcription was for the first time adapted for Tungus speech and, in the following year, in order to satisfy the needs of the students, the first book in Tungus was published. It took the form of an elementary manual in 1931.<sup>4</sup> However, we find, not without surprise, that in 1930 a series of Tungus schools were allowed to begin their work in Tungus, even though an alphabet was not yet established nor books prepared. The alphabet was suggested by J. P. Alkor (alias Koškin) in 1930, and in its final form it was approved by the Sector of Science attached to the People's Commissariat of the Russian Soviet Federal Socialist Republic only in May of 1931.<sup>5</sup>

From 1932 onwards there appeared one publication after another in Tungus, chiefly school books, propaganda pamphlets, etc., about which we shall speak later. However, for this aim a whole machine has been set in motion by the high Soviet authorities and is now functioning under their strict supervision. Hence, in order to form an accurate idea about the history of Literary Tungus, we have to look at this machinery as well. Installation of this machinery was not a play

of imagination; it was imposed by the actual problem of organizing the native populations of Siberia and northern Russia. Here we have to distinguish different aspects of the problem that the authorities were obliged to deal with among the Tungus: the aspect of controlling Tungus scattered over an enormous territory; the aspect of their economic activity, to which the authorities could not be indifferent; the aspect of the ideological side; and the aspect of practical measures to be taken.

During the civil war in Siberia the Tungus did not join the new authorities. Most of them wholeheartedly supported the anti-Communist movement, or at least abstained from any political activity. At any rate, they were not friendly. After the war it was found out that some Tungus groups had become completely extinct, as happened to the Samagir group in Transbaikalia, whence some other Tungus groups also disappeared, giving up their territory to some new groups (while a large part, if not all, of the Mankova and Borzia Tungus migrated to Mongolia.)<sup>6</sup> As for the Aldan-Maia and Aian-Okhotsk regions, a comparison of present statistical observations with those published by S. K. Patkanov<sup>7</sup> shows a considerable loss of Tungus population.<sup>8</sup> In the Enissei region significant changes have also occurred, with the result that Vasilevič states that these Tungus groups have expanded their distribution to the west as far as the left tributaries of the Ob River.<sup>9</sup> This is confirmed by evidence of real wars with the Enisseians, whom the Tungus pushed westwards during their mass migration.<sup>10</sup> The Tungus of the Lower Tunguska Basin have retreated further north, beyond the northern watershed range of this river. These facts may suffice to demonstrate that for the Tungus the Revolution meant first of all a complete upset of their former relations with other ethnical units and groups.

Still more serious were other consequences of the Revolution. Formerly the Tungus lived by hunting, fishing, reindeer breeding, and some other minor forest and river industries, with the produce serving for regular barter with Russian and other merchants, who in their turn supplied the Tungus with powder, firearms, and sometimes even food. The whole economic system that supported the Tungus collapsed with the opening of the civil war, and they were left to themselves. Moreover, their old administrative organization was entirely destroyed, especially owing to the migrations and loss of population. Hence, the Tungus rushed away from any contact with alien groups. Actually, for a certain time they lived independent, as there was no power to keep them under any control. I shall now confine myself to these remarks, quite sufficient to demonstrate how greatly the authorities might be impressed by a considerable loss of population, the economic disor-

ganization, and also the impossibility of controlling the Tungus. Of course, these feelings were not exactly of a humanitarian nature. As a matter of fact, the Tungus, even in their small numbers, in their own territory might become dangerous. Moreover, being experienced hunters, the Tungus used to be the most regular suppliers of fur goods, which at that time formed one of the important items of foreign trade for the Soviets.

Under these circumstances, the authorities appealed to the humanitarian feelings of potential collaborators. Being inexperienced in the art of governing, the government perhaps sincerely believed that they had found persons capable not only of working out practical measures for pacifying the terrified Tungus, measures that were indispensable and needed to be new in form, but also of justifying this activity in terms of economic, political, and humanitarian interests and ideas. The task of elaborating the plan of this work was assigned to a special board of specialists, named the "Committee of the North" and attached to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee, to the "Institute of the Northern Peoples" attached to the Central Executive Committee, and to some others as well. Thus, the Communist Party itself took the problem rather seriously and did not fail to produce directive solutions regularly. The essentials of all these efforts may be reduced to the following points of particular interest for our present subject:

1. The Tungus should be organized into a new Soviet system, where the place of the clan should be taken by special organs composed of young Tungus who were connected with the Communist Party;

2. Their economic activity should be directed by non-Tungus organs, the organs of immediate contact being co-operative organizations and governmental agents at the spot, who should supply the hunters and fishermen with all they need for their activity and distribute their produce with a view to serving "general interests," while all private initiative should be eliminated entirely;

3. The old "beliefs" and shamanism should be fought against as religious aberrations and a basis for hostility towards the new ideas, while a network of schools should be established and young Tungus should be brought to big cities, in order first to be educated in a desirable way and then to be sent back again to direct the lives of their own people;

4. A literary language should be created in order to facilitate this operation and to develop a Tungus "consciousness."

The program for this operation was founded on an assumption that there should be no tendency to Russification, that the Tungus should create their own Soviet system adjusted to local conditions,

that they should have their own (and functioning in their own language) justice, administration, etc., and that they should have their own "press, schools, theatre, cultural work, and, in general, culturally enlightening institutions, in the native language"; also there should be organized a wide network of special courses and schools for general education and schools of a professional-technical type.<sup>11</sup> The rights acquired by the nationalities through the October Revolution represent "the greatest victory of the people," but those nationalities who have not passed through capitalism and have not formed a "proletariat" cannot enjoy all the privileges they may now have and, without assistance from outside, cannot reach a higher stage of development and join those nationalities that have gone ahead.<sup>12</sup> Then, since the "proletarian dictatorship" should be at the same time a period of "flourishing of national cultures," the latter should be developed through the introduction of a general education given in the native language.<sup>13</sup>

In order to show the difference between the present magnificent policy of the Communist Party towards the Tungus and that of the Imperial Government, G. M. Vasilevič asserts<sup>14</sup> that the latter was a merciless oppression of any national movements among the natives of Siberia and the setting of obstacles to prevent them from learning even the Russian language. If any schools had been set up, she says, their aim would have been to have the natives Russified and to prepare agents of oppression and robbery of their own people. Still harsher is the approach to all problems of J. P. Koškin (Alkor),<sup>15</sup> who advocates a militant point of view. He invites his colleagues at the conference to follow Stalin's theory and practice regarding a struggle on two fronts, one the "mechanicism" of the "pseudo-Marxist Japhetidological School" and the other "Menshevikian idealism," to which are also added such other "fronts" as the "Trotskyite smugglers," "rotten liberalism," "bourgeois and social-fascist science," etc. Several of his co-workers are denounced along the way as partisans of all the above-mentioned enemies.<sup>16</sup> A real enlightenment comes from Koškin's official declaration, where he says, "Some theoreticians of the Soviet Country pretend to lead linguistic policy, without conceiving that in our country nobody else but the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party is allowed to determine political principles" (Report of First Pan-Russian Conference, pp. 47-48), whence he finds it a duty of present-day linguists to create written languages. Therefore, the members of the conference did not have to worry about the theoretical side or the practical problem of whether it may be feasible or not. Since we shall discuss the problem of orthography later, I think it is useful to quote once more the same authority, who asserts, "Of course, any

orthography has its own class-sense. The bourgeoisie of every country wants to immortalize such an orthography as would prevent the working masses from learning the writing without spending a great deal of effort and losing a great deal of time. We now see in countries like England and France and others a very confused orthography. Once Engels clearly pointed out the class-character of the English orthography." This, according to him, was responsible for the ignorance of the working class in England (Report of First Pan-Russian Conference, pp. 61-62).<sup>17</sup> Here lies the secret of the major role performed by the above-named party in the creation of the Tungus grammar. As a matter of fact, this relieves the subaltern assistants of J. P. Alkor<sup>18</sup>—such as G. M. Vasilevič, N. N. Poppe, and others, of much responsibility.

We can now summarize. The whole enterprise has from the very beginning been in the firm hands of a political (Communist) party that attached special political importance even to orthography. The agent directly concerned with the Tungus was J. P. Koškin (alias Alkor).

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Now it is timely to ask the question, "How numerous are the Tungus for whom all this machinery is going to be organized?" As is usual with Soviet publications, the statistical estimates are adjusted to demands dictated by various considerations. Generally speaking, the Tungus may be linguistically divided into two main groups, namely, Northern and Southern. Those who speak the northern language usually call themselves "Evenki," while those speaking southern Tungus call themselves by different names. The Northern Tungus, or Evenki, are scattered over the territory from the western tributaries of the Ob River to the Pacific and from the Glacial Ocean to the southern frontier of Russian possessions in Asia. S. K. Patkanov, who had at his disposal the very rich and statistically rather reliable material from the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry of the Interior and had access to most valuable data regarding the past (covering almost two centuries), has come to the conclusion that within this long period there apparently occurred no great loss of Tungus population, while in those regions where the Tungus adopted some new cultural complexes, such as cattle breeding or agriculture, they have shown a certain increase of population. The Southern Tungus within the Russian possessions have never been numerous, while the Northern Tungus formed a group of importance. Thus, according to the Census of 1897 there were 62,068 males and females, of whom 33,450 lived in Transbaikalia, but the majority of them (84 percent) did not speak Tungus.<sup>19</sup> From a cultural

point of view, almost all of them were under either Russian or Mongol (and Buriat) influence.<sup>20</sup> Naturally, all these people were recorded as "Tungus" only because of their administrative status—they thus enjoyed privileges in taxation, exemption from compulsory military service, use of common law, etc. In 1897 the actual number of those who were still Tungus-speaking in Transbaikalia and called themselves Evenki or the like, was only 5,515 souls, and they made up several ethnical units. As regards other regions, there were 28,618 Tungus, of whom slightly under 22.9 percent had lost their original tongue (most by adopting Yakut). Thus, forty years ago there existed 27,597 Tungus who were using their mother tongue. Since that time there have occurred further losses of Tungus-speakers in favor of Russian, Yakut, and Mongol dialects (Buriat included). This has been a natural process under powerful inter-ethnic pressure.

One can realize how far the number of Tungus-speakers has been affected by the Revolution. In 1926 Soviet authorities undertook a kind of census, the results of which were taken as the basis for further work.<sup>21</sup> However, there ought to be important corrections made to this Polar ["Pripoljarny"] Census. From various Soviet publications I have found the maximal figure for Tungus Proper as 55,000.<sup>22</sup> However, the authors of "Explanatory Note to the Ethnographical Map" (edited by a special commission of the Academy of Sciences, St Petersburg, 1929), having found the new statistical data unreliable, made use of Patkanov's figures. The lowest number I found was given by Koškin and his subordinates as 41,531.<sup>23</sup> It is evident that the latter was obtained by exclusion of the above-mentioned Russianized and Mongolized Tungus, who might be estimated at least at thirty thousand (from Patkanov's data). This figure (41,531) is quite improbable, since it is much larger than Patkanov's 28,618. First of all, there have been no records of any considerable increase in the Tungus population since 1897, but losses did occur.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as I have already mentioned, the Tungus lost considerable numbers of people during the civil war in Siberia through famine, epidemics, and migration abroad. Some hints as to how such a large figure was obtained by Koškin may be gathered from Vasilevič's dictionary (p. iv), where the population of the Enissei Tungus is estimated at 6,924, based on the Polar Census. This is extraordinary, indeed, since their population was only 3,169 in 1897, according to Patkanov. It is true that the figure given by Vasilevič obviously includes some other groups, such as a part of the Kirensk Tungus (Irkutsk Government), but the number she included must at any rate be less than a thousand. We know that there was a shifting of population westwards, but we have no evidence of Tungus migra-

tion from the Lena Basin to the Enissei Basin, or from Transbaikalia to the Enissei River. Doubling of the Tungus hunting population within thirty years (from 1897 to the time of the Polar Census) is out of the question. Of course, Patkanov's data may be suspected, too, but this suspicion appears hardly justifiable, for in all the other regions the figures for the Tungus population, as seen after the Census of 1897, were usually in agreement with new observations.<sup>25</sup> Apparently the Polar Census was much like other similar statistical operations dictated by political desiderata.

In this particular case the situation is rather simple. Even assuming there were 22,082 Tungus still speaking Tungus beyond Transbaikalia, as indicated by the data of 1897, would it be really rational to invest so much capital to create a literary language for them? But even this figure of 22,082 cannot be accepted forty years after the Census of 1897, since the Tungus have gone on losing their mother tongue all this while, and it is not likely that there has been enough increase in population to make up for the decrease. Accordingly, those Tungus who have preserved their mother tongue must be far fewer than twenty thousand. Therefore we are talking about the introduction of two planned literary Tungus languages, Evenki and Even (so-called Lamut), for a population numbering under twenty thousand and scattered over an enormous territory. It seems unrealistic, especially for a country which itself suffers from famine and in which the government has continued to struggle to survive for the past twenty years. Still more unrealistic is the plan to create boarding schools for all Tungus children to be collected from the taiga, with the yearly expenditure for their board alone being estimated at four hundred roubles. Maintaining schools with their staffs, buildings, books, organization of theaters, courses, professional schools, and publication of newspapers, and the maintenance of a huge editorial office with a special staff of translators, editors, and directors, etc., to create two literary languages far exceed the limits of normal imagination. No normally functioning government would allow itself to be fooled by such a plan, which can be accepted only on the condition that "*credo quia absurdum est.*"

What the practical result will be is not difficult to forecast. A group of people concerned with this huge enterprise will for a certain period of time be left alone to fulfill the obligations they have taken on themselves, and so they will go on with their useless work. The considerable expenses connected with it will be added to other "losses" by the bookkeepers. The Tungus attracted to live among the Russians for their education will be Russianized. Those few who will benefit from the school education, first by learning to read and write

in Tungus, will easily master the Russian language. Denationalization and dispersion from the taiga towards Russian and other settlements will result from the further disorganization of the Tungus cultural complex. The Tungus as a distinct group of ethnical units will be submerged in the ocean of other ethnical units. Should they be left alone as they are just now, some groups of them in remote regions might perhaps survive as a kind of ethnic rarity, like the Yukagirs and the Enisseians, for future paleo-ethnologists to study.

Now, it is quite evident from this description of the situation that the creation of a Tungus literary language was not derived from the cultural needs of the Tungus, nor was it carried out by the Tungus themselves. Everything has been done by a group of naive enthusiasts who perhaps sincerely wanted to help (as they understood it) the Tungus, because the Tungus were needed by a certain political party for certain political reasons. It was also partly dictated by the need to obtain cheap fur goods.

There remains one more thing to be mentioned here. It is possible that the literary Tungus language created by G. M. Vasilevič and promoted by J. P. Alkor/Koškin may cause great misunderstanding among linguists. I consider it my duty to warn them against such a possibility.

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This lengthy introduction is quite indispensable for my subject, the Tungus literary language, since I feel an explanation of the abnormal conditions under which this new language came into existence is quite necessary. It is Vasilevič who is responsible for its creation. Still, some other persons were of importance, so far as the orthography and final shape of the language are concerned.

Now we shall proceed with our inquiry. The first question to be answered is how and on what materials this language has been constructed.

Vasilevič herself investigated the dialects spoken by those Tungus who lived in the basin of the Enissei River, stretching between the confines of the left tributaries of the Ob River to the west and the tributaries of the Lena River to the east, within the northern part of Irkutsk Government.<sup>26</sup> The latter group is of special interest for us, for Vasilevič says the literary Tungus language was based on this dialect. According to her, two Enissei dialects ought to be distinguished, the Northern and the Southern. The latter comprises three subdialects: the Sym (a tributary of the Ob River), the Upper Nepa (a small left tributary of the Lower Tunguska—in its sources within the Kirensk

District), and the Lower Nepa.<sup>27</sup> The last two sub-dialects are spoken by those Tungus living northwest of the Lena, i.e., in the northern part of the Kirensk District of Irkutsk Government. Speakers of the Lower Nepa sub-dialect are scattered among the Russians and have given up their former occupations of hunting and reindeer breeding.<sup>28</sup>

The language of the Nepa River Tungus (the Nep dialect) was selected for promotion to Literary Tungus, for it had satisfied the requirements of the authorities who stipulated that: 1) it should be a dialect of "working" Tungus, i.e., "proletarized" (as opposed to economically independent Tungus), the most advanced economically and politically; 2) it should have a central geographical position; 3) it should be "used by a large group of Tungus"; and 4) it should be the least influenced by other languages.<sup>29</sup> That is the theoretical setting of the problem. However, we find the actual motives are somewhat different if we look at things a little bit closer. The truth is, a large number of these Tungus being Russianized and living together with Russians under the stress of a disorganized life, rushed together with the Russians to the big cities. Some of them went under the pretext of getting an education in such centers of education as Irkutsk and Tomsk, whence they moved on to St Petersburg, the center for the creation of Literary Tungus. That is why the Nepa River dialect was far better represented than any other dialect.

These Tungus, half-denationalized and without an educational background, had to adjust themselves to the requirements of their new protectors. They accepted uncritically the ideas that might help them to become persons of importance among their own people. For these denationalized proletarians, despised even by their clansmen, promotion to the rank of privileged officials naturally was too big a temptation to be resisted; they became, in the eyes of Vasilevič and others, "the most advanced people." Actually, these Tungus have followed the line of least resistance, and became assistants in all reforms planned by the authorities. Naturally, these young Tungus men were very accessible for the authorities. Furthermore, the Kirensk Tungus were perhaps the most accessible of all from the viewpoint of means of communication. Living among the Russians, they were the first Tungus group to be "Sovietized," as Vasilevič asserts.<sup>30</sup>

Such were the principal motives for the selection of this Tungus dialect to become the matrix of Literary Tungus.<sup>31</sup>

Once the collection of lexical materials and texts was accomplished, the construction of a grammar became the next matter of moment. It did not require too long a time to prepare it, to fix up and complete it with an elaborate system of orthography, since on the one hand, the

main principles of Tungus grammar had already been established by M. Castrén, and, on the other hand, the new grammar to be constructed was not that of a dialect but that of a language being constructed by the compilers themselves. The whole task had apparently been carried out, owing to the personal energy of G. M. Vasilevič, and it had only to be approved. It was, and the Literary Tungus language was born.<sup>32</sup>

The Tungus grammar in general, owing to its agglutinative character, presents none of the difficulties inherent to flexive languages. Moreover, contractions are rare, owing to the absence of strong expiratory accent as a stable character, and vowels are rather well preserved, owing to the functional importance of musical melody, inherent in this language. There is, however, a peculiarity in Tungus which produces an opposite effect. Here I have in mind a tendency toward unclearness of the vowels that have no expiratory stress, nor length nor melodic weight functionally important enough to be minutely observed by the speaker. These vowels are subject to variations in individuals and dialects, and in relation to the longer speech units (sentences) as well. This peculiarity especially affects the vowels of transitory types—from narrow to wide, from front to back, from low to high. Moreover, there is another peculiarity to be taken into account: a tendency to syllable association of identic vowels.<sup>33</sup> All these phenomena are responsible for the “irregularities” that so strike persons whose linguistic thinking depends too much on school training in literary languages. For these people, certain kinds of orthography ought to be adopted, corresponding to certain “ideal” languages (whether actually used, or imaginary).

When Vasilevič began to sense these peculiarities (true, without realizing their nature), she had to find, in line with her inclination to follow any orthographic preconception, a simple and efficient way to get rid of the above-mentioned “irregularities.” The solution was easily found by Koškin/Alkor, who, having learned from linguists about the existence of the so-called vocalic harmony, raised the latter to the status of a linguistic law and made it, together with the whole of the old theory of the Ural-Altai family of languages, a theory compulsory for all those who were working under his direction on the Tungus languages. We have seen that in this respect he was a man of decision. He did not hesitate to appeal to the authorities when attempts seemed to be made at questioning the competence of the Communist Party, which had taken it upon itself to define “linguistic policy” (see above, p. 45).

As soon as the simple solution was arrived at, the rest of the task became a simple matter of automatic orthographic adjustment, claimed

to be based on "phonetic laws."<sup>34</sup> The essence of the constructed principles is that the vowels are divided into "soft" and "hard" in the stems and demand corresponding vowels in the suffixes. However, although it is stated that there are two kinds of /u/ and /i/, they are not distinguished, and those interested in finding a distinction are recommended to look in the dictionary, where the distinction between the "soft" and the "hard" vowels is indicated by diacritic marks. The second principle is that the short and long vowels are not always followed by the same vowels in the suffixes. Then special "rules" are formulated and shown in tables. Here we may note that /u/ and /i/ are taken as "neutral" in suffixes. The short vowel /ǎ/ may be followed only by /ǎ/ and /ā/, but not by /o/ and /è/, whereas the long vowel /ā/ can be followed by any vowel; the long vowel /ō/ can be followed only by /a/ and not by /o/, /è/, etc. It is impossible to make out on what kind of facts all these "rules" are based, for the published materials (her texts and dictionary) are already adapted to the "rules." Anyway, such regularities are found in no dialects known to me, and the inventor of these rules not infrequently comes into conflict with her own "rules," as is seen in her dictionary, especially in those cases she failed to foresee. The reason for giving such rules is evident. It is an imitation of M. Castrén's grammar, in which the famous linguist theoretically constructed all possible forms that accorded with his supposition that there exists vocalic harmony in Tungus (the Urulga and Mankova dialects).<sup>35</sup>

Vasilevič's rules are adjusted to the requirements issued by the special political organs under Koškin/Alkor's direction.<sup>36</sup>

The orthographic "rules" thus created affect the whole morphological part of the grammar. But this is not all that makes the grammar an artificial construction that is especially affected by two more phonetic peculiarities proper to the dialect chosen as the matrix of Literary Tungus. Here I have in view a strong tendency towards the assimilation of consonants, and the aspiration of initial vowels. As for assimilation—for instance, < *nanna* > ← < *nanda* > (skin), < *abdanna* > ← < *abdanda* > (leaf); and in suffixes: /*nni*/ ← /*ndi*/ etc.—this peculiarity does not equally affect all Tungus dialects, but only some of them. Perhaps there are more dialects that avoid such an assimilation, yet many dialects show the interesting phenomenon of fortifying the assimilable consonants, e.g. < *nanda* > → < *nandra* >, < *abdanda* > → < *abdandra* >, etc., thus protecting /d/ from assimilation.

As I have shown elsewhere,<sup>37</sup> the aspiration of initial vowels was only a certain "fashion" that had affected a limited number of dialects. Its introduction into Literary Tungus turns this "fashion" into a

stable characteristic of the Tungus language. This is quite misleading.

As for the consonants, we may note here the "remarkable absence" of the dento-labial /v/—which is found in most, if not all, Tungus dialects. Distinction between /w/ and /v/ is quite essential, since these consonants show different behaviors in alternations. The consonant /w/ is often met with as a derivative of /u/ or /ɣ/, etc., while /v/ remains rather stable. The absence of /v/ seems to be very doubtful.<sup>38</sup> The alternations of consonants, as shown in the Appendix,<sup>39</sup> are not so strict in the living dialects. This makes all the paradigms of Literary Tungus quite artificial.

One thing is evident: should the dialect which was chosen for the basis of Literary Tungus be reproduced, there could not be formulated all the "rules" of Vasilevič's grammar. Hence this is not a Tungus grammar at all, but the grammar of an invented language. As such, this language has no value as a scientific source for knowledge of the Tungus language and, therefore, cannot be used for scientific reference.

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Among the publications that I have at my disposal are the following. They seem to represent all the types of publication issued until now: school books, political propaganda, books for general education, and varia.

(A) School Books

1. G. M. Vasilevič, *omakta okto*\* [New Path], 1933, Leningrad, in 8°, 80 pp. with twelve tables, profusely illustrated. This is an ABC that contains a lot of political propaganda. [\*Spelling in the original is "hokto."]
2. G. M. Vasilevič, *tajin zarin dukuwun* (second-year reader), 1934, Moscow, in 8°, 96 pp. with some illustrations. It contains mixed materials concerning some natural subjects, folk stories, and, especially, political propaganda, as well as Communist Party advertising, a biography of Stalin, etc.
3. P. N. Žulev, *tajin zarin dukuwun* (first-year reader), 1933, Moscow, in 8°, 64 pp. The author apparently is a native (not a Tungus) who is somewhat better aware of the needs of native children. The political sections and spirit are apparently introduced by the editors and collaborators. The author's original has been translated into Tungus by Vasilevič and V. I. Cincius.
4. G. M. Vasilevič, *tacilgat tajmi* ["Let us learn how to count"], 1932, Moscow, in 8°, 132 pp. The book is intended for use over three semesters. It may be noted that this book seems to

be aimed at teaching feeble-minded children, but still political propaganda is not forgotten.

5. N. S. Popova, *arimetika. tatigawun nonopti tatkit zarin* [Arithmetic: A manual for primary school], 2nd part, 2nd year. Moscow, 1934. This is a translation into Tungus done by Vasilevič.
6. G. M. Vasilevič, *èvèdi nimyakar* [Tungus folk stories], 1934, Leningrad, illustrated, in 8°, 16 pp. It contains five folk stories recorded by the author.

(B) Political Propaganda

This group consists of five pamphlets, all published in 1933 and varying in length from 12 to 40 pages. All of them are translations into Tungus done by G. M. Vasilevič or under her supervision. Subjects are clear from the titles:

- “What Revolution Has Given the Northern Peoples,” by J. P. Alkor;
- “War Menace and Our Problems,” by M. Kokin;
- “Position of Women among the Progressive Peoples of the Soviets,” by N. Hodža;
- “How the Workmen and Peasants Won Their Freedom,” by K. Ščukin;
- “The Party Leads,” by I. Kulagin.

Every pamphlet contains a list of Russian terms explained or translated into Literary Tungus. In addition to the above-mentioned publications, other pamphlets with similar contents were published prior to 1935.

(C) Books for General Education

Pamphlets in this group are much briefer. Their origin and size are the same as those of group (B) above. In order to give a general idea of the publications, it will be sufficient to mention the titles, as I did above:

- “What Is Industrialization?” by L. Walerstein;
- “What Is Factory?” by the same author;
- “How People Are Travelling,” by L. Saveliev (industrial achievements).

In addition to these, there is a publication of special interest, in which the author (a certain Gr. Rahmanin) tries to persuade Tungus hunters to observe the agreements and seasons in their professional operations, giving them along the way instructions on how to deal with co-operative

stores and the like.

(D) *Varia*

Here we may note only one publication of scientific value. It is *Materials on Ewenkee [Evenki] (Tungus) Folklore* (1st fasc., Leningrad, 1936, in 8°, vi+290 pp.), which contains 120 stories recorded by Vasilevič among the Enissei Tungus, and 92 stories collected from other groups (every story is accompanied by a Russian translation and some explanations). In an Appendix (52 pages) are included two translations, of which one is G. Huth's article on his work among the Enissei Tungus, while the other is Madame E. Shirokogoroff's paper (originally in English) on Chinese folk music, in which are included some Tungus songs. The Appendix also includes translations into Russian, and just summaries, of Tungus stories recorded by V. N. Vasiliev, K. Ryčkov, and others. Indeed, it is a valuable collection of Tungus folklore. As linguistic material, however, it must be used only with great caution because of the fact that it has been adjusted to the requirements ("rules") of the Literary Tungus language, particularly levelled by the application of the "law of vocalic harmony."

As regards the outer appearance of all these publications, it is of such poor quality that there are no publications in other countries to which they can be compared. The dirty-greyish paper used is usually for the poorest newspapers and wrapping. The illustrations are usually unsatisfactory, and the binding is primitive.<sup>40</sup> The whole collection would be the most miserable specimen of the printing art one could find in any library.

Besides the above-mentioned publications in Tungus, there were three more school books and nine political and educational pamphlets, according to the bibliographical list attached to the *Manual of the Tungus Language* of Vasilevič. I have no information on further publications. However, one can see from what has been reviewed that, if the language receives no further development, further enrichment of the literature is quite improbable if we exclude propaganda pamphlets.

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Upon a perusal of all these publications, one gets the impression that the Tungus linguistic complex cannot respond to all the requirements necessary for expressing alien complexes in the Tungus idiom. This will be hindered not only by the lack of technical terms, but also by semantic limitations (which greatly depend on the volume of a cultural complex in general and its constructive complexity). Of course, it is not very difficult to enrich vocabulary. It can always be done either by the "Tungusation" of alien words or even by the introduc-

tion of neologisms formed out of Tungus stems. But it is far more difficult to adapt the language for the expression of complex ideas. The first difficulty has been rather successfully overcome by Vasilevič,<sup>41</sup> so that we may expect in the future, should this language survive, the lexical content will gradually be so augmented by the alien elements and neologisms that the original stock will be entirely submerged. (This is what has already happened with a number of other languages.) But as for the second difficulty, the inadequacy of Tungus for secondary semantic combinations and complex starters in general, Vasilevič has chosen a dangerous path. She and her collaborators have obviously made the choice of imitating the style of folk-story language, and the question-and-answer style suitable for mentally immature or even feeble-minded individuals, and also children's speech, on the supposition that such a language will be better understood by the Tungus, as if they were a kind of mentally inferior people. However, I have shown that the Tungus are very good speakers whose speech abounds in very rich syntactic forms, semantic variations, and allusions.<sup>42</sup> Why not introduce the best forms of Tungus? The reason is, of course, simple. It requires much more time than G. M. Vasilevič had at her disposal to study a language to that extent; it would require her to meet many friendly people (not everyone is a good speaker) and to *master* the language.<sup>43</sup>

Probably the Tungus have to wait a long time before one of them, or some outsider, will put good specimens of Tungus language into a written form. To do this is a genuine art, which is apparently lacking among the creators of Literary Tungus. This language, as it has emerged from the hands of its creators, looks very much like a language unsuitable for a full expression of human thought. This is true of any artificially created language, as opposed to languages grown historically on native soil. This newly created language, ethnologically speaking, is an interesting example of how the psychology of the creators may be reflected in their works. We have seen that the authorities have theoretically assumed Tungus "inferiority" from the viewpoint of their economic organization and social differentiation. From this, the cultural-mental inferiority of the Tungus is, as is usual for vulgar evolutionists with a materialistic trend of ideas, nothing but a logical inference that does not need to be confirmed or investigated. Furthermore, the theoretically inferred cultural-mental inferiority of the Tungus has been taken as evidence of their inborn mental inferiority, and for this reason a simplified children's language had to be created.<sup>44</sup> The whole situation surrounding Literary Tungus presents a particular case of the self-confidence that is inherent in an imperfect knowledge of realities

and that is stimulated by a strong ethnocentric behavior. The Literary Tungus language has no scientific value, nor any future.

## NOTES

1. So far the idea of introducing compulsory Latinization of the Russian language has been, temporarily at least, given up. Latinization has been introduced in some countries outside of Russia as well. It had a certain success in China, too, but there were no serious consequences of practical value, except for its introduction into the special schools for the Chinese under the Soviets.

2. The term *people* may be misleading. In this case it means a "nationality"; in scientific terminology, an "ethnic unit or group of ethnic units."

3. Here it must be explained that the word *faculty* in Russian corresponds to "college." However, "Workmen Faculty" actually meant "Special Preparatory School for Workmen." It was regarded as one of the great achievements of the Revolution, since it opened up a wide opportunity for "workers" to get the university education of which they had been deprived by the ill-will of the Imperial Government. However, when the first experiments failed to show any results of practical value, "workmen faculties" were first reformed and then given up; a preliminary selection of students who have some preparation has proved to be the only rational way of recruiting them for higher education. Naturally, Tungus who had been attracted to university education from the beginning of the experiment had to experience all the reforms, until the establishment for them (and other "northern peoples") of a special institute.

4. *Primary Book in Tungus*, by G. M. Vasilevič, 1931, Moscow.

5. Here I am using *Explanatory Note to the Tungus ABC, New Path*, by Vasilevič, Leningrad, 1933.

6. See my *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, Shanghai, 1929.

7. *Essay on the Geographical and Statistical Distribution of the Tungus* (in Russian), St Petersburg, 1906.

8. B. N. Vasiliev, *Preliminary Report on the Investigation of the Aldan-Maia and Aian-Okhotsk Tungus in 1926-1928* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1930.

9. See G. M. Vasilevič, *Tungus-Russian Dialectal Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1934.

10. See Kai-Donner, in *Journal de la Société Finno-Ougrienne*, 1922(?).

11. Resolutions of the Tenth Party Congress concerning all nationalities.

12. Resolutions of the Twelfth Party Congress.

13. Resolutions of the Sixteenth Party Congress, proposed by J. Stalin (Dzugasvili).

14. *Manual of the Tungus Language*, Moscow/Leningrad, 1934, in 8°, 156 pp. The author has distinguished herself by a long list of publications in Literary Tungus, the compilation of various textbooks, an original investigation of a group of dialects (Enissei), which has resulted in a short dictionary (see note 9), and the collection of folklore. Her activity began rather recently, i.e., around the end of the last decade. As we learn from the list of participants in the First Pan-Russian Conference for Development of the Languages and Writing among the Northern Peoples (reports were published in 1932, Moscow), she is Russian by origin and holds the position of teacher of Tungus in the Institute, but is not a member of the Communist Party. In her publications she shares the opinions of her superiors and seems to have accommodated herself to the Marxist-dialectic view on the history and present state of the Tungus,

about which, owing to their "political" implications, no controversy is allowed. See below.

15. I could not ascertain what his real name was—J. P. Alkor, or J. P. Koškin—since in the same report on the First Pan-Russian Conference he figures under both of them. A Latvian by origin and a distinguished member of the Communist Party, in 1932 he occupied such positions as Director of the Institute of the Northern Peoples and President of the Scientific Research Association. Thus he may be regarded as a mouthpiece of the high spheres. Apparently his task was to iron out all the problems in accordance with the method of dialectical materialism, while adjusting it to the opinions of leading authorities of the past and present such as K. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and, perhaps the most important of all (at least today), J. Stalin, whose opinions are lavishly quoted by him. As to his personality, he himself informs us that he has learned a lot from his teacher, L. J. Sternberg, who personally fostered in his pupil a special interest in ethnography (see his contribution to the booklet, *To the Memory of L. J. Sternberg* [in Russian], Publ. of the Acad. of Sciences, Leningrad 1930). He has distinguished himself through a few articles connected in one way or another with the Tungus and their literary language, and also through reports expounding the official point of view on the same subjects. Apparently he has carried out no original investigations.

16. Given the state of *mania persecutiva* prevailing in ruling circles, such a denouncing is not an act without consequences. Thus, people whose names have been mentioned by such an authority as the Director of the Institute, might pay for their disagreement with him with their lives. He attacked E. Polivanov for the latter's "Marxist disguise of liberalism," Comrade Lomtev for his "Menshevikian Hegelianism" (formerly this philosopher used to be the cornerstone for the whole Marxian scaffolding), and Comrades Dresen and Rus for their "mechanicism," and he also accused Comrade Danilov of supporting such social-fascists as Kautsky, Trotsky, et al. I have quoted all these terms of uncommon classification and delirious denouncing, since they characterize the situation under which some linguists have to build up their theories, and for which they ought to be excused as well, for under these conditions it is quite risky to have any opinion of one's own. Indeed, we cannot take everything which is published in present-day Russia as the genuine opinion of those who put their names under their writings. Was this not the case of N. Marr's scientific activity in his last years?

17. We find all these remarkable ideas in his report, which fills twenty-six pages of poor printing with invariably fascinating reading that, however, soon becomes monotonous and tiresome.

18. As for the other participants in the conference, we may mention here only N. N. Poppe, V. G. Bogoras, and V. I. Cincius, as we shall meet their names later. The first of them has distinguished himself by a series of articles and studies on various Mongol subjects and dialects, and by two sketches of Tungus dialects. He represented the Institute of Orientalists of the Academy of Sciences (his nationality is not indicated). Bogoras (who has recently died), a well-known field ethnographer who has investigated several groups of Paleo-Asiates and a Lamut dialect, was invited as an expert, and he declared himself to be Russian. Cincius, a teacher of Tungus in the Institute, has also declared herself to be Russian. She is known as a translator into Tungus and the editor of some Tungus materials. Altogether there were fifty-five participants, of whom twenty-three were members of Communist organizations and fifteen were "natives," while most of the others were described as being Russians, even though not all were so. I do not know what has become of them after several "purges" as practiced among

the Communists and their collaborators. It is likely, indeed, that not all of them are alive, so that the whole thing might be treated in accordance with an old saying, "*De mortuis aut bene aut nihil*," except for the fact that they are leaving behind works which could tempt uncautious people to use them as a reliable source, and about which we have to speak unfavorably.

19. S. K. Patkanov, *Essay on the Geographical and Statistical Distribution of the Tungus* p. 194, Vol. I, Fasc. 2. These Tungus at the time spoke Russian or Buriat (or Mongol). The Tungus tongue had become a foreign language to them.

20. To find some Tungus-speaking people in 1912, I was forced to organize an expedition in order to reach them in the taiga.

21. I am speaking about "a kind of census," since the results obtained have proved to be unreliable and needed immediate corrections.

22. *Economic Geography of Siberia*, edited by A. A. Anson et al., Novosibirsk (Novo-Nikolaevsk), 1928, p. 105. This manual for teachers is remarkable for its wealth of wrong information.

23. Report of the First Pan-Russian Conference, p. 102.

24. According to I. Lopatin, I. Gapanovic, and my own studies.

25. Hunting populations are usually stationary when their territory remains the same, and they decrease if the territory is reduced or the animals are getting extinct. This is the case of the Tungus.

26. The Enissei Tungus dialects have been recorded by G. Huth; by M. Czaplicka during the first years of the Great War (her material is still unpublished); by a local missionary, Father Koževnikov; and by A. A. Makarenko and V. N. Vasiliev (in manuscripts). Very copious material was collected by K. M. Ryčkov before the Great War, but this is still unpublished, too. As for the Tungus of the Baikal region, their dialect was investigated by A. Czekanowski (the material was published by A. Schiefner), by Ptitsyn, and by E. I. Titov between the years 1919 to 1929 and published (lexical material is found in his *Tungus-Russian Dictionary*, 1926, Irkutsk, while texts were published by G. M. Vasilevič, 1936, Leningrad).

27. The sources of the Lower Tunguska, located several kilometers from the Lena, are also inhabited by some Tungus population. However, Vasilevič did not personally investigate the Tungus group who lived southeast of the Lena (investigated by E. I. Titov), who were known as the Tungus of Kirensk District, according to Patkanov.

28. According to Patkanov, the total number of Kirensk Tungus in 1879 was 1,358, of whom 16.2 percent spoke Russian as their mother tongue. A great majority of these Tungus also knew Russian, and 9 percent were settled, engaging in agriculture. Thus, forty years ago this was one of the Tungus groups strongly influenced by the Russians. Apparently the process of assimilation of these Tungus has continued since then. Therefore, at the beginning of the Soviet era Titov found the group living in the basin of the Kirenga River, southeast of the Lena River, numbering fewer than four hundred people, partly intermingled with the Russians and partly still practising hunting, fishing, and, on a smaller scale, reindeer breeding. Moreover, the process of Russianization had gone so far that some of them were not included among the Tungus communities.

29. It is superfluous to enter into a detailed discussion of these requirements. Nevertheless, I deem it necessary to make some remarks. As to the central position of these Tungus, it may seem so only from an egocentric point of view. In fact, in reference to the entire body of Tungus these Tungus form one of the fringe southwestern groups, whereas the actual Tungus centre is situated about 1,000 kilometres northeast,

where, it is true, 95.7 percent of the Tungus population speak the Yakut language. The dialect selected for Literary Tungus is not the one which is spoken by the majority of Tungus, unless only the Enissei Tungus are taken into consideration. As for the alien influences, these dialects are rich enough in Russian elements, but the Buriat and Yakut elements are much less represented.

30. In her *Explanatory Note to the Tungus ABC*, p. 4.

31. I omit here a motive of personal nature, namely, the fact that this dialect was by far more familiar to the chief actor in this drama than the other dialects.

32. This is the picture one gets from what has been published. I presume some other specialists in Tungus had been involved, e.g., N. N. Poppe and V. I. Cincius, who perhaps provided not only the materials (as a lot of Tungus were then getting their education under Koškin's protection and direction), but also some other useful information. However, the names of all collaborators are left in the dark.

33. "Vocalic Harmony and Vocalic Associations in 'Tungus'", in *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. IV, 1939, Peking. [This article did not appear in *Monumenta Serica*.]

34. See *Manual of Tungus Language*, Lesson 5, pp. 23-24.

35. M. Alexander Castrén, *Grundzüge einer Tungusischen Sprachlehre*, etc., edited by A. Schiefner, St Petersburg, 1856. I have just stated that his tables are theoretically constructed. In fact, first of all, he stayed only for three or four months among the Tungus (1848), for weeks lying seriously ill in bed. Naturally he could not prove his statements by his own texts, as he had no time, indeed, to record them. I have found no vocalic harmony in Mankova as described by Castrén. Moreover, there are many things to be corrected in his grammar. Hence his records, adapted to the theory (it is difficult to say to what degree by himself and to what degree by Schiefner), cannot now be accepted with perfect confidence.

36. See above, p. 51. Koškin is inclined to formulate "phonetic laws" without consulting facts. In his contribution to a special publication of the Academy of Sciences, *To the Memory of M. A. Castrén* (Leningrad, 1927), he speaks about the phonetic law of Altaic languages according to which "voiced consonants cannot stand at the final" in a word, whereas as a matter of fact we frequently meet with final /n/, /m/, /l/, /ʎ/, /w/, /r/, /ɣ/. In the same easy manner he formulates the "phonetic law" of vocalic harmony in Tungus. It is interesting to note here that in 1927 N. N. Poppe, when he published some materials gathered among the Nomad Barguzin Tungus (*Materials for Investigation of the Tungus Language. Dialect of Barguzin Tungus*, Publ. Acad. of Sciences, 1927, in 8°, 60 pp.), states that he did not discover vocalic harmony, as had other investigators of Tungus dialects (practically, only M. Castrén). A few years later he published another study on the Solon dialect, a typical Northern Tungus language (*Materials on the Solon Language*, Publ. Acad. of Sciences, 1931, 142 pp. in 8°). Here Poppe makes a special effort to demonstrate the existence of vocalic harmony, even though he admits that it was not always observed. Although he introduces a series of vowels and quite unconvincing explanations to make his statement more credible, it cannot stand up under objective criticism. I must say that, when I first read this work, I was surprised at how an author of numerous publications on different linguistic subjects could produce such a vulnerable and artificially built-up study. I did not know then what was really going on behind the scenes. Having learned how the manufacturing of Literary Tungus was going on, I realized that, so far as vocalic harmony was concerned, Poppe's work was needed in order to prepare the ground, to facilitate everybody's adhesion to Koškin's point of view, which in turn, thus given the stamp of approval by the specialist, could give support to Vasilevič to speak about "phonetic laws" as the basis of her grammar.

37. "Notes on the Bilabialization and Aspiration of the Vowels in the Tungus Languages," in *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* VII [1931]: 235-263; also, *Ethnological and Linguistical Aspects of the Ural-Altai Hypothesis*, Peking 1931, especially pp. 102-121.

38. Perhaps the source of this idea is Castrén's grammar, where *v* does not figure at all. However, Castrén does not explain how to pronounce *w*, whether in the German manner (dento-labial), or the English manner (bilabial) as Vasilevič wants it. It may be remarked here that /w/ (bilabial) is rather typical of Mongol and Buriat, whereas /v/ (dento-labial) is typically Tungus.

Particular adherence to Castrén's ideas has still deeper, even political, reasons. In fact, Castrén used to be one of the greatest supporters of the Ural-Altai hypothesis and all its premises. This hypothesis also played an important part in the history of the theory of evolution, since at that time philosophers' minds were busy finding genetic relationships among various languages as the best proof of evolution as a general law of nature. The theory of evolution was accepted by Marxists as their credo; under the Soviets it became a compulsory theory, officially recognized and supported, as we have seen, by the power of public force. Therefore, to deny phonetic laws and other Castrén aberrations means to undermine the Ural-Altai hypothesis (also promoted to an officially recognized "law"); to deny the value of the Ural-Altai "law" means to undermine the theory of evolution; to deny the theory of evolution means to undermine Marxism-Stalinism; to deny Marxism-Stalinism means a political crime. This explains Koškin's energetic activity in such peripheral problems as "vocalic harmony," the Ural-Altai hypothesis, etc., where he finds bitter enemies.

In the whole structure there is a point which may seem to be inconsistent, namely, how is evolutionism consistent with "revolutionism"? The founder of Marxism has found a very good solution. According to him, the historical process proceeds in accordance with the theory of evolution and at a certain moment reaches an impasse. To get out of the impasse the intervention of a midwife is needed, and she by an act of violence produces a child. So Karl Marx imagined himself to be such a midwife; he did not succeed, however, in getting clients. In the same way, Joseph Stalin and his collaborators, such as J. P. Koškin, apparently feel they belong to that class of midwives who live on the illicit practice of abortion.

39. *Manual of the Tungus Language*, pp. 138 et seq.

40. The only two pamphlets that appear more or less decent are Vasilevič's book with five folk stories and Saveliev's pamphlet on the means of communication.

41. Nevertheless, she has introduced some Russian words even though their equivalents exist in other Tungus dialects, though they are lacking in the dialects with which she was familiar. For instance, she adopted Russian <rak> (crayfish, which is not found in the Enisei River Basin) instead of <kapč'fk'i> (Nerchinsk dialect), <kapč'imk'i> ~ <kapč'iwk'i> (Bihar dialect); Russian <v'erblud> (<werblud> of her transcription in Tungus means "camel") instead of <tëmègè> (Solon dialect), <tëmègon> (Nomin & Barguzin dialects, according to Poppe), which are words borrowed from Mongol; Russian <gosudarstvo> (state, power) instead of <gurun> (Bihar & Kumar dialects, Manchu) and many others. The same holds true for some neologisms, such as <ajicitwun> (medicine) instead of several other words already existent in other dialects, e.g. <òm> (Nerchinsk), <okto> (Bihar & Kumar), <boɣo> (Nerchinsk), etc.; and <nuɣè> (owner, master) instead of <oɣan> ~ <èɣan>, found in a great number of the Tungus dialects.

42. *Social Organization of the Northern Tungus*, Ch. VIII; also *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, Ch. VIII, Section 33 et seq.

43. I have already pointed out the exclusive part played by Vasilevič in the crea-

tion of Literary Tungus. What she has done personally and through directing the work of collaborators really appears enormous. She was universal in her work—she collected the materials needed herself, attracted the Tungus and taught them herself, compiled a number of textbooks, translated a long series of pamphlets, etc. It is evident that to carry out such a work means much more than common impulses have motivated her. What animates her work apparently is the love for the Tungus, whom she wants to help in their tragic position of a people doomed to become either extinct or swallowed by a wholesale levelling. I fully realize how any person who comes into long contact with the Tungus is gradually captivated by their open-hearted and humane attitude of a kind of personal disinterestedness and self-denial, in which the personality receives its full development as a member of a higher social formation (particularly clan and small ethnic units), while the totality of the conditions of Tungus existence impose a great demand upon the individual, especially in hunting. This Tungus power of attracting sympathy has been noted by so many travellers that in Siberian ethnography it has become a commonplace. Vasilevič did not seem to have escaped this influence. One feels that behind her activity there are stimuli of an “irrational” nature, a sort of hatred for the mutual destruction of classes and the merciless exploitation of human beings, expressed in an extraordinary form of idealism in the name of a messianic idea. What will happen to her personally, when, rather sooner than later, the reality will prove the futility of her effort and the collapse of the whole construction in which her part was not minimal? It will become a personal tragedy for her when her emotional complex clashes with the realities. Such is the waste of human energy when the direction of a nation is given over to the hands of ignorant fanatics and dishonest individuals.

44. Here the psychology of the creators is most complicated, for theoretically they deny the idea of hereditary “inferiority” and “superiority,” whereas they behave as if they recognized it. This presents a case of subconscious recognition, hidden from outsiders, as is typical of the so-called inferiority complex. I must emphasize again the fact that an inadequate knowledge of the Tungus psychomental complex, curiously interwoven with an uncontrollable fear of losing control over the Tungus, is plainly demonstrated in all the practical measures of the Soviet authorities. This is exemplified by the measures taken against the shamans, who were imagined to be one of the backbones of the kulak-capitalist-clan organization of the Tungus.

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