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NOTES ON THE CAUCASUS

by

Richard Pipes

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**Center for International Studies
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Cambridge, Massachusetts
May 1958**

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THE NATIONALITY QUESTION IN PRESENT-DAY
TRANSCAUCASIA

by

Richard Pipes

The remarks which follow represent not so much firm conclusions as suggestions and hypotheses derived from the study of generally unsatisfactory printed sources and rather inadequate personal observation.

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Of all the borderlands of the Soviet Union, Transcaucasia provides the most favorable conditions for the development of strong nationality movements. The following circumstances account for this: a relatively isolated location, Transcaucasia being removed a good distance from the center of Russia and protected by two seas and a range of high mountains; ancient native cultures capable of facing Russian culture on a certain footing of equality; a numerous local intelligentsia; and an economy which, in relation to the USSR as a whole, is on the decline.

Among the native nationalities the Georgians have shown over the past fifty years the greatest degree of cultural and demographic dynamism. Although less urbanized than the Armenians and less fertile than the Azeri Turks they have demonstrated the most steady population growth. Their population is highly concentrated. They have probably the highest proportion of persons with a middle and higher education of any borderland area in the Soviet Union, which means that they dispose of a large intelligentsia to carry out administrative and economic functions. They have shown no tendency to assimilate, and indeed have themselves been assimilating some of the minor Transcaucasian groups. And finally, between 1932 and 1953 they enjoyed, thanks to the Georgian origin of Stalin and Beria, a certain privileged position in Soviet society. All these factors have helped to establish

a Georgian hegemony in Transcaucasia.

In reaction to this the two other major nationalities, the Armenians and Azeri Turks, have tended to draw together in a common front against the Georgians. The Armeno-Turkic rapprochement was assisted by the fact that most of the causes which had engendered their mutual hostility before the revolution are gone. The religious conflict has subsided as a result of the elimination of religion from public life; the social conflicts have been undermined by the destruction of the Armenian middle class; and the racial antagonism, prompted by the persecution of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, has lost much of its intensity because there no longer is any Armenian problem in Turkey. The Armenians and Azeri Turks, regarding themselves (and not without justice) as second-rate citizens in regard to the Russians and Georgians, find a certain community of interest in opposing their more powerful neighbors.

In Transcaucasia, the Russians play a relatively minor role. They have never exceeded 15 per cent of the total population, and have been largely confined to the two major cities, Baku and Tiflis. There is no evidence of any increase in the number of Russians residing in Transcaucasia after the war. In fact, it is more than likely that the Russians have actually been leaving Transcaucasia as a result of the gradual shift of the petroleum industry from Baku and environs to the Urals.

In their Transcaucasian policy the Communists have tended to follow a divide et impera policy, with slight favoritism toward the Armenians. The Armenians, as the least nationalistic, least land-rooted group are the natural allies of Soviet power with which, in addition, they share a common tradition of hostility to the Ottoman Turks.

There is thus something akin to a balance of power in Transcaucasia. On the one hand are the Georgians, on the other the Armenians and Azeri Turks, the former of whom enjoy a certain measure of Soviet and Russian support. In all three republics, however, (except to some extent in Azerbaijan) the local regimes are native in composition and orientation. The Russians here seem less to rule (directly at any rate) than to supervise. The position of Transcaucasia in the Soviet empire resembles more closely that of a satellite than of a borderland area. For some time Russia's primary interest in this area has been strategic.

Economically, Transcaucasia has been developing less rapidly than the USSR as a whole. This fact can be illustrated in several ways. One is to look at the history of the republican budgets. Before World War II Transcaucasia's share of the all-Union republican budgets (ie., moneys allotted by the government for local use) was customarily around 10-12 per cent. After the war it dropped to 6 per cent, and it has been declining ever since, having dropped last

year to an all-time low of 4.4 per cent. Another way of illustrating this decline is to trace Transcaucasia's share in Soviet industrial growth. The growth of industrial output in the three Transcaucasian republics since 1940 has been consistently slower than in the USSR. This holds especially true of the two most industrialized republics, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The relative economic decline produces a variety of effects which are not without bearing on the nationality question in this area. On the one hand, the population, and especially the intelligentsia, is dissatisfied by material deprivation caused by the failure of the Soviet regime to invest heavily in this region; the slow development of housing facilities is only one of the deprivations. On the other hand, an area lying outside the mainstream of Soviet economic development enjoys a measure of autonomy and freedom from Russian population pressure which areas of intense economic growth do not. Both these factors are propitious for local nationalism.

From the point of view of cultural development, the Transcaucasian nationalities seem to have been undergoing a process of secularization and Westernization, through the medium of Russian culture, observed in other borderland regions of the Soviet Union. If the process here is somewhat less dramatic than elsewhere it is because it got underway some time before the Communist conquest, and in some ways goes back to the mid-19th century.

Broadly speaking, in the past fifty years the population of Transcaucasia has been transforming itself from a loose agglomeration of small groups whose loyalties were to their religion and locality into three cohesive nationalities. This process of transformation was spontaneous in its impetus, but it was also assisted, for reasons which cannot be gone into here, by the Soviet regime. The three nationalities are, of course, the Georgians, the Armenians, and the Azeri Turks. The Georgian nationality has emerged through the fusion of the various Kartvel groups (including the Mingrelians, Svanetians, and Imeretians) and the assimilation of some minor Christian groups of non-Kartvel origin. The Armenians in particular have proved themselves susceptible to the lure of Georgian culture, and a certain proportion of the Armenian population residing in Georgia has become linguistically assimilated. The Azeri Turks have been absorbing the smaller Muslim nationalities, while the Armenians, whose loyalty to their culture is least developed, have assimilated some Kurdish groups. None of the three principal Transcaucasian groups has shown itself susceptible to Russification. In Georgia the use of Russian is virtually unknown in the villages and smaller towns, and even the intelligentsia (including leading members of the Academy of Sciences) speak it poorly.

Intermarriage between Russians and natives is rare, although not as exceptional as in Central Asia. Due to their common

religious heritage, intermarriage involves for Russians, Armenians, and Georgians less of a break with their cultures than it does for Russians and Muslims. But the cultural gap is wide enough to prevent intermarriage from assuming significant proportions. Georgians have told this writer that Russians and Georgians at the university frequently dated each other. But the question whether they also married elicited an emphatic "no". The reason given was "difference in customs and traditions". This is less of a factor in cases of intermarriage involving Armenians. The Armenians who marry outside their nationality, whether with Russians or Georgians, seem to become assimilated, and their children are no longer considered Armenians.

Despite growing "modernization" of local life, social customs seem to survive. An example of this is the local attitude toward the gainful employment of girls and young women. Traditionally, Transcaucasians regarded it as highly improper for women to work outside the home. The Communists, for reasons which are obvious, have been very anxious to alter this attitude, and to drive able-bodied women to work. One of the methods which they employed and still employ is to pay such low wages to the men that the female members of the family too must seek work. Despite this economic pressure one almost never sees in Tiflis a Georgian girl in a place of public employment; on those jobs where women are usually employed (eg., in restaurants and on street-cars) they are invariably Russian. The reason

for this unwillingness of Georgian girls to find jobs is the strict conception of morality which Georgians apply to their own race. A woman publicly employed is subjected to such abuse that with the best intention she cannot maintain the self-respect which natives expect of her. Conversations with natives confirm the impression that Georgian girls past the age of adolescence stay home under their mother's watchful eye.

The natives display much the same traditionalism in their other habits and attitudes, including food. In this respect the situation in Transcaucasia does not differ from that observable in any other area inhabited by minorities.

In view of the absence of all data it is very difficult to form any opinion of the attitude of the natives toward foreign powers. One thing, however, is fairly certain. The pro-Western, pro-Russian, and pro-Turkish attitudes which characterized respectively Georgian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani politics before the revolution have become significantly modified. Two factors account for this: the memory of actual independence during 1918-21, intensified by the trappings of pseudo-independence provided by the Communists since 1921, and the emergence of a host of new Middle Eastern states after World War II. Both mean that the Transcaucasian nationalities can rely more heavily on their own resources and on alliances with the new Middle Eastern states, and less on the Western powers and Russia. As for Azerbaijan and Turkey there is little reason to suspect deep feelings of sympathy between them. Thanks to its colonial status Azerbaijan has

developed in some ways more rapidly than Turkey, and if the experience of Azeri Turkic DP's is any indication, Azeri intellectuals consider themselves more truly "Western" than their Turkish cousins. In other words, today the Western powers and Turkey can count less on the political sympathies of the Transcaucasians than in the decades preceding the revolution. The cultural pull to the West, on the other hand, is every bit as strong among the youth of Transcaucasia as it is among the youth of Russia, and if anything stronger than it was before 1917.

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DEMOGRAPHIC AND ETHNOGRAPHIC
CHANGES IN TRANSCAUCASIA, 1897-1956

by

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Preface

In studying the nationality question in Russia one sooner or later arrives at the conclusion that it is to a large extent a by-product of demography. What is decisive in the long run is not the ability of the Russians to assimilate culturally the national minorities, for assimilation has proven effective only in the case of small and isolated social or ethnic groups; nor is it the hostility (or lack of it) between the Russians and non-Russians, since the relationship between nationalities is usually the result rather than the cause of nationalism. The decisive factor is the capacity of the minorities to withstand the relentless Russian population movement which presses outward, toward the peripheries of the state, century after century, regardless of how or by whom the country is ruled. The history of Russia is still largely a history of colonization. Some nationalities, such as the Finns inhabiting the central provinces of the state, have been fully swallowed by this movement, and disappeared. Others, including the modern Ukrainians, have developed as it were a split personality, with the urban population becoming Russified, and the rural one retaining native traditions and loyalties. This process is a long-term one. It cannot be studied from year to year or even from decade to decade, but demands to be viewed from the perspective of many decades.

The present essay is an attempt to analyze the evolution of the nationality question in terms of demographic development in a

region where it has become acute in relatively recent times, and where its outcome is as yet uncertain. Transcaucasia came into Russian hands only one hundred and fifty years ago. Administratively it was fully incorporated into the Russian Empire fifty years later, and the influx of Russians began only toward the end of the nineteenth century. The demographic pressures, therefore, have gotten under way at a time which is too close to us to permit conclusive generalizations about their ultimate result. On the other hand, here the period of greatest demographic changes can be studied by means of statistics which are not available for older times.

This inquiry begins with the year 1897, the year of the First All-Russian Census, and ends with 1956. Its immediate purpose is to determine the relative capacity of the principal Transcaucasian groups to weather the various upheavals which this area has experienced over the past sixty years, to adapt themselves to changing political and economic conditions, and to evolve viable and demographically sound population structures.

The sources of information are of two kinds: statistical and historical. The statistical data are derived mainly from the census reports (1897, 1926, and 1939), and from information released by the Soviet government at various times between the censuses. This information is by no means as definitive as the elaborate absolute figures and percentiles may lead one to think. In the first place, the criteria used by the various censuses are not the same; this is particularly true of so ambivalent a category as "nationality." In the second place, there are long periods between the censuses

when we have no information at all, and must rely on interpolations the accuracy of which is always questionable. In the third place, the census data for 1939 have been very likely deliberately falsified, since it replaced the census of 1937 which had been declared "incorrect"; in any event, its results have not been fully published even at this late date. Finally, there has been no census at all since 1939, which means that the past two decades are not subject to statistical analysis except in a most general way.

Because of the inadequacy of the statistical information, it is necessary to have recourse to historical sources to help fill in the gaps and clear up obscurities. It is also necessary to depend on inference, interpolation, and plain guess. My method of computing the ethnic structure and urban population of the Transcaucasian republic in 1939 is very rough at best, and certainly makes no claim at being "scientific." In fact, all information on the period 1932-1956, i.e., for nearly one-half of the whole period under study, is approximate.

But although the factual basis of this study is not as solid as one may wish, the end-result is consistent enough to inspire confidence. The advantage of undertaking a long-term study is that even if the individual parts are hazy in spots, the total effect, when seen from a distance, is fairly clear. That is to say, the sum-total is more cogent than the component parts. I hope the conclusions will seem as convincing to the reader as they do to me. In any event the materials gathered in this study provide a good vantage point from which to analyze the results of the forthcoming Soviet census, promised for next year.

I would like here to thank the Center for International Studies of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology for its generous assistance in gathering the information and analyzing the facts presented in this report.

Cambridge, Massachusetts
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The Population in 1897

According to the First All-Russian Census of 1897 the region of Transcaucasia had the following demographic characteristics: a high fertility ratio, a high proportion of children and men, a predominantly settled, rural population with comparatively little movement between districts and provinces, and low urbanization.¹

The fertility index for Transcaucasia as a whole stood in 1897 at 876.² In areas which were least urbanized, such as the province of Elizavetopol, this index rose as high as 1,032. Transcaucasia thus was a region with a high rate of natural growth. (Table 3).

A reflection of this fact may be seen in the age distribution which was heavily balanced in favor of the young. Thanks to its fertility, the population of Transcaucasia had the lowest average age in the whole Russian empire (23.94 years as compared to 25.16). Forty point three per cent of its inhabitants were children of 15 or less, as compared to 37.9 per cent in the empire as a whole. (Table 4). Closely connected with this phenomenon (due to the normal preponderance of boys at birth) was the high sex ratio, the highest in Russia: for every 100 women there were 117 men. (Table 5).

Since the majority of the inhabitants engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, there was relatively little urbanization.

1. In the discussion of the prerevolutionary period, the term "Transcaucasia" is understood to include the provinces of Baku and Elizavetopol (later Azerbaijan), Erivan (Armenia), Tiflis and Kutais (Georgia), and the Districts of Kars and Zakataly.
2. This index is arrived at by dividing the number of children aged 5 and under by the number of women aged 14-44 inclusive, and multiplying the result by 1,000.

The census reported 24.1 per cent of the inhabitants as urban, but even this figure is probably somewhat high by usual demographic standards.¹ The low degree of urbanization also tended to favor a high birth rate.

The vast majority of the inhabitants spent their lives in the same localities in which they were born. Since the influx of outsiders was as yet insignificant, it is not surprising that between 90 and 95 per cent of the inhabitants in each of the five provinces (Kars excepted) were reported by the census as residing in their native districts. (Table 8).

Ethnographically, the population consisted of four principal groups: Azeri Turks, Armenians, Georgians, and Russians.

1. Unlike most modern states which classify a settlement as urban when its population exceeds a certain number of inhabitants, Russia (Tsarist as well as Soviet) does so on the basis of a legal definition: a settlement becomes urban when it is so declared by the government. The term "urban" in Russia, therefore, has not so much a demographic as a legal and administrative connotation. That the two are not identical can be seen on the example of the 1926 data for Azerbaijan. These data reveal that four settlements with a population of 1,000 or less each were listed as "urban," whereas five others, each with 5,000-10,000 inhabitants, were listed as "rural." In a dynamic country such as the Soviet Union, one obsessed with the ambition of catching up with the most industrialized countries of the West, such a method of computing the urban population favors and tends to give an inflated picture of urbanization. If one were to classify the urban population of Transcaucasia in 1926 by drawing an arbitrary line at 5,000 inhabitants (a compromise between the standards employed by some Western and Far Eastern states), the proportion of those living in urban areas would decline by some 10 per cent (from 24.1 per cent to 21.7 per cent). The situation is further complicated by the fact that there is little individual farming in Transcaucasia; there the bulk of the population lived and continues to live in fairly large villages which do not lose their purely rural character even when they do grow above a few thousand inhabitants. In addition, the Soviet regime makes use of an ambivalent category "settlements of urban type" which includes housing developments for workers. Thus since the Soviet government is interested in showing the most rapid progress of urbanization possible, and yet is not hindered by anything from increasing the ratio of

The Azeri Turks were racially and linguistically related to the Turks of the Ottoman Empire, but in their religious practices they were closer to the Persians, because they adhered to the Shiite branch of Islam. Approximately one third of the Azeri Turks lived in Transcaucasia, and the remainder in northwest Persia. They were an agricultural and pastoral people, whose elite consisted largely of well-to-do landowners. By 1897 one could discern the emergence of a small Muslim industrial proletariat in connection with the nascent petroleum industry in and around Baku. This proletariat was made up of unskilled Turkic and Persian laborers. Two-thirds of the Russian Azeri Turks lived in the provinces of Baku and Elizavetopol, and one-third in rural settlements of the adjoining provinces of Erivan and Kutais.

The Armenians were, like the Russians and Georgians, Orthodox Christians but with their own church establishment. Culturally they had little in common with the Muslims next to and among whom they lived, and whose way of life they largely shared. In view of the mounting Turkish-Armenian conflict in the Ottoman Empire, repercussions of which were felt in Transcaucasia, the Armenians tended to draw nearer to the Christians, such as Russians and Georgians. As in the case of the Azeri Turks, only a minority of the Armenians resided in Transcaucasia; the majority lived under the Turks, and there were many scattered in towns of Russia proper (e.g., Rostov on Don). The bulk of the Armenians in Transcaucasia consisted of peasants (71.2 per cent), but the proportion of those

urban inhabitants by the simple procedure of legislative fiat, one must approach all urbanization data in Russia, especially since 1928, with utmost caution.

who worked on their own land was smaller than among either the Azeri Turks or Georgians (49 per cent for the Armenians, 65 per cent for the Georgians, and 68 per cent for the Azeri Turks). The Armenians had the largest middle class. It consisted of traders and industrial employees. In consequence of this peculiar social structure, the Armenians were most urbanized of the native nationalities, and territorially least concentrated. Two-thirds of the Armenians resided in the Erivan province, while the remainder was rather thinly distributed in urban and rural settlements of the other four provinces.

The Georgians, like the Armenians, were Orthodox. They too, therefore, were oriented toward Russia, and their intelligentsia was remarkably Westernized. This intelligentsia descended mainly from the déclassé nobility which was largest in Transcaucasia.¹ It was politically very active, and already at the end of the nineteenth century assumed a strongly pro-Marxist attitude. The bulk of the Georgian population was made up of peasants. The Georgians were the most compactly settled group: 98 per cent of all the Georgians in Russia resided in the provinces of Tiflis and Kutais.

The Russians were relative newcomers to this area, most of them having settled there since the middle of the nineteenth century.²

1. The nobility in the predominantly Georgian provinces of Tiflis and Kutais comprised 4.2 per cent and 6.9 per cent of the population; in the Armenian province of Erivan it was 1.3 per cent, and among the Azeri Turks 2.8 per cent and 3.5 per cent (Baku and Elizavetopol).
2. The term "Russians" will be here used to include also the Ukrainians and Belorussians. There are at least two good reasons for so doing: (1) In a strange environment the cultural differences among the East Slav groups tend to disappear, and (2) a large proportion of the migrant Ukrainians and Belorussians intermarries with Russians because of the

Approximately half of the Russians lived in the cities, where they worked for the government, or in their own commercial and professional enterprises. The other half lived in small but compact rural settlements, outstanding among which were the colonies of the Old Believers south of Baku, and the villages planted by the Russian government along the strategic road linking Erivan with Tiflis.

The remaining national groups consisted of two principal subdivisions: minorities of European origin, and minorities of Middle Eastern origin. The first of these subdivisions included Poles, Germans, Greeks, European Jews; the latter, Adjars, Abkhazians, Ossetes, Tats, Talysh, and local Jews (from the Mountains of Daghestan, and from Georgia). The tendency of most of the nationalities in this category was to identify themselves, at least politically, with the major groups most closely related to them in culture, religion, and speech. This meant in the case of the European minorities identification with the Russians, and of the native ones with one of the three principal Transcaucasian nationalities.

Considering the ethnic diversity of Transcaucasia there was remarkably little crossing of cultural lines. This fact can be illustrated to some extent statistically in the case of one of the most important criteria of nationality, namely language. Since the 1897 census did not report on ethnic affiliations, it is not

shortage of women of their own nationality. This is due to the common tendency of a migratory population to be heavily male. In Armenia in 1926, for example, there were 1,587 Ukrainian men and only 18 women. With the passage of time, the Ukrainians and Belorussians living in such remote areas, therefore, merge with the Great Russians culturally as well as demographically.

possible to show precisely how much each group adhered to its native language, but a juxtaposition of the data on the linguistic and religious status (which, in the case of some nationalities, was practically identical) shows how little linguistic assimilation there was. Where it did occur at all, the language which replaced the original one was not so much Russian as Caucasian. The Armenians, as the most urbanized and least compact group, were most likely to succumb to the influence of other cultures. Yet a comparison of the number of inhabitants reported as professing the Armeno-Gregorian or Armeno-Catholic faiths reveals that only 3 per cent of them spoke languages other than Armenian: of these, 35,000 Georgian, and 1,000 Russian. The Muslims were almost one hundred per cent Turkic or Persian in their language; the number of those who considered Russian their mother tongue was a mere 200, and of those who adopted Georgian or Armenian even smaller. There is every reason to assume that the Georgians, for whom no such statistics are available because they were considered as belonging to the same church as the Russians, were equally loyal to their native language.

If we now turn to the four principal nationalities which are the subject of this inquiry, we find that they showed significant demographic peculiarities.

Fertility was highest among the Azeri Turks, with the Armenians following closely behind. The Georgians stood half-way between these two groups and the Russians, who were the least fertile of all. Age-wise, the Georgians showed the highest proportion of children, then came the Azeri Turks, Armenians, and, last of all,

the Russians. The Russians, on the other hand, were most highly urbanized (60 per cent); the Armenians came second (20 per cent), the Azeri Turks and other Muslims third (10 per cent), the Georgians last (9 per cent).

The Inter-Census Period 1897-1926

The time which elapsed between the census of 1897 and the Soviet census of 1926 cannot be studied with much statistical precision, because, apart from some scattered and often unreliable data, there are no population figures for it. To understand what happened to the inhabitants of Transcaucasia during this turbulent era, and what the first Soviet census was later to reveal, one must largely rely on history.

The three decades can be historically divided into two unequal periods. The first period (1897-1914) was one of peace, prosperity, and growth, during which the population increased by natural means as well as by immigration. The second period (1914-1926) was one of war, genocide, and conquest, in the course of which the population not only failed to show the normal growth, but in some respects declined.

Between the census of 1897 and the outbreak of World War I the population of Transcaucasia increased by one and a half million, i.e., by an average of 1.7 per cent annually. How much of this increase was due to the excess of births over deaths, and how much to influx of immigrants from other parts of the country we do not know; but the relatively small increase in the number of Russians over the whole inter-census period (from 219,000 to 375,000 in 1926)

suggests that immigration was rather a minor factor. This was a time of rapid urbanization, during which the areas connected with the petroleum industry (Baku, Batum) and transport (Tiflis, Aleksandropol, and others) experienced something of a boom.

The social changes which Transcaucasia underwent during the 1897-1911 period produced, as may be expected, a certain amount of friction, which often took the form of national antagonism. The most pronounced conflict was that between the Azeri Turks and Armenians. It was in part a conflict between the Azeri peasant and laborer and the Armenian petty bourgeois (not unlike that in which the Jews in Eastern Europe were involved), and in part a reflection of the mounting wave of anti-Armenian feeling in the Ottoman Empire.

The convulsions which all Russia underwent during the subsequent period (1911-1926) affected Transcaucasia somewhat later than other parts of the Empire, and had a different impact on the various nationalities. But in the end the population losses for the entire area were heavy, and Transcaucasia entered the trying years of Stalinist dictatorship with a population no larger than that which it had had at the beginning of World War I.

The war itself spared Transcaucasia. The Russian armies in the Caucasus went on the offensive early in 1915, and from then on until the October Revolution the major campaigns were waged on Turkish territory. In the course of these campaigns, however, the Turks carried out a frightful massacre of Anatolian Armenians, whom they charged with pro-Russian sympathies. In these massacres an estimated one million Armenians were killed or died. Several

hundred thousand Armenian refugees fled to the Russian Caucasus, where their ordeal added more fuel to the smouldering fires of Armenian-Azeri Turkic hostility. In early 1918, during the short-lived Communist government of Baku (the so-called "Baku Commune") the Armenians, assisted by the Bolsheviks, carried out a massacre of the Azeri Turks. In the meantime the Russian troops, influenced by Bolshevik propaganda, deserted the front lines, and the Turks virtually walked into Transcaucasia. They headed directly for Baku, which they seized in the fall. There they helped the Azeri Turks to revenge themselves on the Armenians for the events of the preceding spring, and so the mutual slaughters continued.

The Georgians escaped for a long time the horrors which had visited their neighbors. This they did first by placing themselves under a benevolent German protectorate (1918), and then by establishing a comparatively efficient Georgian republic (1919 and 1920). But in 1921 the Communists invaded Georgia, and after short and intense fighting, occupied it. In 1924 the Georgians rebelled. This uprising, as well as the Azeri Turkic revolt of 1920, and Armenian of 1921, were bloodily suppressed.

Little wonder that the population of Transcaucasia appeared decimated once Soviet rule was firmly established there. The Armenians showed the heaviest losses. According to Soviet estimates, the Armenian population of Transcaucasia declined between 1914 and 1920 by one half million: 200,000 in consequence of Turkish, and, presumably Communist, massacres, and 300,000 from other causes, mostly famine and disease. The population of the area included in

today's Armenia dropped from over one million in 1914 to 780,000 in 1920.¹ After its conquest by the Bolsheviks, therefore, the Armenian republic consisted of approximately 500,000 local residents, and approximately 280,000 refugees. As a result of the losses suffered during and immediately after World War I, the demographic gains made by the Armenians between 1897 and 1914 were entirely wiped out. One of the by-products of these disasters was a considerable decline in the birth rate during the decade 1911-1921, so that in 1926 the Armenians proved to be particularly short of children aged 5-15.

There are no statistics for the Georgians comparable to those available for the Armenians. It does seem that they were growing normally until the time of the Communist invasion which occurred in February 1921, and that most of their population losses were a consequence of the conquest and 1924 revolt. A Soviet source estimates the population of Georgia in 1921 at 2,677,000 of which 17.7 per cent (475,000) is urban.² The census of 1926 reported the population at 2,667,000 indicating an actual decline of 10,000; it must be remembered, however, that Georgia lost certain territories to Azerbaijan in the early 1920's.

The population of Azerbaijan was reported in 1921-1923 at 1,863,000.³ Between this time and 1926 Azerbaijan was enlarged by

1. Institut Ekonomiki Akademii Nauk Armianskoi SSR i Institut Geografii Akademii Nauk SSSR, Armianskaia SSR, (Moscow, 1955), 50.
2. Akademia Nauk SSSR, Institut Geografii, Gruzinskaia SSR, (Moscow, 1956), 53.
3. Upravlenie Narodno-khoziaistvennogo ucheta ASSR, Narodnoe khoziaistvo Azerbaidzhana, (/Baku/, 1934), 41.

the addition of Zakataly (from Georgia) and Nakhichevan (from Armenia), each with about 100,000 inhabitants. In 1926 the population of Azerbaijan was reported as 2,315,000--a growth of some 13 per cent in three to five years.

The total population of Transcaucasia at the time of the final establishment of Soviet power in that area may be estimated on the basis of Soviet sources at 5,321,000. This figure represents a net loss of 670,000 since 1914.¹

But statistics tell only a part of the story of Transcaucasia during the inter-census period. During these three decades the population not only suffered heavy losses; it also underwent social changes which influenced appreciably the internal and external situation of the nationalities.

The first striking change was the growth of the urban population, which increased between 1897 and 1926 from 14.4 per cent to 24.1 per cent. A breakdown of the available figures indicates that this growth was not continuous. The urban population of Transcaucasia in 1920-1921 was 20.6 per cent²--that is to say, it increased 6.2 per cent in the pre-Soviet period, and only 3.5 per cent in the Soviet one. The growth of urbanization occurred largely as a result of the industrial expansion of the first decade of the twentieth century.

1. This decline is in part explainable by the change in the Russo-Turkish frontier. In the Brest Litovsk peace treaty, Lenin had ceded to the Turks the Kars District with some 300,000 inhabitants.

2. Armenia 17 per cent, Azerbaijan 26 per cent, and Georgia 17 per cent.

The second change, closely connected with the economic expansion which accounted for urbanization, was the increased mobility of the population. Movement between district and district, province and province, village and village became more and more frequent; the area was beginning to lose its self-contained, settled character. The growing mobility tended to make the various nationalities more conscious of their ethnic identity, and to lend the local political movements, which matured very rapidly in times of revolution and chaos, a pronouncedly national character.

Each of the major nationalities had its own national party even before World War I. Georgian political life was dominated by the Social-Democrats, largely of a Menshevik orientation. The Georgian Marxists were at first aggressively antinationalist. They preached internationalism, and argued to their more nationally-minded neighbors that the road to salvation lay through the worldwide socialist movement. But they quickly abandoned their internationalism when, in the course of 1918-1919, their land was threatened first by the Whites and then by the Reds. They then adapted their new-found nationalism to the Marxism which they continued to profess, evolving in the process an amalgam of nationalism and socialism which has proven a very potent force among newly liberated colonial peoples ever since. The Armenians and Azeri Turks had no such qualms. Their political life took from the very beginning a clearly nationalist orientation, due perhaps to the fact that before the Revolution their mutual hostility was the outstanding problem facing both these nationalities. Both the

Dashnaksutiun, with its predominantly bourgeois and petty bourgeois membership, and the Mussavat, which united the Azeri Turkic landlords and intellectuals, were openly nationalistic from their very inception.

During the period of the Revolution and Civil War these three parties took over the administrative responsibilities for the areas of Transcaucasia most heavily populated by their respective nationalities. Thus between 1918 and 1920, political authority rested in the hands of the nationalities themselves. What this did to their national egos can be easily imagined. Due to accident of war and revolution, they were suddenly transformed from passive, subject peoples into independent, sovereign nations. It is irrelevant to inquire whether the three Transcaucasian republics which had emerged in 1918 were viable: judged by the test of viability a considerable proportion of sovereign states today in existence would have to be condemned to disappearance. What matters is that political independence, once tasted, produces a situation, psychological as well as material, which is most conducive to the development of national consciousness. National pride, the feeling of belonging to a real "nation," spread among the people and remained even after the republics and their leading parties had been suppressed by the Communists. It is not far-fetched to say that the experiences of the revolution transformed the ethnic groups into full-fledged nationalities.

Thus the inter-census period was one of important changes. During this period the population experienced a relatively slow

rate of growth (if one takes into consideration its phenomenal fertility), but at this time it went a long way towards transforming itself from an agglomeration of self-contained ethnic groups into a more mobile and nationally conscious modern society.

The Population in 1926

The first Soviet census, conducted in 1926, conveyed the impression that demographically there had been no profound changes in the structure of the Transcaucasian nationalities toward each other, or toward the population of the Soviet Union as a whole. Everything that had been said of the Transcaucasian population as of 1897 applied also in 1926, only a bit less so. The process of transition toward a more complex modern society was obviously a ^{and} slow/gradual one.

As stated above, owing to the losses incurred during the decade 1914-1924, the population had shown little or no gain since the outbreak of World War I.

The fertility index had fallen somewhat, but it was still high, higher than in any other region of the Soviet Union. For Transcaucasia as a whole it stood at 746 (compared to 876 in 1897).¹ (Table 12).

There was a slight shift in the age distribution. The population was somewhat older than in 1897, but still young compared to

1. If one were to compute the fertility index for Transcaucasia using the same standards as those commonly employed in the United States (i.e., children 5 and under, and women 20-44), the index for 1926 would rise to 970. In the United States at this time (1930) the index stood at 481 for Whites and 497 for Negroes. Transcaucasian fertility in 1926 was comparable to that of the United States at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

the population of the USSR as a whole. The proportion of children ^{had} 14 and under/dropped from 40.3 per cent in 1897 to 39.6 per cent (in the USSR it was in 1926, 37.2 per cent). The population of working age (15-60) also declined slightly (from 53.8 per cent to 52.8 per cent) so that the oldest group alone showed a gain. This ageing was in part due to the heavy losses suffered by the younger population during the disorders of 1917-1924, with the attendant decline in birth rates, and in part to growing urbanization.

Urbanization showed a gain of 9.7 per cent as compared with 1897, but two-thirds of that gain had occurred before 1921, i.e., before the Soviet regime had seized Transcaucasia.

The most startling demographic change was in the sex ratio which dropped from 117 in 1897 to 106. (Table 14).

The census documented statistically the population movement which had been under way during the preceding three decades due to industrialization and the influx of refugees. In Transcaucasia as a whole 10.5 per cent of the inhabitants were born outside their place of residence. This figure was approximately twice that of 1897.

The relative fertility ranking of the four principal nationalities was the same as it had been in 1897, with the Azeri Turks and Armenians leading, followed at some distance by the Georgians, and the Russians far in the rear. (Table 12). The proportion of children showed the same order: Turks, Armenians, Georgians, Russians. The Russians had the highest proportion of persons of working age (68.5 per cent), the Armenians the lowest (48.7 per cent). (Table 13). The sex ratio was highest among the Azeri Turks (111);

it did not differ significantly among the remaining groups, varying between 100 and 103. (Table 14).

The Russians continued to be the most heavily urbanized ethnic group, with 73.3 per cent of the Russian-speaking inhabitants residing in towns. This figure indicates that during the inter-census period the Russian population intended to concentrate in the cities, and suggests that practically all the Russians who had settled in Transcaucasia between 1897 and 1926 had moved into the cities: the Russian population as a whole increased during this period by 126,000 whereas the Russian urban population increased by 131,000. Two hundred and eighteen thousand out of the 275,000 Russian-speaking urban inhabitants resided in two towns, Baku and Tiflis. The Armenians were again in the second place as regards urbanization, with 29.3 per cent urban. The Georgians and Azeri Turks were more or less on the same level of urbanization, far behind the Russians and Armenians; but it is significant that during the inter-census period the Georgians, who in 1897 had been the least urbanized group, now gained a slight edge over the Azeri Turks. (Table 15).

Some of the national groups, which even in 1897 showed a high degree of territorial concentration under the system of gubernii, became even more compact as a result of the introduction by the Communists of the national-territorial system of administration. The group which gained most in this respect were the Azeri Turks: the boundaries of their republic were drawn in such a way as to include 84 per cent of all Azeri Turks living in the Soviet Union (compared to the 65 per cent who had resided in the provinces

of Baku and Elizavetopol in 1897). There was no substantial change in the concentration of the Georgians and Armenians, which remained very high for the former, and low for the latter. The Russians, by virtue of their tendency to move into the cities, also became more concentrated. Thus, notwithstanding the increased mobility of the population, there was no sign of dispersal. In 1926, as in 1897, each nationality (the Armenians partly excepted) was identified with a definite territory or type of settlement.

The increased mobility also seemed to exercise no appreciable influence on the linguistic habits of the population. In 1926 93 per cent of all the inhabitants spoke their native languages. Of the 405,000 who adopted other languages, 100,000 spoke Turkic, 82,000 Georgian, 39,000 Russian (exclusive of Ukrainian and Belorussian), 1,600 Armenian, and 111,000 the languages of other, mostly North Caucasian nationalities. The gain of Russian was accomplished almost entirely at the expense of European languages (Yiddish, Polish, and German); only 2,500 Georgians and 10,000 Armenians adopted Russian. Georgian thus had made a clear gain since 1897 when only 35,000 non-Georgians had spoken Georgian. In 1926 the category of Georgian-speaking non-Georgians consisted mainly of Armenians (74,000). Turkic was adopted mostly by the smaller Middle Eastern groups (Kurds, Tats, etc.), by nearly half the Greeks, 13,000 Georgians, and 3,000 Armenians. It is worth noting that the number of Georgians who adopted Turkic was five times as large as the number of those who adopted Russian. Similarly seven and a half times as many Armenians switched to Georgian as to

Russian. The Armenians were in 1926 as in 1897 least loyal to their native language, 6.5 per cent Armenians speaking other languages (compared to 4 per cent in 1897).¹ This information--the most complete ever supplied on the linguistic affinities of the population of the Russian state--suggests that (1) the inhabitants of Transcaucasia continued to show a high degree of loyalty to their native languages, and (2) the tendency of those who, for one reason or another, abandoned their mother tongue was in the case of Europeans to adopt Russian, and in case of the natives to adopt either Turki or Georgian.

The Inter-Census Period 1926-1939

After 1926 it becomes increasingly difficult to study population changes in Transcaucasia as ever thicker layers of secrecy hide from the eyes of the foreign observer not only statistical information, but virtually all information of any significance. Between 1926 and 1932 the Soviet government released intermittently some figures bearing on the present inquiry, and though most of them are estimates, they are very useful in tracing developments during this period. But after 1932, when the terror of the "second" or Stalinist revolution was gathering momentum, the sources dried up completely. In 1937 there was a second Soviet All-Union census.

1. Of the 118,000 Armenians residing in Georgia who could read one or more languages (alone or in various combinations) 80,000 read Armenian, and an almost equal number (47,000 and 50,000 respectively) Georgian and Russian. Among the literate Georgians in the Georgian SSR, totaling 701,000 527,000 read only Georgian, 170,000 Georgian and Russian and 3,000 only Russian.

Its results were apparently so appalling that they were never released, and its compilers were thrown into prison as "saboteurs." the census of 1939, only partially released even at this late date, must therefore be treated with considerable caution: obviously figures which satisfied the Soviet regime better than those of the preceding census must deviate from the truth at least in some respects. In other words, for the period 1926-1939 our sources of information are highly inadequate. This holds particularly true of problems connected with language and nationality, in part because such information is always difficult to obtain except by a regular census, and in part because the regime is particularly reluctant to release figures on this subject.¹

How these lacunae hinder the study of our topic will be readily understood when one remembers that between 1926 and 1939 Transcaucasia was exposed to external forces more violent and more profound than any that have faced it since the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century. Forced confiscation of all private landed property in the guise of collectivization, partial enserfment of the industrial proletariat, extensive and often indiscriminate arrests, all of which measures accompanied an enormous effort at industrialization--these well-known aspects of Stalinist rule must

1. The 1939 census, for instance, did not supply data on the ethnic structure of the constituent republics. Only since the death of Stalin has this information been allowed to trickle out in scattered sources, and even then only for the republics which had suffered no excessive losses, or have had relatively little Russian immigration.

have had an overwhelming impact on Transcaucasian life in general, and on its demographic and ethnographic structure in particular. Yet all these facts are so poorly documented in published sources that they are known only in a general way.

Some things, however, are known, and one of them is that the over-all population of Transcaucasia increased at a rate that was quite unprecedented even for that fertile area. Between 1926 and 1939 the population of Transcaucasia was reported to have grown from 5,851,000 to 8,110,000 inhabitants, i.e., by 38.6 per cent, more than double the rate of increase for the USSR as a whole. This growth represented an average compounded rate of 2.5 per cent annually. This increase was not evenly spread over the whole of the inter-census period, nor was it entirely due to natural growth.¹

To begin with, Soviet figures for the early 1930's indicate beyond doubt that the principal increase occurred between 1926 and 1932. During these six years the population increased 3 per cent annually. From 1932 to 1939 the rate of increase dropped to $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent annually. The relative decline in the rate of growth may be studied on the examples of Armenia and Azerbaijan for which Soviet statistics happen to be available.

<u>The population of Soviet Armenia, 1926-1939²</u>		
1926	- 880,000	} or 4 per cent annually
1931	- 1,051,000	
1936	- 1,187,000	} or 2.5 per cent annually
1939	- 1,282,000	

1. One must always keep in mind the possibility, and even probability, that the 1939 figures have been deliberately falsified.
2. Before the Revolution and during the period 1920-1926 the population of Armenia had grown at an average annual rate of 2 per cent or slightly less.

The population of Soviet Azerbaijan, 1926-1939

1926	- 2,315,000	} or 2.7 per cent annually or 4.0 per cent annually or 2.0 per cent annually
1930	- 2,570,000	
1932	- 2,785,000	
1939	- 3,210,000	

Thus in the case of two of the three republics, the annual rate of growth declined appreciably after 1931-1932.

In the second place, the rapid increase of the population, especially between 1926 and 1939 was in large measure due to the mass influx of Russians from other parts of the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, lacking full ethnographic data for 1939, we cannot determine the exact number of these migrants; we can only estimate.

Here are the ethnic breakdowns of the three Transcaucasian republics gathered from diverse Soviet sources, and compared with the figures reported for 1926:

The population of Soviet Armenia in 1926 and 1939
(in thousands)¹

Nationality		1926		1939	Change
Armenians	744	81.7%	1,062	82.8%	-1.9%
Azeri Turks	77	8.7	131	10.2	+1.5
Russians	23	2.6	56	4.4	+1.8
Others	35	4.0	33	2.6	-1.4

The population of Soviet Azerbaijan in 1926 and 1939
(in thousands)²

Nationality		1926		1939	Change
Azeri Turks	1,438	63.3%	c.1,900	c. 59.4%	-3.9%
Russians	242	10.7	512	16	+5.3
Armenians	282	12.4	384	12	-0.4
Others	308	13.5	404	12.6	-0.9

1. Armianskaia SSR, 51.

2. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, Article "Azerbaidzhan," gives the number of Azeri Turks in Azerbaijan in 1939 as "over three-fifths of the population." The figure 59.4 per cent is arrived at by deducting the number of Azeri Turks known to live in other republics from that reported for the USSR as a whole. This article reports the Russians as 16 per cent, whereas the special volume of this Encyclopedia, SSSR, (Moscow, 1948) p.1863, says the Russians accounted for "approximately 10 per cent of the population."

The population of Soviet Georgia in 1926 and 1939
(in thousands)¹

Nationality	1926	1939	Change
Georgians	1,788	2,210	-6.3%
Armenians	307	421	+0.1
Russians	111	c. 350	+5.5
Azeri Turks	138	190	+0.1
Ossetins	113	151	-0.1
Others	180	278	+0.9

These tables, although not entirely precise, yield some interesting conclusions.

The striking fact is the increase of Russians. The total Russian population of Transcaucasia increased between 1926 and 1939 from 376,000 to approximately 918,000. If we allow that the resident Russian population increased at one-half the rate of the Russian population in the whole USSR (which was 27.1 per cent)--an adjustment which must be made in view of the high degree of urbanization and comparatively old age structure of the Russians in Transcaucasia--we arrive at the figure of 426,000 for the resident Russians. The remaining 492,000 must be considered Russians who migrated into Transcaucasia during the inter-census period. It is a high figure, but not remarkably so. In the four republics of Turkestan (Kirghiz, Tajik, Uzbek, and Turkmen) the Russian population during the same period increased by approximately 1,300,000, i.e., two and a half times as much; in the Uzbek republic alone there were an estimated 720,000 Russian migrants for a total population of 6,300,000.²

1. Bol'shaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopediia, Volume SSSR, p. 1853. To the reported 8.7 per cent for Russians, I added an estimated 1 per cent for Ukrainians and Belorussians.
2. Cf. this author's "Muslims of Soviet Central Asia: Trends and Prospects," The Middle East Journal, IX, No. 3, Summer 1955, pp. 296-297.

The Russians increased most sharply in the Georgian republic, where they more than tripled. The Russian migrants distributed themselves approximately as follows:

in Armenia	30,000
in Azerbaijan	237,000
in Georgia	224,000

The second significant fact is that, except in Georgia, the category of the smaller nationalities declined. This suggests a continuation of the process of assimilation of the smaller nationalities observed in our analysis of the returns of the 1926 census.

The third important conclusion which emerges from these data is that, notwithstanding industrialization and the great movements of population which the first Five Year Plans entailed, the principal native nationalities not only did not tend to scatter, but on the contrary, became territorially even more compact than they had been in 1926. In the case of both the Georgians and Azeri Turks the number of those residing in their respective republics remained unchanged: 98.2 per cent for the former, c. 84 per cent for the latter. The Armenians, however, tended to concentrate in the Armenian republic, and the proportion of those who resided there increased from 47.4 per cent in 1926 to 49.4 per cent in 1939.

The urban population in Transcaucasia stood in 1939 at 2,593,700, or 32 per cent (Azerbaijan 36.2 per cent, Georgia 30.1 per cent, Armenia 28.6 per cent). This was a fifty per cent increase since 1926. Most of that growth had occurred in the first half of the inter-census period, especially in the years 1930, 1931,

and 1932. Thus, for example, the urban population of Azerbaijan increased from 1926 to 1932 by 5.3 per cent and between 1932 and 1939 only by 2.8 per cent. The total numerical gain of the urban population in Transcaucasia was 1,181,000, of which 510,000 in Azerbaijan, 472,000 in Georgia, and 199,000 in Armenia.

These figures acquire added significance when juxtaposed to the figures showing the estimated influx of Russians. If we allow that the population residing in the cities of Transcaucasia in 1926 remained constant throughout the inter-census period, and increased at a rate two-thirds as large as the population of the republic in which it was located, we find that the resident urban population increased from 1926 to 1939 by 365,000: 187,000 in Azerbaijan, 128,000 in Georgia, and 50,000 in Armenia. The new urban population, therefore, was around 816,000. Here is its distribution by republics, and the estimated migrant population:

<u>Increase in the urban population and in the Russian population of Transcaucasia, 1926-1939</u>			
Republic	New urban population	New Russian Population	Difference
Azerbaijan	312,000	237,000	105,000
Armenia	149,000	30,000	119,000
Georgia	315,000	224,000	121,000

If the experience of the period 1897-1926 is any indication, then it may be assumed that for all practical purposes the entire Russian immigration moved into the cities. Land in Transcaucasia is scarce, much of the agriculture is of a technical kind for which the migratory Russians lack skills, and in general the conditions for Russian colonization are not propitious. On the other hand, the development of the petroleum industries, railroads, and the whole administrative as well as technical machinery which the Soviets

require, provide inducements for Russian urban settlement. If that assumption is correct, then the national composition of the Transcaucasian cities in 1939 would have looked approximately as follows:

Natives - 70 per cent

Russians - 30 per cent

These figures indicate a steady growth of the Russian share in the the urban population. In 1897 Russians had constituted 22 per cent of the total urban population of Transcaucasia, and in 1926 19 per cent. Seventy per cent of the urban population equals 1,815,000 which signifies that the proportion of non-Russians who resided in the cities in 1939 was 25 per cent. In 1926 the urban share of the non-Russian population had been 20 per cent. These numbers suggest that the Russian population in the cities was increasing at a more rapid rate than the non-Russian population (the Armenians excepted).

We lack data to analyze the relative fertility of the principal national groups, but the rate of population growth over the whole period suggests that the Armenians outstripped the Azeri Turks in fertility, the Georgians continuing to occupy third place. The rate of increase was 59.0 per cent for the Armenians, 33.2 per cent for the Azeri Turks, and 18.0 per cent for the Georgians.

There are reasons to suppose that the Georgians continued to adapt themselves to the changes wrought by the Soviet regime better than their neighbors. The main reason for this adaptability is the nature of the Georgian elite. Whereas among the Armenians the elite was middle-class in origin, and among the Azeri Turks it

consisted largely of well-to-do landlords--both classes actively persecuted and eventually destroyed by the Bolsheviks--the Georgian elite was an intelligentsia. Of all social classes in Russia, the intelligentsia had the best chances of survival. Relying on technical and administrative skills the Georgian intelligentsia, even when "contaminated" by nationalist and Menshevik ideals, could somehow fit into the Soviet system. The intellectuals were at worst persecuted as political foes, whereas the Armenian and Azeri Turkic leaders were persecuted as political and social foes.¹ The other factor which helped the Georgians weather the storm was the fact that Stalin and Beria were Georgians. Now it may be open to doubt whether Stalin or Beria really intended to accord the Georgians a privileged status in Soviet society; but it is undeniable that many of the other nationalities thought they did, and, unwilling to expose themselves to unnecessary risks of punishment, gladly accorded the Georgians the primacy which the Georgians eagerly acknowledged. In a society such as the Soviet, where so much of public life revolves around personal relations and is determined by subtle changes in the climate of opinion prevailing in the government, this psychological superiority of the Georgians was of immense importance to their capacity for survival. Georgian national feeling, intense to begin with, was further intensified

¹. Georgia was traditionally top-heavy with an intelligentsia. In 1941, for instance, it had more specialists with a higher education than Armenia and Azerbaijan put together, and it was consistently in first place in the number of all other kinds of specialists and students of all ages. All through the Soviet period Georgia was and continues to be the best educated republic. The high level of education is not directly proportionate to Georgia's economic development, and therefore causes social ferment well-known from other colonial and ex-colonial areas.

by the influx of Russians in the 1930's. This influx, which brought to Georgia an estimated 224,000 Russians and tripled the number of Russians residing in the Georgian republic, was without precedent in the history of that area. Even in the best circumstances the sudden accretion of a foreign population by such numbers and in so short a time is bound to produce ill-will and social unrest. In the Soviet Union such effects are more violent than elsewhere because of the acute housing shortage. There has been little construction in Tiflis, and the housing space per capita has been declining steadily since 1926, which means that the influx of Russians caused very real hardships for the native population.

All these considerations help explain why the Georgians were best able to meet the challenge of the 1930's. Their unspectacular but steady population growth contrasts vividly with the uneven demographic evolution of their two neighbors.

The Armenians were saved by two factors from the complete destruction which faced them in consequence of Turkish and Communist persecutions. One of them was the fact that they had a relatively large urban population. In view of the privileged position which the urban inhabitants enjoy in the Soviet system vis-à-vis the rural inhabitants, the Armenians acquired a proportionately greater share of the political and social benefits than the less urbanized Azeri Turks. The second advantage was that of the three Transcaucasian groups the Armenians were least anti-Russian. The Communist regime, distrusting the nationalism of the Georgians and Azeri Turks, tended to rely on the Armenians, much as the Tsarist regime used to do on occasion.

Of all the national groups, the Azeri Turks lost most social and political status under the new regime. They were most heavily agricultural and had the smallest intelligentsia, which meant that they were least able to adapt themselves to the new conditions, and were most burdened with obligations. In urbanization as well as fertility they were slowly slipping behind the Georgians and Armenians, respectively. Their national elite vanished early in the Soviet period, leaving them virtually without a voice in the political cliques where the fate of the region was being decided.

There is evidence that in the period 1926-1939 the conflict between the Azeri Turks and Armenians lost much of its previous intensity. This conflict originally had three causes: religious (the clash between Muslims and Christians), national (the antagonism between Turk and Armenian in the Ottoman Empire), and social (the mutual dislike of a peasant and unskilled laborer for the middle class). The religious conflict subsided in consequence of the fact that the Communist regime removed religion altogether from the sphere of public life. The national conflict lost its raison d'être with the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. The social conflict disappeared with the elimination of all private enterprises in business as well as land.

This is not to say, however, that national antagonism disappeared altogether from Transcaucasia. Rather, it shifted. The old conflict between Turks and Armenians seems to have been replaced by a new conflict between the Georgians with their subgroups (Adjars, Abkhaz, and possibly Ossetins), and the other nationalities. This conflict was caused by the privileged position

which the Georgians, because of the factors enumerated above were able to enjoy under Stalin. The national animosities still had a socio-economic foundation: what mattered was the struggle for the benefits which could be gained only by securing the largest possible hold on the apparatus of the state. Economic benefits were, therefore, decided on a bureaucratic plane: here the Georgians and Russians enjoyed the greatest advantages. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the lines of conflict were drawn as follows: the Russians and Armenians united in their anti-Georgian sentiment, and the Azeri Turks on the side, hostile to all, specially to the Georgians and Russians as the two most privileged groups.

The Period 1939-1956

For this period there are no population statistics, except for three figures released in 1956 which reported the estimated population of each of the three republics.

The striking fact about these figures is the sharp decline in the rate of growth. If the population of Transcaucasia had grown between 1939 and 1956 at the same rate as between 1926 and 1939, it would have increased from 8,100,000 to 11,000,000. Actually, it increased only to 9,000,000. From this we conclude that (1) there was a considerable decline in fertility, and (2) there was little or no migration from other parts of the country.¹ The annual rate of growth for Transcaucasia as a whole dropped from an average of $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent (1932-1939) to 0.6 per cent.

1. An exception to the second of these statements are the 100,000 Armenians known to have migrated to Soviet Armenia immediately after World War II.

Armenia, which grew from 1,200,000 to 1,600,000 showed the most rapid rate of growth; setting apart foreign immigrants, its population increased by 15.4 per cent. Georgia ranked next in the rate of growth, with 11.1 per cent, and Azerbaijan last with 6.2 per cent. The Azeri Turks, therefore, continued to show further symptoms of a demographic decline, the first signs of which were already visible in the censuses of 1926 and 1939. The Georgians, on the other hand, notwithstanding their comparatively low fertility, kept on forging steadily ahead.

Barring major population shifts between 1939 and 1956, the ethnic structure of Transcaucasia at the present time should look approximately as follows:

Georgians	- 2.6 million
Armenians	- 2.1 million
Azeri Turks	- 2.3 million
Russians	- 1.2 million
Others	- 0.8 million

If these estimates are correct, only the Georgians and Armenians would have experienced any significant natural increase since 1939, with approximately 400,000 births over deaths (to which must be added 100,000 immigrants for the Armenians). The Azeri Turks and Russians probably showed an insignificant increase of 100-200,000 each. (Table 17).

The failure of Transcaucasia to grow demographically at anything like its traditionally high rate is even more significant when one bears in mind that this area was never occupied by the enemy in World War II, and in consequence was spared most of the horrors which had decimated the population in the Western regions of the Soviet Union. The dramatic decline of the rate of growth,

therefore, cannot be directly related to the war, and must have occurred in consequence of inner developments, the nature of which is presently unknown.

One of the factors which may account for the decline in the rate of growth of the population may have been the relative decline of the importance of Transcaucasia in the economy of the Soviet Union. This latter process may be traced in various ways. One is to study the indices showing the rate of increase of the gross national output (valovaia produktsiia) between 1940 and 1950, which in Georgia and Azerbaijan has been slower than that of the whole USSR. The other is to juxtapose the figures showing the share of the whole republic budgets assigned to the three Transcaucasian republics: it was in 1933, 12 percent; in 1937, 11 per cent; in 1953, 5.6 per cent and in 1957, 4.4 per cent. An important reason for this decline, especially after World War II, was the shift of the oil industry from Transcaucasia to the Urals and Central Asia. Such economic shrinking is often accompanied by a drop in the rate of population growth. It is perfectly possible, too, that the Russian population in Transcaucasia, especially in Azerbaijan, actually declined as Russian technical personnel was moved to the new oil-producing areas. In that event the growth of the Azeri Turkic population would have been bigger than the estimate above allows. There certainly can be no doubt that the strategic vulnerability of Transcaucasia has impelled the Soviet regime after 1945 to reduce its investments in that area, and that this reduction in

investments has had a profound effect on the general growth of the population.¹

1. In this connection it may be suggested that one of the ways to study the movements of the population in the Soviet Union, especially of the Russian population, is to analyze investment and budget figures. It is likely that any region which shows a sudden spurt in its financial resources is at the same time a region subject to intense Russian immigration, since the bulk of the administrative, technical, and qualified labor personnel is imported from Russia proper. For instance, the share of Kazakhstan in the union republic budgets jumped between 1953 and 1955 from 4.2 per cent to 7.9 per cent. It was during this very time that an estimated one to one and a half million Russians moved into that republic.

Conclusions

The graph showing the population growth in Transcaucasia over the past sixty years has the shape of a curve which rises until 1932 (except for the decade 1914-1924, the losses of which were made up in the years 1924-1932), and then declines, at first gradually, and later precipitously. The annual rate of growth which was 1.7 per cent before the first World War, rose to 3.0 per cent between 1926 and 1932, then declined to 2.4 per cent (1933-1939), and then further to 0.6 per cent (1939-1956). This decline was in part due to declining fertility brought about by the general "modernization" of the inhabitants (urbanization, ageing, etc.), as well as by the uncertainties of life under the Soviet regime, and in part by the relative economic decline of Transcaucasia since World War II, which, among other things, put a stop to Russian immigration and perhaps even caused some Russians to depart.

The various nationalities inhabiting Transcaucasia adapted themselves with varying degrees of success to the changes which time has brought. In general, the Georgians seem to have done best. They owe their success to several favorable circumstances: the nature of their elite, the high cultural level of the population, the territorial compactness of their inhabitants, the large proportion of young people, and the favorite position which they enjoyed under Stalin and Beria. Demographically and culturally they have proven themselves over the past sixty years to be the most consistently dynamic nationality in Transcaucasia.

The Armenians have been somewhat less fortunate than the Georgians. They had suffered enormous losses during and after

World War I, losses which they made good in remarkably short time owing to their extraordinary fertility, but which nevertheless left deep scars on their over-all demographic structure. Culturally, they have shown the least cohesion, and in Georgia especially (where nearly one-fourth of all the Transcaucasian Armenians reside) they have shown themselves very susceptible to alien influences. What has helped the Armenians weather the storms of the past four decades has been their high fertility and relatively high urbanization.

The Azeri Turks have undoubtedly fared worst of the three principal indigenous nationalities. Despite the fact that in 1897 they were the most numerous as well as the most fertile group in Transcaucasia, throughout the past sixty years they have been steadily falling behind their neighbors in all those respects which make for demographic dynamism. Their over-all growth has been the slowest, and they have fallen behind in urbanization as well as fertility. The relative decline of this nationality must be attributed mainly to its low cultural standards, and to its social structure: The Azeri peasantry suffered probably more heavily than the less independent and proportionately less numerous Georgian and Armenian peasantry in the period of collectivization. The decline of the Azeri Turks is part of the general process of decline of the Turkic population of the Soviet Union.

Of the other national groups, Russians excepted, the following general rule holds true: They tend to identify themselves with those major national groups which are closest to them in religion, language, and other cultural respects. This means that the European

minorities assimilate to the Russians, and the others either with the Georgians (if they are Christian) or Azeri Turks (if they are Muslim). For this reason they are not dynamic, and have been shrinking.

The Russian inhabitants do not seem to have gained a firm foothold in Transcaucasia. In fact, one seems to discern something of an ebb and flow which is quite unlike the movement observed in other borderland areas. The influx of Russians occurred twice: at the end of the nineteenth century, and then again in the early 1930's. In the period of war and revolution a part of the Russian population left for Russia proper, and it is very likely that a similar exodus has been taking place since the end of World War II. The reason for this is that the Russians are primarily urban, and therefore very sensitive to political and economic fluctuations. Only in those areas where they settled en masse on the land (e.g., Volga-Ural region, Kazakhstan, the Crimea) have the Russians been able to secure a solid and permanent hold on the territory and its population.

It thus appears that demographically Transcaucasia is within a Georgian "sphere of influence." The decline in Georgian political prestige since 1953, and the general economic decline of Transcaucasia during the past 13 years have acted as powerful irritants stimulating Georgian nationalisms which on occasions (e.g., spring of 1956) assumes violent forms.

TABLE I

The population of Transcaucasia

1897	1,193,000
1911	5,990,000
1920-1922	5,321,000
1926	5,851,000
1929	6,273,000
1931	6,775,000
1932	6,976,000
1933	7,110,000
1939	8,110,000
1956	9,000,000

TABLE 2

Average annual rate of growth

1897-1911	1.7%
1926-1929	2.5
1929-1932	3.7
1933-1939	2.1
1939-1956	0.6

TABLE 3

Fertility ratios in 1897

<u>Province</u>	<u>Fertility ratio</u>
Baku	897
Elizavetopol	1,032
Erivan	977
Tiflis	670
Kutais	835
Kars District	1,000
TRANSCAUCASIA	876

TABLE 4

Age distribution in 1897

Province	0-14	15-60	60 and over
Baku	313,800	476,000	37,100
Elizavetopol	362,000	474,000	42,200
Erivan	357,700	433,000	39,000
Tiflis	421,000	567,000	63,000
Kutais	431,200	541,400	85,600
Kars District	107,100	166,000	16,700
TRANSCAUCASIA	1,991,000 40.3%	2,657,000 53.8%	282,000 5.9%

TABLE 5

Sex ratios in 1897

Province	Ratio of men for 100 women
Baku	124
Elizavetopol	120
Erivan	114
Tiflis	121
Kutais	108
Kars District	123
TRANSCAUCASIA	117

TABLE 6

Linguistic structure of the urban population in 1897
(in thousands)

Province	Georgians	Azeri Turks	Armenians	Russians
Baku	1,0	82,0	23,0	42,0
Elizavetopol	0,7	50,0	23,0	4,0
Erivan	0,4	24,5	54,0	9,0
Tiflis	71,0	5,5	74,0	53,0
Kutais	48,0	4,0*	14,5	26,0
Kars	0,3	4,5*	16,5	10,0
TRANSCAUCASIA	121,4	170,5	205,0	144,0

*Includes Ottoman Turks

TABLE 7

Urban and rural population in 1897
(in thousands)

Province	Urban	Rural	Total	Per cent urban
Baku	170	657	827	21.0%
Elizavetopol	89	789	878	10.1
Erivan	92	921	829	11.0
Tiflis	225	826	1,051	21.3
Kutais	97	961	1,058	9.1
Kars	37	253	290	12.7
TRANSCAUCASIA	710	4,222	4,923	14.4

TABLE 8

Inhabitants by place of birth in 1897

Province	Born locally	Born in another part of same province	Born outside given province
Baku	87.1%	1.0%	8.5%
Elizavetopol	92.5	3.5	4.0
Erivan	92.7	2.8	4.5
Tiflis	82.9	6.0	11.1
Kutais	86.3	8.6	9.1
Kars District	68.2	1.6	30.2

TABLE 9

Linguistic affinities of the population in 1897
(in thousands)

Province	Georgian	Turkic*	Armenian	Russian
Baku	1.5	486.0	52.0	78.0
Elizavetopol	1.0	534.0	292.0	18.0
Erivan	0.5	313.0	441.0	16.0
Tiflis	467.0	131.0	196.0	86.0
Kutais	868.0	46.0	24.0	23.0
Kars	0.5	103.0	73.0	28.0
TRANSCAUCASIA	1,338.5	1,613.0	1,078.0	249.0

*Includes Azeri, Osmanli and other Turkic dialects.

TABLE 10

Growth of the three principal Transcaucasian nationalities
1897-1939 (in the whole USSR)

Nationality	1897	1926	1939
Azeri Turks	/1,519,000/	1,700,000	2,275,000
Armenians	1,100,000	1,500,000	2,150,000
Georgians	1,352,000	1,900,000	2,250,000

TABLE 11

Rate of growth of the principal Transcaucasian nationalities
1897-1939

Nationality	1897-1926	1926-1939
Azeri Turks	/9.8%/	33.2%
Armenians	36.3	59.0
Georgians	40.5	18.4
Russians	56.2	c. 145.0

TABLE 12

Fertility ratios of the principal groups inhabiting
Transcaucasia in 1926

Azeri Turks	908
Armenians	807
Georgians	631
Russians	372
All others	764
TRANSCAUCASIA	746

TABLE 13

Age distribution by nationality in 1926

Nationality	0-14	15-59	60 and over
Azeri Turks	42.0%	50.3%	7.7%
Armenians	40.9	48.7	10.4
Georgians	38.6	52.1	9.3
Russians	27.4	68.5	4.1

TABLE 14

Sex ratios by linguistic affinities in 1926

Azeri Turks	111
Armenians	103
Georgians	100
Russians	102
Average for above four groups	106

TABLE 15

Proportion of members of each linguistic group residing
in cities in 1897 and 1926

<u>Linguistic group</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>1926</u>
Azeri Turks	10.5%	16.6%
Armenians	19.8	29.3
Georgians	9.0	17.7
Russians	57.8	73.3

TABLE 16

Urbanization by republics 1897-1939

<u>Republic</u>	<u>1897*</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1939</u>
Azerbaijan	15.2%	28.1%	36.2%
Armenia	11.0	19.0	28.6
Georgia	15.2	22.2	30.1
TRANSCAUCASIA	14.4	24.1	32.0

TABLE 17

The population of Transcaucasia by national groups 1897-1956
(in millions)

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>1897**</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1956*</u>
Azeri Turks	1.6	1.7	2.2*	2.3
Armenians	1.1	1.3	1.9	2.1
Georgians	1.3	1.8	2.3	2.6
Russians	0.2	0.4	0.9	1.2
Others	0.3	0.6	0.7	0.8
TOTAL	4.5	5.8	8.1	9.0

*Estimated

**Linguistic criterion used.

