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Архитектуры столкновения на постреволюционном сибирском Севере

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Architectures of Encounter in the Post-Revolutionary Siberian North

Abstract. This article offers a new direction for exploring the history of the Krasnoyarsk Territory. The autor introduces the term "architectures of encounter" to focus attention on the ways in which forces external to the Indigenous peoples of the Evenki Municipal Region actively designed the material and social infrastructures for cultural transformation, dispossession of land, and resource extraction. He believes that this case can be extended to Indigenous peoples across Siberia and the Russian Far East, more generally. This essay borrows heavily from his book "Agitating Images" to offer a detailed examination of the soviet "Culture Base," built on the Lower Tunguska river in 1927. This is a preliminary and exploratory paper that is designed to lay some foundations for thinking about the affects of encounter and leading to work that seeks to understand increasingly industrial interventions and extractive operations.

Keywords: cultural anthropology; Soviet cultural and national politics; Sovietization; indigenous peoples of Siberia; Evenki; Tunguska cultural base.

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Аннотация. В статье предлагается новое направление исследования истории Красноярского края. Вводится термин «структуры столкновения», чтобы сосредоточить внимание на способах, с помощью которых силы, внешние по отношению к коренным народам Эвенкии, активно создавали материальную и социальную инфраструктуру для культурных преобразований, лишения права собственности на землю и добычи ресурсов. По мнению автора, этот случай можно распространить на коренные народы Сибири и Дальнего Востока в целом. Данный материал во многом заимствован из книги «Агитирующие образы», где изложен подробный анализ истории советской «культбазы», построенной на р. Нижняя Тунгуска в 1927 г. Это предварительная дискуссионная статья, призванная заложить некоторые основы для размышления об эффектах столкновения, выступив прологом к работе, направленному на понимание расширяющегося промышленного вмешательства и развития добывающих отраслей.

Ключевые слова: культурная антропология; советская культурная и национальная политика; советизация; коренные народы Сибири; эвенки; Тунгусская культбаза.

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Let us begin with the composition of a single picture. A large-format box camera is hoisted onto a heavy-duty wooden tripod. The photographer affixes the lens, and then fishes in his box of negatives for a fresh glass plate, coated with light-sensitive emulsion and carefully encased in a cartridge. The negative is inserted into the light-tight camera. The photographer now enters the world of the darkened chamber, the *camera obscura*. He veils himself with a heavy black cloth and gazes into the ground-glass upon which the world outside the camera is projected. After careful deliberations, focusing and framing, a plunger on a cable is used

The boat "Gostorg" built to navigate the northern tributaries of the Enisei [River]. Date: May 19251. Photograph courtesy of the Evenki Regional Museum: EOKM_2341-113.

to release the shutter, allowing light to bathe the silver halide crystals in a dried emulsion on the glass plate. The photographic encounter becomes the photographic event in this instant. If the encounter traces out the social relations, imagined and real, that circumscribe the photographic ritual, the event is both an encapsulation and culmination of this ritual. After the photographic event we are left with photography's mobile affects. There are no facilities for processing the negative on the shore of the Lower Tunguska River. So, having been exposed to the light and marking what is now an incontrovertibly past moment or event (which in any event is always past), the negative is packed away safely. It now makes the long river journey past Turukhansk and back to Eniseisk or maybe Krasnoyarsk where it will be developed and printed. The prints may be used in albums or filed away but do they ever make that long return trip home? Do photographs return to the distant forests of Turukhansk barely known by soviet scientists and bureaucrats?

Modernity was staged in the 'deepest' taiga of central Siberia. An elaborate spectacle of machines and abundance, of enthusiasm and liberation, was mounted for the Evenkis who came to the shores of the Lower Tunguska River to watch the barges plodding against the current in the autumn of 1926. Eventually buildings were erected, artifacts of industrial manufacture were unpacked, and devices set in motion as part of the revolutionary scenography. These new *things*, modernity's aeffects[1], produced new sounds and music, smells and visions, and they were imbricated with new ways of being and engaging with others. In this architecture of encounter reindeer herders were invited in to the "house of the native" [*dom tuzemtsev*] and encouraged to peruse the "red corner" [*krasnyi ugol*] – to look at posters and other iconographies of the new power. Photographs from this revolutionary period in the North document the efforts of communist organizers to build the foundations for a sustained and transformative encounter with Indigenous peoples. Along the Lower Tunguska River, it was mostly Evenkis who were enticed to visit these edifices.

The relations that the architecture proposed. The architectures of encounter are not imposed on the natural world but emergent in it through technical systems and ecological environments. These architectural interfaces rely upon various social-technical infrastructures to relay ideological designs for the transformation of everyday life. By architecture of encounter I mean to signal both the built edifices and the goals of cultural transformation that motivated their construction. This essay begins to look at architecture of interface, threshold technologies that can foreground aspects of the relationality in places where Russians met Indigenous peoples. The churches, chapels, ostrogs ("like wooded rooks" as Chris Marker[2] once said), and other sites of religious/imperial/

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[1] Note I'm using æffect here to propose an entanglement of belongings and feelings.
[2] *Marker Ch.* Lettre de Sibérie. Argos Films, Procinex. 1958.

colonial expansion were also architectures of encounter. In this paper I offer only a preliminary exploration of a thesis concerning Russian efforts to create a stage for meeting with Indigenous peoples in the Turukhansk North. For the most part, my goal here is to explore the description of these interfaces as "architectures of encounter;" an idiomatic way of talking not only about the edifices built by Russian power but also the logic for and performance of these outposts. In this I wish to develop the connection between the Russian Orthodox chapel and the early Soviet culture base as technologies of cultural interface.

Throughout history institutions have sought to shape everyday practices that comprise what we now think of as culture. They have done and continue do this as a way of molding human behavior and belief. The Orthodox Church in the 1800s sought to eradicate certain social practices and cultural beliefs … among Indigenous peoples. Certainly, its modes of proselytizing differed significantly from those of Catholicism and yet it still was concerned with indoctrination[3]. One might say that the Chapel and the Church were among the foremost architectures of this indoctrination. They formed networks across regions of the arctic and subarctic that were difficult to access for Europeans[4]. Such way-points in the Turukhansk north, their appropriation by socialist planners, and their gradual abandonment through the latter half of the 20th Century is registered in chronicles of the area. While the role of these technologies was initially to proselytize the Indigenous peoples, they were also appropriated for other reasons. For example, the Tsarist state supported these chapels/outposts as they contributed to the goals of establishing Empire[5]. Consider how it was that a small kingdom on the edges of Europe came not only to take possession of these lands through the 17th and 18th Centuries, but to inculcate in Russians a sense of timeless entitlement.

Distance and difficulty, known as 'remoteness,' have always foregrounded the description of Siberia for European outsiders. Their notions of possibility, of exploitation and exploration were defined by space[6]. I suspect that to most of the Indigenous peoples (particularly before industrialization in the mid 20th Century) the meaning of distance was defined according to profoundly different epistemes and ontologies. The 'Turukhansk North'–or 'Siberia' for that matter– as a unified geographical proposition was something that had to be learned. Such a territorial agglomeration could only be part of an imperial imaginary that collectivized people who had no knowledge of one another as subjects of empire. In the 20th Century Tuvan pastoralists met Chukchi sea mammal hunters on and through the edifices of Russian Imperialism (whether Tsarist, Socialist, or Federalist?)[7]. Remoteness is what conditions the architecture of encounter in my study. While Indigenous peoples were met on their own terms, the proselytic imperatives of Orthodox and Communist paternalism, paired with the extractive colonial economies of Russian and Soviet rule, led to the desire for restructuring the conditions of the encounter.

Building for socialism. In a short biographical report held in the archives of the Evenki Municipal Region, the Soviet ethnographer and administrator, I.M. Suslov states that he created the first clan soviet among the Tungus at the Chune River in 1926. This was only the beginning of his increasingly expansive involvement in a project that would bring socialism to the Turukhansk

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[3] *Toulouze E.* Movement and Enlightenment in the Russian North // Folklore. Electronic Journal of Folklore. 2011. Vol. 49. P. 97–112.

[4] Places that came to be called 'remote' in English, with all its imperial-colonial baggage.

[5] *Anderson D.G., Orekhova N.A.* The Suslov Legacy: The Story of One Family's Struggle with Shamanism // Sibirica: Journal of Siberian Studies. 2002. No. 2 (1). P. 88–112.; *Ablazhei A.* The Religious Worldview of the Indigenous Population of the Northern Ob' as Understood by Christian Missionaries // International Bulletin of Missionary Research. 2005. No. 3 (29). P. 134–139.

[6] *Хамфри К.* Изменения значимости удаленности в современной России // Этнографическое обозрение. 2014. № 3. С. 8–24.

[7] In the particularity of European colonialism and later socialist colonialism of the 19th and 20th Centuries this was sometimes romantically framed as an encounter of different legal systems [cf. the film *Two Laws*, Maria Czaplicka has also made use of this language]. The legal, in these cases, seems to refer to what we might now generalize as cultural habitus. The rules which govern social life. Enlightenment and Marxist thought asked people to understand rules or laws as historically particular systems that should be examined.

North. Suslov's efforts to establish Soviet forms of organization among Indigenous peoples is usefully understood as an ethnographically inflected socialist managerialism [ref[8]].

The Communist Party considered itnecessary to involve the natives in the Soviet system, but as there were no industrial workers or proletariat, and no class consciousness or revolutionary feelings among them, a great deal of Marxist theorising and practical experimentation was required in order to decide upon the appropriate form for native soviets by "adapting them to pre-capitalist conditions." This indeed became the principal theme of Soviet ethnographic studies of Siberia in the 1930s[9].

Only a year before Suslov helped to establish the Tungus Clan Soviet on the Chune River, the Siberian Region (Sibirskii Krai) was named and the Siberian Revolutionary Committee [*Sibrevkom*] was replaced by the more permanent Siberian Regional Executive Committee [*Sibkraiispolkom*][10]. The dizzying array of organizational and institutional structures that were assembled and disassembled in the first decades of the Soviet era were no doubt bizarre to Indigenous peoples in the Turukhansk north unfamiliar with the everyday life of Russian bureaucratic worlds. Up to that point their interactions had been primarily centered on encounters with traders and missionaries who were less interested in the social organization of the Indigenous peoples and more interested in feudal and capital exploitation of their labor and the conversion of their souls. The Orthodox Church in the 18th and 19th Centuries established missions along the Yenisei river from which they traveled to meet the itinerant Indigenous peoples. Anderson and Orekhova have written about one particular Russian family whose willingness to travel to proselytize among Indigenous peoples of the Turukhansk north spanned ideological-spiritual chasm of the Russian Orthodox Church and Soviet Atheism. That study demonstrates the shared repertoire that structured the encounters, which it must be said seemed to be more transactional than coercive. Yet there can be no denying that the proselytic encounter is premised upon implicit, if distributed, power differential.

Regional instructors, however, made the most of this by focusing on the development of local-level representation in the form of soviets, suggesting that the turmoil was temporary and that the intent was to work toward stability in the supply of goods and services as well as greater degrees of ethnonational autonomy. The election of soviets was seen as the first step in restructuring native social organization; though in many ways it essentially reestablished pre-Soviet representative organizations. After ousting the *tungusniki*[11], the first order of business for the socialist newcomers was establishing a cadre of natives who could represent their brethren within the new political order and who could begin to help with the cultural internalization of Soviet principles.

The "opportunity" for these precapitalist peoples presented by the incipient state was sometimes called *korenizatsiia*. Literally "nativization," *korenizatsiia* was a policy of "making use of people native to an area in leading posts etc.,"[12] as well as a way of generating broader support for Soviet Communism in a multi-ethnic environment. As Lewis H. Siegelbaum describes it, "korenizatsiia represented a victory … for the national communists who had been urging the party to make itself and the new political order more comprehensible, accessible and therefore legitimate in the eyes of

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[8] It is not clear if the 'managerialism' which seems to have emerged in the mid-1800s was the same thing that emerged in Soviet Russia. Did Lenin and the Bolsheviks implement some kind of socialist managerialism? Is this an argument I want to make and do I want to appropriate this term for my own purposes. Also, what might the connection be between my emerging thoughts on the view of cultural/ethnic/racial difference as one of laws?

[9] *Forsyth J.* A History of the Peoples of Siberia: Russia's North Asian Colony, 1581–1990. Cambridge, 1992. P. 245.

[10] *Shishkin V.I.* State Administration of Siberia from the End of the Nineteenth Through the First Third of the Twentieth Centuries // Regions: A Prism to View the Slavic-Eurasian World Towards a Discipline of "Regionology". Sapporo, 2000. P. 116.

[11] Individuals identified as exploiters of Tungus peoples, essentially kulaks who specialized in exploiting Tungus. The quality of the exploitation seemed to be unimportant. This might be comparable to private grocery operators in northern communities. Capitalists, in short, were class enemies. The narrative of exploitation was typically built around the use of alcohol take advantage of vulnerable Indigenous trappers and hunters. The alcohol facilitated sleight of hand in trading.

[12] *Smith R.E.F.* A Russian-English Dictionary of Social Science Terms. London, 1962. P. 187.

the non-Russianpeoples."[13] The importance of creatingand fostering a cadre of native leadersisclearly documented in the photographic record as well. A rupture is visible between scopic regimes of the tsarist eraand the early Soviet era. Photographsof indigenous peoples in the tsarist erararely document the name of their subjects. Evidently the primary interest wasnative typologies, not native biographies.

Pre-Socialist photography was a practice that reconfirmed the exteriority of Indigenous peoples to historical time in a dominant enlightenment-scientific ideology that perceived them not as historical agents, but bystanders at best. In the first years of the Soviet era, we begin to see photographers actively naming their subjects. This is especially the case when they were members of indigenous intelligentsia and active socialists: men and women who had entered the flow of History as actors. They were represented as local engineers of the national project.

Social organization of the Evenkis of the central Siberian North at the time of the revolution in 1917 had been integrated into larger systems and networks of exchange and encounter for centuries. While the nomadic hunters and herders were familiar with some aspects of Russian culture and rule, they were very much on the outside of it. Their invitation to participate in the new order was truly revolutionary.

All clan soviets of a given district were to send their representatives to the district native congress, which was to elect the District Native Executive Committee (*Tuzemnyi Raionnyi Ispolnitel'nyi Komitet,* abbreviated TUZRIK)[14].

One report from 1926, "On the question of the organization of native village or clan and regional soviets,"[15] describes the scene: there were three clan soviets operating on the right bank of the Yenisei River in the Ilimpii Tundra. The three clan soviets in this area were called the Ilimpii, Pankagir, and Chapogir. The Ilimpii clan soviet consisted of nearly 1,500 "souls"; they traveled nomadically in the Lower Tunguska basin, around Lake Chirinda, Lake Murukta, and others. The center for them according to the report was either Chirinda or Tura. The Pankagirs and Chapogirs each consisted of over two hundred individuals. The former gravitated toward Lake Vivi, while the latter considered Tura their center. This snapshot attempts to locate and enumerate, and it is a relatively straight forward example of the Soviet gaze: an instrumental and pragmatic accounting of life in the margins of state power. It also captures some of the anxiety felt by Soviet administrators. They struggled with few resources to maintain observational clarity over an enormous territory. In themid-1920s, Suslov complained in reports to the Enisei Governorship of "chaos in the Tundra."[16] He was referring to the difficult task of monitoring the movements of multiple nomadic groups who refused to fit neatly into Soviet rubrics and taxonomies that sought to delimit ethnicity and national territories.

According to Yuri Slezkine, clan soviets were the favored model for native self-government, but alternatives and variations existed[17], particularly in the early years. For example, archival documents refer almost interchangeably to "nomadic soviets" and "native soviets," though there is some evidence that nomadic soviets replaced clan soviets. By 1939, before major programs of village consolidation and forced sedentarization, there were nine nomadic soviets in the Ilimpii region of the Evenki National District. Certainly the very notion of a clan soviet was at odds with models of sovietization that granted privilege to economic taxonomies rather than kinship ones. A clan soviet went against the very principles of progressive thought and was in danger of supporting ways of being and organizing socially that were deemed backward and threatening to Communism. In Leninist ideology, clans and extended families were expected to expire under Communism. Such networks were read instrumentally and the parental role of obligation and expectation was in part usurped by the state. Leon Trotsky writes in *The Revolution Betrayed:*

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[13] *Siegelbaum L.H.* Soviet state and society between revolutions, 1918–1929. Cambridge, 1992. P. 125.

[14] *Slezkine Yu.* Arctic Mirrors: Russia and the Small Peoples of the North. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. P. 159.

[15] Государственный архив Новосибирской области (ГАНО). Ф. Р-354. Оп. 1. Д. 86.

[16] Государственный архив Красноярского края (ГАКК). Ф. Р-1845. Оп. 1. Д. 6.

[17] *Slezkine Yu.* Arctic Mirrors… P. 173.

The revolution made a heroiceffort to destroy the so-called "family hearth"–that archaic, stuffy and stagnant institution inwhich the woman of the toiling classes performs galley labor from childhood to death. The place of the family as a shut-in petty enterprise was to be occupied, according to the plans, by a finished system of social care and accommodation: maternity houses, creches, kindergartens, schools, social dining rooms, social laundries, first-aid stations, hospitals, sanatoria, athletic organizations, moving-picture theaters, etc. The complete absorption of the housekeeping functions of the family by institutions of the socialist society, uniting all generations in solidarity and mutual aid, was to bring to woman, and thereby to the loving couple, a real liberation from the thousand-year-old fetters[18].

Note the implicit architectures of sedentary European life in this statement. The ideal kinship structure for Trotsky was ultimately was modeled not on the Russian nuclear family but on modern love (which in itself was an invention of a European philosophical tradition). Clan soviets were typically subordinated to any local Russian soviets and were almost always under the direction of Russian "instructors." The native and nomadic soviets were local-level elected organizations that were the lowest in a chain of soviets leading all the way up to the All-Union Soviet in Moscow. Among the Evenkis and other indigenous peoples, this marked the beginning of the expectation that they would have representation. It also was a point of new divisions that would overlay existing forms of social organization: principally, this was between party members and non-party members. Unlike other places in the former Russian Empire, there was an additional register, because governance of indigenous peoples was initially controlled through a number of special statutes and provisions. Slezkine notes that one provisional statute was supposed to reintroduce some order to "native administration" but that it was frustrated and blocked by indifference and antipathy to the project: "Most local Russians opposed or ignored native self-government, and district executive committees refused to spend their limited resources on clan soviets."[19]

The effects of this were lessened by the direct access to and supervision by the Committee of the North. While many provincial and rural Communists may have seen little to be gained from intervening in the most remote areas of the taiga, there were others who saw the sovietization of the North as important, if not essential. One organization, noting the work of ethnographer Vladimir Bogoraz, claimed that "native peoples who 'know the flora and fauna' and the precious metals and minerals of a region were 'best suited' to 'exploiting that region's natural riches.' [Furthermore, they] suggested that natives and outsiders work together to further the 'economic and cultural development' of the Union's 'outlying territories.'"[20] Imagining what was essentially an extension of tsarist imperialism and colonialism as a partnership was a critical, latent, and effectively residual ideological artifact that underwrote most of the projects undertaken in the name of sovietization.

Nationality Policies. Through the 1920s and '30s, sovietization was the core project of the Communist Party across Russia and the Central Asian republics. Peoples throughout the former Tsarist Empire shared the experience of sovietization with variable degrees of participation and co-optation. In this era the Communist Party developed the specific techniques of rule whereby state planners created and fostered socialist-consciousness based on ethnic nationalism. Yuri Slezkine writes that the founders of the Soviet state believed that the way to unity lay through diversity and that by promoting ethnic particularism (within certain limits and to much acclaim from the presumed beneficiaries), they were bringing about socialist internationalism and Soviet modernity[21].

In response to the variegated character of the Russian empire, the Communist Party fostered the development of nationality policies that were an important part of revolutionary agitation even prior to 1917. That focus, how- ever, was primarily directed toward the large ethnic groups, many

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[18] *Trotsky L.* The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going? Detroit, 1990. P. 123.

[19] *Slezkine, Yu.* Arctic Mirrors… P. 173.

[20] *Hirsch F.* Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005. P. 91.

[21] *Slezkine Yu.* Imperialism as the Highest Stage of Socialism // The Russian Review. 2000. Vol. 59. No. 2. P. 232.

of whom had a sense of modern ethnic nationalism (from Ukrainians in Europe to Kirghiz in Siberia). This would have important ramifications for the smaller and less nationally conscious ethnic groups, such as the indigenous minorities in northern Siberia. The development of nationality policies concerning the northern minority peoples under Soviet rule has been a major focus of anthropological and historical study by Western scholars.

For ideological reasons many Marxists were vehemently opposed to the very idea of acknowledging ethnic identities through a federal state structure… This ideological principle existed at different strengths throughout the Soviet era. Simultaneously, Marxist theory saw the emergence of nations as a logical stage in the evolution of the dialectical historical materialism and could hence be fitted into a Marxist frame- work. As such, orthodox Marxists considered it a part of the necessary development of pre-capitalist societies *en route* to Socialism[22].

Even before the revolutionary uprisings of 1917, the Russian Communist Party had developed a powerful set of ideas around national autonomies and centralized authority. The group that was established to work out the details of this was the Peoples' Commissariat for the Affairs of the Nationalities, known as Narkomnats." Narkomnats worked under the assumption that Communism would not be achieved overnight and that interim measures would be needed to achieve their goals. Pragmatically this allowed for the development of a theory of federalism, where roughly autonomous groups, through national self-determination, joined together in a union of nations.

There was a great deal of concern in the ruling Communist Party over the relationship between the new Russian Republic (RSFSR)[23] and the emerging Soviet republics on its border. The new state was under internal and external assault and did not begin to develop a sense of security until the end of the civil war. Because of these other priorities, national construction and socialist development in the North among indigenous minorities was haphazard, uneven, and somewhat arbitrary. Iurtaeva and others note that socialist construction among the northern natives began immediately after the 1917 revolution by both central and local party organizations[24]. However, it was not until the Polar Department was created in 1922 that a coordinated plan began to emerge which was specifically tailored to the indigenous peoples of the North.

Two years later, the Committee for the Assistance to the Peoples of the Northern Borderlands (Committee of the North) was established. "Everyone agreed that to ensure correct progress through education, every ethnic group needed its own intelligentsia, and that meant that some [groups] had to be trained faster and more thoroughly than others."[25] The intelligentsia was meant to operate as a form of internal colonization. Thus, a cadre of natives would become "active participants in the Soviet project, who were 'doing the colonizing' of their regions and were not 'being colonized.'"[26] The models for implication and assimilation were being developed around the Russian Federation with other nationalities as well as with Russia's own peasants. Exploring the work to draw the Russian peasantry into the Soviet project, Orlando Figes has focused on the role of language and rhetoric.[27] The goal in the Russian countryside was the same as it was in the Siberian North: "The dissemination of the Revolution's rhetoric to the countryside – the development of a national discourse of civic rights and duties – [in order to] create the new political nation dreamed of by the leaders of democracy."[28]

Early Soviet activists were concerned with cultivating an anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist approach to their sovietization efforts. As Hirsch has outlined, sovietization was not to be

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[22] *Cornell S.E.* Small Nations and Great Powers: A Study of Ethnopolitical Conflict in the Caucasus. London, 2001. P. 39.

[23] Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Российская Советская Федеративная Социалистическая Республика, РСФСР).

[24] *Юртаева В.И.* Советизация малых народностей Енисейского Севера. (1920–1923 гг.) // Сибирь в период строительства социализма и перехода к коммунизму. Новосибирск, 1966. Вып. 6. С. 17.

[25] *Slezkine Yu.* Arctic Mirrors… P. 157.

[26] *Hirsch F.* Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union. Ithaca, 2005. P. 253.

[27] *Figes O.* The Russian Revolution of 1917 and Its Language in the Village // Russian Review. 1997. Vol. 56. No. 3. P. 324.

[28] Ibid.

colonialism (though it was certainly perceived as such abroad). Colonialism and imperialism, after all, had been forcefully criticized in Marxist-Leninist doctrine. Lenin himself understood colonialism to be necessarily linked to imperialism, which itself was only conceptualized in relation to capitalism:

"If the victorious revolutionary proletariat conducts systematic propaganda among them, and the Soviet governments come to their aid with all the means at their disposal – in that event it will be mistaken to assume that the backward peoples must inevitably go through the capitalist stage of development. Not only should we create independent contingents of fighters and party organisations in the colonies and the backward countries, not only at once launch propaganda for the organisation of peasants' soviets and strive to adapt them to the pre- capitalist conditions, but the Communist International should advance the proposition, with the appropriate theoretical grounding, that with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage."[29]

The meeting transcriptions, acts, reports, and other fragments of bureaucratic habit and ritual that I have studied also document an era of language shift. The ideas of rights and duties along with civic participation and inclusion were part of a larger shift in language itself. The rise of a new revolutionary lexicon was another example of everyday acts of implication that drew people into a mindfulness of change and state hegemony – a kind of socialist worlding project. "Tungus" was used interchangeably with "Evenki" for many years; it persists today as well, though it has a strong derogatory overtone. When the Culture Base was first established, it was alternately known as the Tungus Culture Base and the Tura Culture Base. With the official recognition of ethnically determined names (ethnonyms), "Tungus" was eventually dropped. In archival documents from the early Soviet era, the term *inorodtsev* (alien) was often used to describe indigenous peoples. In other cases, the term *tuzemtsev* (native) was used. As indigenous peoples entered the family of Soviet multiculturalism, these were dropped in favor of specific ethnonyms or new terms purified by Soviet statistical science, such as the term "numerically small peoples." In some archival reports, evidence of this shift in policy is evident from corrections and marginalia. In one case an entire report had been redacted, an onerous task for the editor: scratching out the imperialist residue inherent in the language itself. Thus, *inorodtsev* is there/not there on the same page as *tuzemtsev*. Evenkis are briefly caught in an act of erasure by fiat, their identity announced, recanted, and revealed: aliens, not-aliens, and natives. Inherited words became evidence of dangerous presocialist ideological survivals. Another example is *dusha* (soul), which was used in reference to individuals counted in a census. This word carried a clearly Christian heritage. It was not completely expelled from written lexica until the 1930s, when the antireligious campaigns were most broadly applied and Christianity was surgically removed from governmentalism. By the 1930s, the residue was gone and everyone knew the sanctioned and requisite lexicon as the word *soul* receded from bureaucratic registers.

Cultural Enlightenment and Revolutionary Evolutionism. While there was little tolerance for "backwardness" and tradition in the early years of the revolution and civil war, it was not until the inauguration of Stalin's first Five-Year Plan in 1928 that the state fully committed to a mobilization against nonprogressive cultural elements (among other things). Sheila Fitzpatrick refers to this as a "second declassing" – a second thrust to liquidate class difference[30]. As I have shown, prior to this time there was little capacity to enact any serious programs of cultural change, including the effort necessary to under- take a program of "declassing." The war against tradition, however, appears to have been geared more toward stamping out what were considered to be the most deplorable cultural elements of backward societies. This war in many ways was a battle developed around the cultural practices of peasants across Russia as well as Buddhists and Muslims in Central Asia. According to agitators working in rural areas, the 1917

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[29] *Lenin V.I.* V. I. Lenin Collected Works. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966. Vol. 31. P. 244.
[30] *Fitzpatrick Sh.* Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s. New York, 1999. P. 11.

revolution was endangered by the "The 'darkness' of the peasants."[31] The enduring darkness and backwardness, over a decade later, was now seen to be an impediment that could stall the rush of socialist development. Targeted "elements" included vendettas, murder, abduction of women, forced marriages, and the buying and selling of women. From the earliest stages following the revolution, the Communist Party stated that it would "help 'the toiling masses to liberate their minds from religious prejudices,' by 'organizing on a wide scale scientific-educational and antireligious propaganda.'"[32] By the mid-1920s, this had become entwined in a growing and diverse bureaucracy that monitored and maintained the full industrialization of society.

The decrees, laws, and provisions that were initially developed for expediting the war on tradition did not have as much relevance among the nomadic herders and hunters of the North. Nonetheless, as with other policies, they were adapted to fit. Priests, imams, and lamas were identified as anti-Soviet agitators in other regions. In the North, shamans were fairly easily slotted into this category. A typical account follows: Shamans persuaded their fellow countrymen not to send their children to school, [they] frightened with all kinds of horrors those who turned for medical assistance to hospitals, [they] threatened with the revenge of the spirits those who followed the advice of veterinarians, visited the community centre, or went to the cinema. During rituals shamans often did direct anti-Soviet agitation work ... spoke viciously and heatedly against schools, made use of the religious superstition of the backward and illiterate population, [told people not to send] their children to boarding schools[33].

Unlike Orthodox Christianity, there was no centralized and bureaucratized hierarchy of power to target. Shamans were often virtually indistinguishable from other Evenkis (at least to the Russians). Indeed, the categorization of shamans according to their work[34] required a much greater degree of scrutiny – one that was ultimately provided by I.M. Suslov with his work *Shamanism and the Struggle against It.* Their capacity to disrupt the work of "socialist enlightenment" was seen as a potential threat. The real persecution of people identified as shamans and kulaks came once an indigenous cadre had been developed. These individuals had more or less accepted the ideals of socialism, including the narratives of Soviet messianism and the implicit call for class war as a tool in cultural revolution. It is in such spaces that local political struggles could be played out, using the ideological framework of Marxism-Leninism to selectively (and often cynically) persecute individuals. Both Balzer[35] and Boulgakova make reference to this in the context of other areas in Siberia: Boulgakova writes that it was the first wave of students indoctrinated in socialist ideals, including atheism, who led the persecution of shamans: "Vladimir G. Bogoraz confirmed that the representatives of the indigenous people acted not only as executors of the repressions, but also as initiators of the fight against shamanism."[36] Classificatory schemes thus identified shamans and other exploiters as well as a broad category of toiling arctic masses.

For the Bolsheviks, it was imperative that Russian society be "reclassed" forthwith. If the class identity of individuals was not known, how was it possible for the revolution to recognize its friends and enemies?[37] The class analysis of the indigenous Siberians grew out of the approach developed for Russia's "rural laborers": "a tripartite classification according to which peasants were either 'poor peasants' [*bedniaki*], 'middle peasants' [*seredniaki*], or 'kulaks,' the last being regarded as exploiters and proto-capitalists."[38] The reports from the early inspectors made explicit

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[31] *Figes O.* The Russian Revolution of 1917… P. 323.

[32] *Read C.* The Stalin Years: A Reader. New York, 2003. P. 39.

[33] *Гурвич И.С.* Принципы ленинской национальной политики и применение их на Крайнем Севере // Осуществ-ление ленинской национальной политики у народов Крайнего Севера. М., 1971. С. 82, quoted in *Boulgakova T.* Nanai Shamans under Double Oppression. Was the Persecution by Soviet Power Stronger Than the Power of Shamanistic Spirits? // Multiethnic Communities in the Past and Present / ed. Pille Runnel. Tartu, 2003. P. 131–157.

[34] M.A. Czaplicka marked differences between "family shamans" and "professional shamans" in her 1914 book *Aboriginal Siberia: A study in Social Anthropology.*

[35] Shamanism: Soviet Studies of Traditional Religion in Siberia & Central Asia. Armonk, N.Y., 1990.

[36] *Boulgakova T.* Nanai Shamans under Double Oppression… P. 145.

[37] *Fitzpatrick Sh.* Ascribing Class: The Construction of Social Identity in Soviet Russia // Journal of Modern History. 1993. Vol. 65. No. 4. P. 749.

[38] Ibid. P. 751.

use of this language, applied haphazardly atop the typologies of the Speransky reforms noted earlier, that divided the "natives" into settled [*osedlyi*], nomadic [*kochevniki*], and wandering [*brodiachi*].

The mobility-oriented classification system reveals as much about Russian biases as it does about everyday life in the taiga in the first decades of the twentieth century. The three categories of mobility (wandering, nomadic, and settled) were seen as stages in cultural evolution and were thus tied to the state-sponsored evolutionism necessary for full participation in the Soviet project. A parallel schema, which was perhaps less confined to anachronisms implicit in the evolutionism, read a kind of primitive class structure into these categories. The emphasis on settlement or sedentarization attendant to the construction of Communism was not simply a move to administrative efficiency and economic productivity, but was also expressed as an implicit sign of cultural progress and of class liquidation. Industrial modernity was ruthlessly sedentary, and its proponents saw nomadic forms of mobility as an economic survival from bygone eras.[39] While many Evenkis and other indigenous peoples were opposed to radical reconstructions of their ways of life, others, at least on paper, welcomed the benefits promised with sedentarization.

The application of class typologies was not without its problems. Fitzpatrick notes that the Bolsheviks applied a flawed class analysis to society; they turned it into a political tool and "corrupted it as a sociological category."[40] Extending this implication of a corrupted category, Fitzpatrick argues that class was significant in Soviet society as an official "classificatory system determining the rights and obligations of different groups of citizens … [it] was an attribute that defined one's relationship to the state."[41] Beyond the class-consciousness and class conflict encouraged by itinerant instructors and agitators, there was little that could be done in the taiga and tundra without a significant and en- during Soviet presence. In other words, real instruction and agitation required presence and duration. It also required a population that wasn't dying from starvation and sickness.

I.M. Suslov's experience in the central Siberian North complicates this picture of class ascriptions. As an ethnographer, he was interested in documenting and explaining the economic, spiritual, and material culture of Evenkis; yet as a socialist agitator and administrator, he was committed to a pro- gram of selective cultural change and manipulation. Suslov might well have been one of the academics that Yuri Slezkine had in mind when he described a movement of "populist ethnographers-turned- politicians [who] subscribed to the idea of progressive change brought from the outside."[42] To Suslov, culture was seen as a mutable set of practices that could be adjusted and engineered, molded and shaped to fit the messianic ideals of Communism. For the ethnographers of the Committee of the North, the Evenkis (as with other nomadic peoples) were in need of a careful and guiding hand. It was not until 1924 that Suslov would play a genuinely transformative role of instructor and steward who could shepherd the Evenkis toward a prosperous, stable, and Communist future. This role was also espoused by Iulian Bromlei – one of the key ethnographers of the Brezhnev era – who recognized sovietization as an experiment conducted on a grand scale, not in a laboratory, but in the streets, fields, and forests of Russia[43]. Bromlei writes the following passage that makes explicit the important role and complicity of ethnographers in the program of cultural shaping:

As is known, without ethnographic knowledge it is impossible to work out the correct outlook toward the economic-cultural legacies of peoples, to separate the content of progressive rational traditions from harmful anachronistic manifestations. For over fifty years, our government has used the recommendations of ethnographers in connection with economic reconstruction, culture, and lifeways, specifically, in planning new types of settlements and housing and the working out of

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[39] The anthropologist Hugh Brody provides a counterintuitive example of mobilities in his work *The Other Side of Eden*. Brody writes, "It is agricultural societies that tend to be more on the move; hunting peoples are far more firmly settled" (*Brody H.* The Other Side of Eden: Hunters, Farmers, and the Shaping of the World. New York, 2002. P. 7).
[40] *Fitzpatrick Sh.* Everyday Stalinism… P. 11.
[41] Ibid.
[42] *Slezkine Yu.* Arctic Mirrors… P. 150.
[43] *Hirsch F.* Empire of Nations… P. 309.

new rituals to combat such harmful survivals of the past as the remnants of the inequality of women, polygamy, and religious customary traditions[44].

One of the more remarkable examples of the ethnographically informed forced cultural change is that of I.M. Suslov's *Shamanism and the Struggle with It*. Published in various versions from a monograph to a serial publication in *Soviet North* (*Sovetskii Sever,* 1931) and the *Antireligious-ist* (*Antireligioznik,* 1932, titled: "Shamanism as an impediment to socialist construction"), Suslov calls for an elevated place for the battle against shamanism in the class war in the North. He notes that the shamanic ritual is the only spectacle in the vast taiga and that youth are particularly susceptible to its pageant.

"It is time to replace this "theatre" with real theatre, by creating a drama club of the natives and northerners … It is necessary to arrange collective listening to radio programs, games for the masses, lectures with slides, film screenings, question and answer sessions, and other options in the North for cultural entertainment."[45]

Regardless of the aims of cultural reconstruction, the need to secure food, medicine, and basic economic self-sufficiency would take precedence. There was a concern that the North and remote rural centers were being left behind in the rush to Communism. "The natives still depend on the elements, still starve after a bad season, and are still decimated by epidemics in the absence of medical help."[46] What was seen as a general failure to "raise the cultural level" of Russia's native peoples led to the development of the Committee of the North in 1924.

This was also an era of experimental utopianism in Russia and Siberia. The 1920s presented a unique moment in the development of the Soviet Union. As Stites wrote: "It is no exaggeration to say that almost the entire culture of the Revolution in the early years was 'utopian.' All the arts were suffused with technological fantasy and future speculation: Constructivist art, experimental film, 'rationalist' architecture, Biomechanics, machine music, Engineerism, and many other currents."[47] The possibility of building a city where there was none was as appealing as the task of helping "primitive" peoples leap a mountain of one hundred years, passing through the capitalist stage and arriving directly in state socialism. But what had this to do with the deepest [*gluboki*] corners of Siberia? Was the Tungus cultural base not also tied up in a utopian dream? Crossing a mountain of one hundred years in only five! What courage! But the oppressive banality and massive weight of the brutal environmental conditions, multiplied by distance from civilization, must have tempered such dreams. Per- haps these utopianisms were most visible in the transformative possibilities of juxtaposing a "stone-aged" hunter next to a radio apparatus. There are plenty of pictures of Evenkis in camps with tents, dogs, and reindeer. Then there are also a few, identifiably "propagandistic" photographs, staged with Evenkis in the classroom, in the hospital, or the dormitory.

Epilogue: a note on Evenki architectures. Evenkis of course had and have their own architectures as well as their own 'architectures of encounter.' Considering Evenki architectures challenges us to see the limits of this idiom which tends to privilege (in the imagination if nothing else) notions of enduring emplacement. Some Evenki architectures were indeed emplaced (consider graves, sacred sites, storage sheds (*labazy*), etc.) yet many more were mobile. What I find compelling about traditional Evenki approaches to architecture was that the endurance of their edifices was mitigated or moderated by their chosen mode of seasonal migrations. To modify an idea developed by Robin Ridington (1983)[48] in regards to his ethnography of Dunne-Za life in northern Canada, this was not architecture held in the hand but architecture held in the mind. For nomadic or highly mobile peoples, value is in the portability of skilled knowledge to build the necessities of life in place. Thus, I'd like to emphasize that building and maintaining were related

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[44] *Бромлей Ю.В.* Современные проблемы этнографии : (очерки теории и истории). М., 1981. С. 135–136.

[45] *Суслов И.М.* Шаманство и борьба с ним // Советский север. 1931. № 3-4. С. 92.

[46] P.G. Smidovich, head of the Committee of the North, quoted in *Slezkine Yu.* Arctic Mirrors… P. 179.

[47] *Stites R.* Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution. New York, P. 172.

[48] *Ridington R.* From Artifice to Artifact: Stages in the Industrialization of a Northern Hunting People // Journal of Canadian Studies. 1983. No. 18 (3). P. 55–66.

skill sets that relied on highly-localized materials and deep knowledge of the socio-material ecologies of the more-than-human. Perhaps beginning here we can start to see the contours of what Evenki architectures of encounter might have been in these two eras. In order to develop a postal system, the Bolsheviks relied on Evenkis and their reindeer enhanced mobility. This demonstrates not only the 'utility' of Evenkis to Bolshevik aims but it signals a submission of new comers to an Evenki 'system of paths,' an architecture of encounter in its own right.

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