

Culture



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Volume 6, Number 2, 1986

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1078734ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1078734ar>

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Publisher(s)

Canadian Anthropology Society / Société Canadienne d'Anthropologie (CASCA), formerly/anciennement Canadian Ethnology Society / Société Canadienne d'Ethnologie

ISSN

0229-009X (print)

2563-710X (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Bartels, D. & Bartels, A. (1986). Soviet Policy Toward Siberian Native People: Integration, Assimilation or Russification? *Culture*, 6(2), 15–31.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/1078734ar>

Article abstract

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Soviet Policy Toward Siberian Native People: Integration, Assimilation or Russification?

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During eight months in 1981-82, we collected data on the occupations, educational attainments, and ethnicity of 58 Siberian Native academics, professionals, and students, and their immediate family members. We have attempted to use our data, and the conclusions of other Soviet and Western researchers on Soviet nationalities policy, to determine whether the concepts of structural integration, cultural integration, assimilation and Russification, as sometimes used by North American social scientists, accurately characterize the results of Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People. It is argued that these concepts are inadequate for this task.

Pendant une période de huit mois en 1981-82, nous avons recueilli des données sur les occupations, le niveau d'études et l'ethnicité de 58 universitaires sibériens, de personnes exerçant des professions libérales et d'étudiants ainsi que les membres de leur famille immédiate. Nous avons essayé de nous servir de nos données sans oublier les conclusions auxquelles sont parvenus d'autres chercheurs soviétiques ou bien occidentaux à propos de la politique soviétique sur les nationalités, dans le but de déterminer si les concepts d'intégration structurale, d'intégration culturelle, d'assimilation ou de russification — dont se servent parfois les chercheurs en sciences sociales nord-américains — sont caractéristiques des résultats de la politique soviétique à l'égard des Sibériens. Ces concepts sont parfois considérés comme inadéquats pour cette tâche.

In the Soviet North, there are over 800,000 aboriginal people. Their languages are from at least four unrelated language families (Comrie, 1981). With one important exception, the traditional subsistence activities of Siberian Native People are strikingly similar to those of northern Canadian Native People (Graburn and Strong, 1973). That exception was reindeer breeding, which is still practiced by many Siberian groups. The Siberian fur trade also bore striking resemblances to its Canadian counterpart (Fisher, 1943). About 655,000 Siberian Native People belong to the Komi and Yakut nationalities, and about 150,000 Siberian Native People belong to 26 smaller groups, known as the "Small Peoples" (see map and map key). In this paper, we shall deal with Soviet policy toward the "Small Peoples". The phrases, "Small Peoples" and "Siberian Native People", will be used synonymously.¹

After extensive research on Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People, we attempted to find theoretical concepts which accurately characterize the current results of Soviet policy toward them. In this paper, we show that the concepts of structural integration, cultural integration, assimilation, and Russification, as sometimes used by North American

social scientists, are inadequate for this task. It appears that other concepts, particularly the Soviet ethnographic concepts of integration and consolida-

tion (Bromley *et al.*, 1982 : 16 ; Kuoljok, 1985 : 136-8) are more suitable.



Nationality	Map Key *	Approximate Current Population
1. Saami		1,900
2. Nentsy		29,000
3. Nganasan		900
4. Entsy (Isayev, 1977 : 157)		300
5. Komi		327,000
6. Khanty		20,900
7. Mansi		7,600
8. Selkup		3,600
9. Ket		1,100
10. Dolgan		5,100
11. Evenk		27,300
12. Even		12,500
13. Yakut		328,000
14. Yukaghir		800
15. Chukchi		14,000
16. Koryak		7,900
17. Itelmen		1,400
18. Eskimo		1,500
19. Aleut		500
20. Nanai		10,500
21. Nivkhi		4,400
22. Ulchi		2,600
23. Udegheitsy		1,600
24. Orochi		1,200
25. Oroki		n/a
26. Tophalar		800
27. Negidaltsy		500
28. Chuvantsy		n/a

* Unless otherwise indicated, these figures come from Central Statistical Board of the USSR, 1981 : 14-15.

Unfortunately, evidence for this conclusion requires more fieldwork in the USSR. As a prolegomena to such fieldwork, we wish to outline our reasons for concluding that the concepts of structural integration, cultural integration, assimilation, and Russification do not accurately characterize the results of Soviet policy toward the "Small Peoples". We shall also indicate why the Soviet ethnographic concepts of consolidation and integration may be more useful.

During eight months in 1981-82, we collected data on the occupations of 58 Siberian Native academics, professionals, and students, and their parents, brothers and sisters. Most of the people we interviewed (44) were students or graduate students at the Faculty of Northern People (FNP) of Leningrad's Herzen Pedagogical Institute. The FNP specializes in training teachers of Siberian Native languages and Russian for secondary schools in Native regions, although it also trains Native art

teachers and primary school teachers.² In 1981-82, the FNP had 238 students (213 women and 25 men), representing 24 of the "Small Peoples" from at least seven autonomous regions.³ There were 13 full-time teachers, eight of whom were members of Native groups, and 28 part-time teachers, including several Native People. There were also eight Native graduate students who assisted in teaching.

The annual number of Native students from various regions who will be admitted to the FNP is determined by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Republic in consultation with educational authorities in Native regions. Applicants for the FNP take their entrance exams in their Native regions, usually at pedagogical "technicums"⁴ in regional centres. This constitutes a sort of special privilege for Native students since almost all non-Native applicants for higher education must take entrance exams at the institution where they are applying, and this can involve extensive travel.

Each year, approximately 60 students, usually 17-18 years old, are admitted to the FNP. Approximately ten are admitted to the Drawing and Decorative Art programme, approximately thirty to the Russian and Native Language and Literature programme, and approximately twenty to the Primary Pedagogy programme. When students begin their studies, they are assigned to a group of approximately ten students, all in the same programme. Each group is composed of students from different native groups, and is advised by a particular faculty member until graduation. Group members, with assistance from the faculty adviser, are supposed to help each other with their work, and with academic or personal problems. FNP graduates are formally required to teach for two years in Native regions, although this requirement is sometimes waived.⁵ Often, students begin teaching in primary or secondary schools in their home towns or villages.

We do not believe that FNP students are drawn exclusively from a Native elite of highly-educated intellectuals and/or Party members, as M. Balzer suggests (1983: 645). As Table 1 (below) indicates, approximately 15% of the parents of the students whom we interviewed had higher education, in comparison with approximately 6% of the population of the USSR (Szymanski, 1984: 110). Our interviews clearly indicated that not all parents of FNP students possess higher education, occupy important supervisory or political posts, or belong to the Communist Party. Some FNP students were sponsored by Young Communist League (Komsomol) groups, soviets or trade unions in Native regions. Others were recruited by FNP teachers and administrators because schools in particular Native regions needed more teachers of specific Native languages. In such cases, the



Mary Barmitch, a Nentsy from north central Siberia, was born on the tundra. She is a full-time faculty member at the Faculty of Northern Peoples, Herzen Pedagogical Institute, Leningrad, and trains teachers to teach Nenetz language and literature. (Photo by Alice Bartels).

educational attainments and political activity of parents were clearly not primary considerations in the recruiting process. It should be mentioned, however, that all FNP students must meet certain minimum entrance requirements, which include passing a competitive entrance examination. Also, FNP students can, and sometimes do, flunk out.

Even when parents of FNP students had high-prestige occupations, higher education or important political or supervisory posts, this did not seem to guarantee that their children would enter the upper strata of Soviet society. A Selkup FNP student whose father was a full-time Party administrator told us that her brother, who was then working as a brick-layer, had been refused admission to an agricultural institute because he was married. One of her two sisters taught German and English, and the other worked at an insurance company in Norilsk. An Even woman who was originally trained to be a horticultural (*i.e.*, greenhouse) worker, was, when we interviewed her, a fourth-year student at the FNP. Her father was a reindeer breeder and chairman of a local soviet, and her two sisters were construction workers. One of her two brothers was a driver on the reindeer state farm where her father worked, and the other was doing army service.

Over half of the FNP students whom we interviewed were selected for interviewing by FNP administrators. Other interviews—at least one-third—occurred more-or-less randomly, during three visits to the dormitory where FNP students lived and after Native language classes at the FNP.

TABLE I
Occupations and Education Levels of the Parents of 44 Siberian Native Students
at the Faculty of Northern Peoples of the Herzen Pedagogical Institute, Leningrad, 1981-82

Nationality of Student	Parents' Nationalities and Occupations	Parents' Education				Nationality of Student	Parents' Nationalities and Occupations	Parents' Education			
		P ♦	S ♦♦	SS □	H ✕			P	S	SS	H
1. Orochi (f) ☒	Mother: reindeer breeder Father: reindeer breeder (Chief of reindeer brigade)	5 ♦♦♦	x			14. Chukchi (f)	M: daycare worker F: secretary of Sovkhoz Party committee	i 8 □			x
2. Eskimo (f)	M: radio operator F: (Russian) ex-ship's captain			x		15. Chukchi (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	x			x
3. Mansi (f)	M: not working due to illness F: agricultural worker	4 4				16. Yukaghir (f)	M: reindeer breeder (retired) F: (Yakut) hunter (retired)	4		i 7	
4. Mansi (f)	M: fish plant worker F: fisherman	n/a n/a				17. Even (f) (she is married to a Russian)	M: (Russian) cook at daycare centre F: chairman of local Soviet	5		6	
5. Evenk (f)	M: dairy worker F: bookkeeper		i ♀ i			18. Even (f)	M: teacher at internat F: n/a				x
6. Evenk (f)	M: (Russian) housewife (on pension) F: newspaper editor	4				19. Even (f)	M: doctor, supervises polyclinic F: (Yakut) teaches Russian				x x
7. Evenk (f)	M: nurse F: reindeer breeder (deceased)		x i			20. Even (m)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	4 4			
8. Evenk (f)	M: sheep herder F: agricultural worker	n/a 5				21. Even (f)	M: n/a. Raised by grandmother and aunt. Grandmother: hunter Aunt: daycare worker Grandfather: hunter (deceased)	0		i 8	
9. Chukchi (f)	M: hotel administrator F: n/a			x				n/a			
10. Chukchi (f)	M: bookkeeper F: n/a			x		22. Koryak (f)	M: housewife (retired) F: hunter			i 7 i 7	
11. Chukchi (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	x x				23. Koryak (m)	M: daycare worker F: sovkhos worker in charge of heating system			x x	
12. Chukchi (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	x x				24. Koryak (m)	M: agricultural worker F: woodcutter (deceased)			i 8 x	i
13. Chukchi (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder (chief of reindeer brigade)	n/a 4				25. Koryak (f)	M: chairperson of kolkhoz management board F: kolkhoz worker			x i 7	

		P ♦	S ♦♦	SS □	H ✘		P	S	SS	H
26. Koryak (f)	M: head designer at factory producing national costumes F: worker at factory producing national costumes			x		38. Nanai (m)	M: scientist F: merchant ship captain			x
27. Nenetz (f)	M: internat worker Stepfather: fisherman	4		x		39. Nivkh (f)	M: child care worker F: fishing brigade leader	literacy course		
28. Nenetz (f)	M: fur farmer (retired) F: n/a	n/a				40. Dolgan (m)	M: works in Pioneer palace F: n/a			x
29. Nenetz (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	4-5 4-5				41. Saami (m)	M: bookkeeper F: (Komi) artist (deceased)	x		x
30. Nenetz (f)	M: ex-accountant, now worker at daycare centre F: chairman of kolkhoz (deceased)	n/a n/a				42. Evenk (f)	M: was hunter; now dairy worker F: (Yakut) was hunter; now accountant		x (accounting)	
31. Khant (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	x	i			43. Even (m)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	literacy course		
32. Khant (f)	M: primary teacher (retired) F: (Russian) river navigation worker Her grandfather was murdered by rich elders and shamans because he supported Soviet power in the 1930s.	i		x		44. Nenetz (f)	M: reindeer breeder F: reindeer breeder	literacy course		
33. Khant (m)	M: fur farmer F: fisherman/hunter		i i			Notes for Table 1				
34. Khant (f)	M: reindeer breeder (deceased) F: reindeer breeder (deceased)		x x			■	Unless otherwise indicated, the nationality of the parents is the same as that of their child, and both parents were living in the North.			
35. Khant (f)	M: worked "in trade", now retired F: fish cannery worker		x (commerce) x (cinema operation)			♦	'P' stands for primary education.			
36. Selkup (m)	M: housewife Grad student F: fisherman	i x				♦♦	'S' stands for secondary education.			
37. Selkup (f)	M: (Russian) veterinary nurse		i			▣	'SS' stands for specialized secondary education.			
						✘	'H' stands for higher education at university, a research institute, a higher Party school, etc.			
						♀	'f' stands for female.			
						♦♦♦	Indicates number of years at school.			
						♂	'i' stands for incomplete.			
						□	Indicates number of years of education.			
Totals										
Mixed marriages: 8.										
Professionals, supervisory, and/or political posts: 17.										
Primary education (including incomplete and literacy courses): 25.										
Secondary education (including incomplete secondary): 9.										

TABLE II
Types of Work and Occupations by Generation of Families
of 58 Siberian Native Students and Professionals in Leningrad and Moscow, 1981-82

CURRENT GENERATION (up to age ca. 40)♦	PARENTAL (P) GENERATION †	P2 GENERATION □
1. Student at Pedagogical Institute (34). ♦♦	1. Reindeer breeder (29).	1. Reindeer breeder (53).
2. Student at ten-year school (28).	2. Teacher (6).	2. Hunter (21).
3. Higher education student (9).	3. Agricultural worker (6).	3. Agricultural worker (8).
4. Teacher (9).	4. Chairperson of sovkhos/kolkhoz management board (4).	4. Fresh-water fisherman (8).
5. Graduate student (7).	5. Daycare worker (4).	5. Red Army soldier (5). ‡
6. Driver on sovkhos or kolkhoz (5).	6. Red Army soldier (5). ‡	6. Housewife (2).
7. Reindeer Breeder (5).	7. Chairperson of local soviet or Party committee (5).	7. Teacher (1).
8. Agricultural/fishing technician (4).	8. Fresh-water fisherman (5).	8. Red Army officer (1).
9. Red Army soldier (4).	9. Bookkeeper/accountant (4).	9. Fish plant worker (1).
10. Daycare worker (3).	10. Doctor (3).	10. Shop assistant/commercial worker (1).
11. Construction worker (3).	11. Teacher/administrator at pedagogical institute (3).	11. Economist/agronomist (1).
12. Doctor (3).	12. Hunter (3).	12. Bookkeeper/accountant (1).
13. Cinema operator (3).	13. Worker in factory making traditional clothing (3).	13. Linguist (1).
14. Heating plant worker (2).	14. Forestry worker (2).	14. Ethnographer (1).
15. Electrician (2).	15. Fish plant worker (2).	15. Chairperson of sovkhos or kolkhoz management board (1).
16. Student at technical school (2).	16. Service worker at school or internat (2).	
17. Agricultural worker (2).	17. Newspaper editor (2).	
18. Welder (2).	18. Linguist (2).	
19. Industrial worker at urban plant (2).	19. Merchant ship's officer (1).	Total: 106
20. Paramedic/nurse/feldsher (1).	20. Journalist (1).	Approximate percentage of occupations requiring post-secondary technical or university education: 40% (n=6).
21. Forestry worker (1).	21. Fur farmer (1).	Approximate percentage of P2 generation with occupations requiring post-secondary education: 5.6% (n=6).
22. Telephonist (1).	22. Shop assistant/commercial worker (1).	
23. Insurance company worker (1).	23. Housewife (1).	
24. Bricklayer (1).	24. Heating plant worker (1).	
25. Singer (1).	25. Cafeteria cook/worker (1).	
26. Economist/agronomist (1).	26. Red Army officer (1).	
27. Gymnast (1).	27. Radio operator (1).	
28. Shop assistant/commercial worker (1).	28. Electrician (1).	
29. Typographer (1).	29. Driver of sovkhos or kolkhoz (1).	
30. Motor boat operator (1).	30. 'Chum' wife or 'chum' worker (1). ■	
31. Service worker at internat ♦♦♦♦ or school (1).	31. Inspector of daycare centres and creches (1).	
32. Teacher/administrator at pedagogical institute (1).	32. Mechanic on sovkhos (1).	
33. Radio operator (1).	33. Native language specialist at Institute of National Schools (1).	
34. Cafeteria worker/cook (1).	34. Hotel administrator (1).	
35. Worker in factory making traditional clothing (1).	35. Veterinarian (1).	
	36. Oil exploration technician (1).	
	37. Industrial worker at urban plant (1).	
	38. Industrial chemist (1).	
	39. Writer (1).	
	40. Scientist (1).	
	41. Party worker (1).	
	42. Pioneer Palace worker (1).	
	43. Paramedic/feldsher/nurse (1).	

Total: 145

Approximate percentage of types of work/occupations requiring post-secondary technical or university education: 43% (n=15). Approximate percentage of current generation with occupations requiring post-secondary education: 54% (n=79).

Notes: (Current Generation)

- ◆ Excluding two individuals who were a Russian deep-sea fisherman and a Yakut teacher.
- ◆◆ Number of individuals with this occupation.
- ◆◆◆ Boarding school.

Total: 115

Approximate percentage of occupations requiring post-secondary technical or university education: 58% (n=25). Approximate percentage of P1 generation with occupations requiring post-secondary education: 40% (n=46).

Notes: (P1 Generation)

- ✠ Excluding 14 individuals who were Russian, Ukrainian, Yakut, or Komi. Their occupations were: teacher (3); cook at daycare centre (1); merchant ship's officer (1); chairperson of local soviet or Party Committee (1); hunter (1); veterinary nurse (1); a Komi artist.
- ✖ Three were killed in W.W. II.
- A 'chum' worker does domestic work—e.g., food preparation—with a reindeer breeding brigade.
- ⊠ P1 members pursue more occupations than the current generation. This may be because so many members of the current generation are still students, and because members of P1 have been in the work force longer.

P3 and P4 Generations

1. Reindeer breeder (15).
2. Hunter (1).
3. Fisherman (4).
4. Chairperson of Kolkhoz management board (1).

Total: 21**Notes for P2, 3 & 4 Generations**

- Excluding a Yakut shaman, a Russian doctor, and two Yakut hunters.
- ⌘ Four were killed in W.W. II.

As indicated above, we have attempted to use our data, and the conclusions of other Soviet and Western researchers on Soviet nationalities policy and the "Small Peoples", to determine whether the concepts of structural integration, cultural integration, assimilation, and Russification accurately characterize the results of Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People. We have taken definitions of structural integration, cultural integration, and assimilation from Metta Spencer's introductory sociology text (1981) because her use of these concepts seems to be typical of North American social science. Although we conclude that these concepts do not accurately characterize the results of Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People, this should not be interpreted as a criticism of Spencer's definitions. For reasons outlined below, they are simply not applicable to the situation that we are dealing with.

Structural/Cultural Integration

Metta Spencer distinguished between structural and cultural integration as follows:

Structural integration refers to the full participation of various groups in the dominant set of institutions, such as schools, banks, and churches. Cultural integration refers to the adoption by various groups of the dominant ideas, traditions, languages, life styles, values, and religions. It is cultural integration that most ethnic group members would prefer to avoid. Many would favor structural integration if it were not accompanied, as it generally is, by cultural integration (1981: 298).

Dominant institutions in the USSR include state and collective farms.⁶ Since the 1940s and 1950s, traditional occupations of Siberian Native People (*i.e.*, hunting, trapping, reindeer breeding and fishing) have been carried out mainly within the institutional framework of state and collective farms. About one-third of the family members of our subjects pursued traditional occupations (see Table II).

These occupations, and others practiced by Siberian Native People in the North, yield incomes that are comparable to, or higher than, those of workers in Moscow, Leningrad, and other parts of the USSR, mainly because Native People working in the North receive 'Northern pay' allowances and other benefits which are intended to attract workers to the North (see Armstrong, 1978: 51; see Tables III and IV).

These data seem to indicate that traditional Native occupations are integrated into the national economy, and possess administrative structures similar to almost all other Soviet agricultural enterprises.

TABLE III
Wages in the USSR, ca. 1980 *

Average monthly industrial wage: 168.5 rubles **
Average monthly agricultural wage: 148.5 r.
Average monthly transport workers's wage: 200 r.
Average monthly construction worker's wage: 201.5 r.
Average monthly wage for workers in trade, catering, and various types of distribution: 138 r.
Average monthly wage for housing and service workers: 133 r.
Average monthly wage for public health workers, including doctors: 126.5 r.
Average monthly wage for public education workers: 135.5 r.
Average monthly wage for scientific and scientific service workers: 179 r.

Notes

* These data come from Central Statistical Board of the USSR (1981: 164-65).

** In 1981-82, the official exchange rate was about 1 ruble/\$1.60 (Can.)

TABLE IV
Wages in the Chukchi-Eskimo Settlements of Chaplino and Sireniki, 1977 *

Fox farmers (probably all women): 204 rubles
Sea mammal hunters: 350 r.
Mechanics: 340 r.
Preparation of hides and sewing traditional Chukchi/Eskimo clothing (probably all women): 258 r.
Construction workers: 330 r.
Daycare centre workers (probably all women): 165 r.

* Personal communication from Candidate Y. Mikhailova, Northern Peoples Section of the Miklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnography, Leningrad, 1981.

Many Siberian Native People now practice non-traditional occupations which have been introduced during the Soviet period. Over half of the family members of our subjects pursued 'new' occupations (see Table II). Over 90% of family members of our subjects up to age 40 pursued 'new' occupations. Approximately 60% of members of the parental (P1) generation of our subjects pursued 'new' occupations, and approximately 11% of the grandparents and great-grandparents of the current generation of our subjects pursued 'new' occupations (see Table II). Training for these occupations requires Siberian Native People to participate in the same kinds of educational institutions as non-Natives *e.g.*,

Russians. Today, practically all Siberian Native People, like practically all non-Natives, attend daycare centres, ten-year schools, vocational or technical training centres, or university.

Siberian Native People apparently pursue high-prestige occupations, with correspondingly high educational levels, in proportions that are similar to non-Natives. As in the West, prestige in the Soviet Union rises "from unskilled manual to professional posts" (Lane, 1981 : 68). A 1976 study by the Evenk scholar and Communist, V.N. Uvachan, indicated that the proportion of Native "intelligentsia" is similar to that of non-Natives (see Table V).

TABLE V
Skilled and Unskilled Workers Among Russians and Siberian Native People

Workers (including state farm workers)	Collective farm workers	Intelligentsia
USSR (whole) 56.8%	20.5	22.7
Russian Republic 61.3	14.3	24.3
Autonomous Okrugs of the North 68.3	5.1	26.6
Peoples of the North 70.1	4.9	24.1

Source : Uvachan (1981 : 267).

According to A. Danilov, in the late 1960s, 1,500 teachers out of total of 5,950 teachers in Native regions were Native People (1972 : 9). These data should be considered in light of the fact that a majority of residents in most Native regions are transient non-Natives who live in urban centres. Most Natives are permanent residents of rural areas (Armstrong, 1978 : 46-47). Most non-Native teachers work in urban centres, and most Native teachers work in rural Native settlements.

About 20% of the 84 parents of the students whom we interviewed pursued high-prestige occupations with correspondingly high education levels, or occupied important supervisory or political posts.⁷ Among their grandparents and greatgrandparents, only about 6% had higher education. It is also interesting to note that about 67% of the parents of students whom we interviewed did *not* pursue high-prestige occupations, possess higher education or occupy important supervisory or political posts. According to recent Soviet studies, however, Siberian Native People are well-represented in the Party organizations of Native regions, often occupying leadership positions (Uvachan, 1975 : 223).

Soviets, as well as the Party, exercise political authority in the USSR, especially at the local level (Rothman and Breslauer, 1978 : 188)

The city and Republic Soviets have responsibility for checking up on the work of all enterprises and organizations within their territorial jurisdiction. Such Soviets focus on matters like public eating facilities, public health and public transport, education, and 'social parasite' activities, working conditions, pensions, etc. Careful studies of the operation of local Soviets by Western sovietologists conclude that these institutions play a real and active role in local decision making; that a considerable diversity of views is put forward in their internal discussions prior to adopting legislation; that they actually make rather than just 'rubber stamp' decisions previously agreed on by Party organizations; and that they do influence broader political processes in the direction of popular responsiveness (Szymanski, 1979 : 82).

Membership in the Party is not a prerequisite for election to soviets. According to Uvachan, in 1976 there were seven regional soviets, 11 city soviets, 41 village soviets, and 212 small village soviets in Native regions. These soviets had approximately 11,320 members, 38.4% of whom were from 20 Siberian Native groups (see Table VI).

TABLE VI
Siberian Native Members of Soviets in Native Regions of the Soviet North, 1976

Evenks	847
Chukchi	631
Nenetz	539
Khanty	462
Evens	331
Nanai	280
Koryaks	274
Dolgans	247
Mansi	156
Selkup	100
Itelmen	90
Eskimos	89
Ulchi	83
Nivkhi	79
Udeghetz	38
Kets	31
Orochi	23
Yukaghirs	23
Nganasans	22
Saami	20

(Uvachan, 1981 : 270).

Do the numbers of Native Party members and Native members of soviets provide evidence that Siberian Native People have effective input into the political decisions that affect their lives—*e.g.*, decisions concerning environmental protection, Native language education policy, preservation of traditional occupations, etc.? People whom we interviewed told us of several cases where they, or their family members, as elected members of local or regional soviets, had exercised such power. Some examples follow:

1) Successful Native political initiatives aimed at expanding Native language education were mentioned by several people whom we interviewed. These were led by Native members of local or regional soviets;

2) Twenty-nine out of fifty-eight people whom we interviewed told us that Native-language education programmes had been expanded in their native villages since they left them. None of the forty-four FNP students whom we interviewed said that Native-language education programmes in their native villages had been reduced or eliminated since their own school days;

3) A Mansi FNP student told us that a local soviet (with Native members) in her native village stopped a small gold mining operation that was polluting a river used for fishing;

4) A Nanai chemical engineer told us that in his native region, extensive measures were taken to prevent disruption of fish spawning grounds during construction of a hydroelectric project;

5) An Orochi student told us that her mother, who had nurse's training, was given responsibility for matters concerning public health after being elected to her village soviet. As well, each member of the soviet was responsible for dealing with the concerns of people living in a specified group of houses in the village.

Of course, such anecdotal data cannot provide a comprehensive picture; yet they are consistent with the conclusions of various Western scholars regarding current Soviet nationalities policy. David Lane claims that ethnic and national minorities in the USSR are well-represented in the political elite at local levels (1981: 95). V. Zaslavsky, who lived and worked in Siberia for several years, taught for several years at the Herzen Pedagogical Institute, and who now teaches sociology at Memorial University of Newfoundland, said that Siberian Natives are well-integrated into the political institutions of Native regions.⁸

Have Siberian Native People adopted the dominant ideas, traditions, languages, life styles and values of Russians and other, larger nationalities and ethnic groups in the USSR? We shall use the

concepts of ethnic boundaries and ethnicity, defined in terms of self-ascription and ascription by others (Barth, 1969: 14-15), to deal with this question. We shall treat choice of aboriginal nationality by children of mixed parentage, retention of Native language, promotion of Native language education, retention of certain traditional festivals and promotion of Native art, literature, and crafts as indicators of ethnic identity and existence of ethnic boundaries between Siberian Native groups and other groups or nationalities, both Native and non-Native. As we shall see below, all of these factors are affected by Soviet state policy.

It is widely recognized that ethnic boundaries and identities are often products of political strategies, and this is certainly true in the case of Siberian Native People. Soviet state policies are consciously aimed at preserving ethnic, or 'national' identities of Siberian Native People, Native languages, and the various aspects of traditional Native cultures. State policies are also consciously aimed at promoting inter-ethnic 'integration' between Native groups, and between Natives and non-Natives (Kuoljok, 1985: 137-38). Here, we shall discuss some aspects of Soviet state policy which promote ethnic 'consciousness' or 'identity' among members of Siberian Native groups.

All Soviet citizens are required to carry passports which list nationality, and nationality is determined by parentage. Siberian children whose parents are 'Native' will thus be recognized as 'Native' by the Soviet state, and are eligible for various affirmative action education programmes. According to Zaslavsky and Brym, the passport system serves to maintain ethnic and national boundaries and is a major determinant of ethnic self-ascription (1983: 89). Children of mixed parentage must, at age 16, take the nationality of either their mother or their father. Thus, an indicator of maintenance of ethnic identities of Siberian Native People is choice of nationality by 16 year-olds who have one Native and one non-Native parent—*e.g.*, a Russian.

Marriages between Siberian Natives and non-Natives are, according to Soviet studies, quite common, although M. Balzer reports their absence in the 'mixed' Khanty-Russian settlement of Kazeem in 1976 (1983: 643). According to the Soviet ethnographer, I.S. Gurvitch,

Marriages between the nationalities of Siberia and the North and migrants, chiefly Russian, have become more common. Special investigations carried out in a number of different places have shown that with the Nenets, mixed families number some twenty percent (1978: 418).

Yelena Mikhailova of the Northern Peoples Section of Leningrad's Miklukho-Maklay Institute of

TABLE VII

Mixed Families in the Chukchi—Eskimo Settlements of Chaplino and Sirenikii, 1977 *

TOTAL NUMBER OF FAMILIES	SINGLE NATIONALITY FAMILIES			TOTAL NUMBER OF MIXED FAMILIES	Eskimo-Chukchi			Eskimo-Russian			Chukchi-Russian		
	Eskimo	Chukchi	Russian		Total	Husband-Eskimo	Wife-Eskimo	Total	Husband-Eskimo	Wife-Eskimo	Total	Husband-Chukchi	Wife-Chukchi
Chaplino													
121	60	15	29	17	9	4	5	6	1	5	0	0	0
Sirenikii													
203	60	53	74	16	9	7	2	5	2	3	1	0	1

* Personal Communication from Cand, Y. Mikhailova, Northern Peoples Section, Muklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnography, Leningrad, 1981.

Ethnography found that about 10% of the families were 'mixed' in the Chukchi-Eskimo settlements of Chaplino and Sirenikii in 1977 (see Table VII).

A.V. Spevokovskii, also of the Northern Peoples Section of Leningrad's Muklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnography, found that about 10% of Evens in the three Kamchatkan villages of Arka, Achaivyam, and Esso, ca. 1976-78, were married to non-Evens (see Table VIII).

TABLE VIII *

Marriages between Evens and non-Evens in the Three Kamchatkan Villages of Arka, Achaivyam, and Esso, ca. 1976-78. *

Evens married to Russians **	46
Evens married to Yakuts	17
Evens married to Chukchis	11
Evens married to Tatars	4
Evens married to Koryaks	8
Evens married to Poles	3
Evens married to Nivkhs	1
Evens married to Koreans	1
Evens married to Kazakhs	1
Evens married to Chuvashes	1

Notes for Table VIII

* These data were given to us by Candidate Spevokovskii in the fall of 1981. He said that in this region of Kamchatka, there were about 1000 Evens in 1976-78. Most of them apparently lived in these three villages.

** Evens married to non-Evens were roughly split between men and women. That is, approximately half the Evens married to Russians were men, etc.

Of the 44 FNP students whom we interviewed, five were children of unions between Natives and Russians, and four were children of unions between people of different Siberian aboriginal nationalities.⁹

Obviously, all of them had chosen to be 'Native'. Several Native teachers at the FNP, and practically all Native academics and professionals whom we met in Moscow and Leningrad, were married to non-Natives, mostly Russians. We asked all of them whether they cared about their children's choice of nationality, and the typical response was, "It's up to them". One Evenk woman, whose husband was Ukrainian, quoted her daughter as saying that she would choose to be an Evenk because she looked like an Evenk. In several cases, parents (including the Evenk woman mentioned above) arranged for their 14 or 15-year-old children to visit Native relatives in Native regions. This seemed to be aimed, perhaps unconsciously, at leading children to 'choose to be Native'.

At present, the Soviet state is heavily committed to expanding or reviving Native-language education programmes for Siberian Native Peoples. Some of these efforts have been described elsewhere (Bartels, 1985). Several Soviet ethnographers and Native People whom we interviewed told us that Native languages remain vital when they are used for work—*e.g.*, [Yupik] "Eskimo is better for reindeer breeding than Russian." We were told by Soviet ethnographers that non-Natives who join Native hunting brigades learn to use Native languages while working. Use of Native languages for work, political meetings,¹⁰ newspaper publishing, and broadcasting, no doubt contribute to retention of Native ethnic identities.

Most Siberian Native groups now have poets, writers and artists whose work reflects traditional and modern themes (see, for example, the work of Ritkheu, a Chukchi writer, 1981, 1983).¹¹ Also, the Soviet state supports many Native ensembles which perform traditional Native dances and songs. As in Canada, traditional Native craft industries thrive. The promotion of Native art, literature and crafts promote retention of Native ethnic identities among FNP students, and may well do so for most Native

people. For instance, FNP students often made decorative covers, incorporating traditional design motifs, for major written assignments. These motifs reminded us of traditional decorative motifs of Newfoundland Micmacs.

In several cases, traditional festivals of Siberian Native groups—*e.g.*, the Bear Festivals of the Nenez and Kets—have been retained, but given new Soviet content (Alekseenko, 1968: 190; Khomich, 1973: 74). For example, the Festival of the Young Reindeer among the Evenk now consists of reindeer races and other sports competitions, parties, and exchanges of scientific and practical information about reindeer breeding. Such modernized festivals also contribute to retention of ethnic identities of Siberian Native People.

Each of the seven Native regions elects one Native representative to the Chamber of Nationalities of the Supreme Soviet (Mandel, 1985: 156). This also contributes to retention of 'Native' ethnic identities.

Current expansion of traditional Native occupations (*e.g.*, reindeer breeding—see Liely, 1979: 408) no doubt promotes retention of ethnic identities. At the same time, the adoption of 'new' occupations by Siberian Native People does not appear to necessitate loss of ethnic identity. This is largely because the 'new' occupations are often practiced in Native communities, and many involve additions of modern technology to traditional occupations. For example, a Chukchi truck driver is likely to work on a reindeer state farm (*sovkhos*) in the Evenk Autonomous Region; a Nivkh radio operator is likely to work in a Nivkh area of Sakhalin, maintaining radio contact with Nivkhi fishermen at sea; etc. Also, 'new' occupations are sometimes focussed on various aspects of traditional culture. For example, Native teachers often teach Native languages, traditional art forms, or traditional occupations in Native communities. While Native People must sometimes leave Native regions in order to be trained for 'new' occupations, it is not usually necessary to stay away in order to practice them.

Even if Native People remain outside Native regions, this does not always entail a loss of ethnic identity. We interviewed several Native professionals in Moscow and Leningrad whose occupations are firmly rooted in their ethnic identities—*e.g.*, ethnographers who study the past and present cultures of their own peoples, philologists who study their Native languages, writers and artists whose work centres on various 'Native' themes, educators who plan and produce Native-language texts, curricula, and teaching materials, etc.

If our analytical tools for characterizing the effects of Soviet policy on Siberian Native People are limited to the concept of structural/cultural integra-

tion, we would have to conclude that most Siberian Native People are structurally integrated into major Soviet institutions, but not culturally integrated, insofar as they have retained important aspects of their traditional cultures. But this would be misleading. The concept of structural/cultural integration implies that majority or 'dominant' culture and institutions are simply 'presented' to minorities, who can either accept or reject them. While minorities have the option of change (*i.e.*, accepting the culture and institutions of the majority) the majority's culture and institutions seem to be immutable, or 'given'. This excludes the possibility that minority and majority institutions and cultures simultaneously can be changed in similar ways, as a result of state policy. The concept of structural/cultural integration, when applied to relations between Siberian Native People and non-Natives during the Soviet period, only allows for Native structural and/or cultural integration, or non-integration, into non-Native (*e.g.*, Russian) institutions and cultural practices. It is thus insufficient for characterizing policies of the Soviet state which have brought change to *all* Soviet Peoples, including Siberian Native and non-Native groups. While traditional occupations of Siberian Native People were collectivized and mechanized, so were the traditional occupations of Russians and other non-Native groups. Most of the occupations that are 'new' for Siberian Native People are also relatively 'new' for non-Natives, including Russians. Similarly, the Communist Party, local and regional soviets, atheism, universal science-oriented education and independence of women from male authority were not only absent from the traditional cultures of Siberian Native Peoples, but from the traditional cultures of all ethnic and national groups prior to the revolution. Concepts other than structural/cultural integration are thus necessary to characterize such changes.

Assimilation

Metta Spencer's approach to assimilation focusses on what an assimilated group retains or loses from its traditional culture, and what it gains from or contributes to a "dominant" culture. The losses, in Spencer's view, generally outweigh the gains (1981: 298). Is this an accurate characterization of the effects of Soviet policy on Siberian Native People? Terence Armstrong, writing in the late 1950s, apparently thought so:

The native peoples of the Soviet far north have had much done for them on paper; and even if the reports are not entirely reliable, it is clear that they have benefitted in

material things to a very considerable extent: medical and veterinary aid, better equipment for gaining a livelihood, better organization of food supplies, facilities for education. But if they have gained materially, they have lost spiritually. For their future existence as distinct nationalities, at least in the case of the smaller groups, is threatened by the loss of any real right to self-government, and by a tide of Slav settlement which is free, as far as the Soviet authorities are concerned, to inundate them (1958: 129-130).

While it is true that Siberian Native People have largely lost certain aspects of their traditional occupations—*e.g.*, shamanism¹² and menstrual huts—they have retained their ethnic identities, traditional occupations and, to a large extent, their languages. At the same time, they have gained in occupational diversity and are integrated into the larger society in terms of incomes, prestige and, at least to some extent, political power. The impact of Siberian Native People on the larger society are, at the same time, significant. These consist not just in traditional art forms, but substantial amounts of food (*e.g.*, fish and reindeer meat) and fur clothing for the new industrial centres of Siberia (see Armstrong, 1978: 41).¹³ It has been acknowledged from the beginning of Soviet power in the north that industrial development of Siberia would depend upon the Native population. As W. Bogoras, an ethnographer who played a key role in framing early Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People, wrote in 1928:

... The real riches of the far north, the most important of all, are represented by the northern people, who are the only means and agents to work out profitably all the natural resources of the north and bring them [*i.e.*, natural resources] in touch with human culture. Without northern tribes, the riches of the north will be left without use and without workers (Bogoras and Leonov, 1928: 59).

Soviet ethnographers told us that it has not been possible to improve on the traditional outer clothing of the Native People for northern winter conditions, and that non-Natives quickly adopt it when they first experience northern winter temperatures. In some northern areas, Native People are involved in greenhouse agriculture and dairy farming as well as traditional occupations. This decreases dependence on the south for foodstuffs.

It should be noted, however, that consideration of gains and losses involved in assimilation (or non-assimilation) is, like the concept of structural/cultural integration, inadequate for dealing with relations between Siberian Native People and non-Natives during the Soviet period. 'Assimilation', in Spencer's sense, seems to imply that Siberian Native People assimilate, or don't assimilate, to a 'dominant' culture that is simply presented to Native People, to be accepted or rejected. This diverts attention from

the fact that the traditional cultures of all Soviet national and ethnic groups, both Native and non-Native, have been changed as a result of Soviet state policy.

As noted above, from the 1930s to the present, both Natives and non-Natives have been, as a result of Soviet state policy, involved in collectivization, mechanization of traditional occupations, acquisition of literacy and scientifically-oriented education, the formation of soviets and Communist Party organizations, reduction of male authority over women, etc. These changes were alien to the traditional cultures of Natives and non-Natives alike. The concept of assimilation commonly used by Western social scientists, does not seem to take this possibility into account.

Russification

'Russification' is often defined as a type of forced assimilation in which the language and culture of a non-Russian group is suppressed in favor of Russian language and culture (Simpson, 1968: 440), while many positions of significant wealth and power are reserved for Russians.

It is true that some Native People have lost their Native languages, or no longer regard them as mother-tongues (see Table IX), but this may not have resulted from policies aimed at suppressing Native languages.

If suppression of Native languages had been the aim of the Soviet state, it is unlikely that policies aimed at maintaining Siberian Native languages would have been framed. Instead, Soviet educational policies in Native regions seem to be aimed at making Native children bilingual. According to several Soviet ethnographers, loss of Native languages occurs mainly in 'mixed' communities where Russian is used as a *lingua franca*.

The fact that Siberian Native People are not generally inferior in wealth, prestige and power to non-Natives has already been noted. There is reason to believe that Native People play a role in developing policies which affect their lives (*e.g.*, language and environmental policies), and that they have done so, to some extent, from early Soviet times.

The concept of Russification, like the concepts of structural/cultural integration and assimilation, does not allow for changes in the cultures and institutions of all Soviet national and ethnic groups, including Natives and non-Natives, which have resulted from Soviet state policies. Zaslavsky and Brym characterize some of these changes, such as collectivization, industrialization, and introduction of universal education, as 'Sovietization', and conclude that Sovietization is much more significant

TABLE IX
Language Use Among Siberian Native People

Ethnic Group	Population in Thousands		% Change 1959-70	Percentage of population who consider language of group to be their Native language	
	1959	1970		1959	1970
Nentsy	23	29	+26	84.7	83.4
Evenk	25	25	—	55.9	51.3
Khanty	19	21	+11	77	68.9
Chukchi	12	14	+16	93.9	82.6
Even	9.1	12	+39	81.4	56
Mansi	6.45	7.7	+19	59.2	52.4
Koryak	6.3	7.5	+19	90.5	81.1
Dolgan	3.9	4.9	+26	93.9	89.8
Selkup	3.8	4.3	+13	50.6	51.1
Saami	1.8	1.9	+5	69.9	56.2
Itelmen	1.1	1.3	+18	36	35.7
Ket	1	1.2	+20	77.1	74.9
Nganasan	0.75	1	+33	93.4	75.4
Yukaghir	0.4	0.6	+50	52.5	46.8
Eskimo	1.1	1.3	+18	84	60
Aleut	0.4	0.4	—	22.3	21.7

Source : Narodnoye Khozaystvo SSSR v 1970g, Moscow, 1971, pp. 16-17, cited in Armstrong, 1978 : 48.

than Russification in Soviet nationalities policy (1983 : 95). While Sovietization is a useful concept, it does not encompass state policies which have led to retention of Native languages and other aspects of traditional Native cultures.

Conclusions

When we first began to look for appropriate theoretical frameworks to characterize the results of Soviet policy toward Siberian Native People, we thought that the concept of structural/cultural integration might be useful. When we tried to apply this concept to our data, however, it seemed clear that it was insufficient for illuminating past and present social and cultural change among Native People in Soviet Siberia. The concept of 'assimilation' was also inappropriate for ordering our data, as was the concept of Russification. It was necessary to look further for concepts which could encompass the integration of Siberian Native People into major Soviet institutions, *and* their retention of many aspects of traditional cultures. It was also necessary to relate both of these processes to state policies which have been applied to *all* Soviet nationalities and ethnic groups. Such concepts must allow us to deal with, for example, an Evenk man who works

with a reindeer breeding brigade on a state farm in the Evenk autonomous region; uses the products of industrial technology at work and at home; has a working knowledge of the Evenk, Russian, and German languages; has a daughter who is a doctor; has a son who works alongside him in his reindeer brigade; celebrates the Festival of the Young reindeer; is a committed atheist; has a wife who is a teacher in an Evenk national school, and who is a member of the local soviet; has a Russian daughter-in-law who works in a daycare centre; has grandchildren who will have to choose Russian or Evenk 'nationality' at age 16, and will probably choose Evenk because of the privileges accorded to Siberian Native People, and because of a feeling of 'being Evenk'.

The Soviet ethnographic concepts of assimilation and consolidation may be appropriate for dealing with this type of case, and with the general results of Soviet policy toward Siberian Native Peoples.

'Consolidation', for Soviet ethnographers, means the emergence of a common ethnic or national identity and lessening of differences between groups with similar or related languages, cultures or histories. Consolidation is promoted by use of a common literary language (*e.g.*, the written language

used in schools, newspapers, etc.), emergence of a common educational system, and growing awareness of a common history and culture (Bromley, 1983: 13-21). 'Assimilation', as used by Soviet ethnographers, means inter-ethnic or international integration promoted by inter-marriage, knowledge of various 'international' languages (e.g., Russian, English, German), orientation toward internationally-accepted educational, scientific, and cultural standards and increasing similarities in institutional structures (Bromley, 1983: 15-16). N. Bromley and other Soviet ethnographers do not use 'assimilation' as a euphemism for Russification. Rather, they use it to describe a process where Soviet institutions, such as soviets and state farms, replace or modify certain traditional cultural practices and institutions among all Soviet nationalities and ethnic groups. For example, the decreasing influence of the Russian Orthodox faith, the disappearance of private ownership of the major means of production, the formation of soviets, the introduction of compulsory education, and the collectivization of agriculture among Russians were paralleled by the decreasing influence of shamans and wealthy reindeer breeders, the introduction of compulsory education, and the collectivization of traditional occupations among the Khanty (see Bartels, 1983). These developments have brought increasing contacts and inter-marriage between Soviet nationalities and ethnic groups.

As Kuoljok has noted, Soviet state policy is consciously aimed at promoting assimilation (in the sense outlined above) and consolidation among Soviet ethnic and national groups, including Natives and non-Natives (1985: 137-8). We hope to determine the utility of the concepts of consolidation and assimilation by finding out, during future fieldwork, whether consolidation and assimilation are 'reflected' in the everyday lives of Siberian Native People.

NOTES

1. We wish to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for the Leave Fellowship (for Dennis Bartels) which supported this research, and the USSR Academy of Sciences which hosted us in the USSR. We also wish to thank Diana Gerasimova, Yuri A. Syem, Natlia N. Kyakshoto, and other teachers and students at the FNP, the ethnographers at the Northern Peoples Section of the Miklukho-Maklay Institute of Ethnography in Leningrad, the educators at the Northern Peoples Section of the Institute of National Schools in Moscow, the workers at the Northern Peoples Section of "Education" Publishers in Leningrad, and many others who assisted us with our research.

2. Native science and math teachers used to be trained at the FNP, but are now trained at other pedagogical institutes—e.g., in Khabarovsk.

3. By 1934, political-administrative units roughly corresponding to the traditional lands of Native Peoples had been established. In these 'autonomous regions', political bodies were required, by law, to include Native People. Traditional hunting, fishing, trapping, and reindeer-grazing areas were reserved for Native People and for long-time non-Native settlers. Speculators, private fur traders, and other relatively recent arrivals were compelled to leave these areas, often by soviets and militias composed of Native People. Today, there are seven relatively large autonomous regions, and several smaller ones, where most Native People live.

4. A 'technicum' is a post-secondary technical College. Teachers from the FNP sometimes travel to Native regions in order to assist in giving entrance exams. In 1981, three FNP teachers did this.

5. If, for example, a Native woman FNP student marries a Ukrainian, she may accompany her husband to the Ukraine. She could, of course, work there.

6. State farms (*sovkhozi*) are owned by the state. All state farmers are paid a salary by the state and belong to a union, like factory workers. Collective farms (*kolkhozi*) are owned co-operatively by the people who work on them. Collective farmers share the profits from their farm instead of receiving salaries from the state.

7. 'Important supervisory and political posts' are defined as full-time Party work, and membership on management boards of state farms, collective farms, or other enterprises.

8. Personal communication, fall, 1985. Zaslavsky and Brym argue that representatives of small nationalities hold significant leadership positions and high status jobs in practically all the republics of the USSR. This aspect of Soviet nationalities policy, they claim, serves to defuse potential national/ethnic resistance to the state by winning over 'native elites' (1983: 100).

This is not to say that Siberian Native People always effectively exercise political power over issues that affect their lives (see Chichlo, 1981). Instances where they fail to do so, however, do not necessarily mean that they do not participate in major Soviet political and economic institutions. Similarly, if state or collective farms in Native regions have social or economic problems (see Humphrey, 1983: 16), this does not necessarily mean that state and collective farmers do not participate in major Soviet political and economic institutions.

9. Some FNP students did not give us any information about their fathers.

10. According to one of the people whom we interviewed, political meetings in Native regions are sometimes conducted in the Native language and Russian. This makes meetings quite long because of the time required for translation.

11. *Soviet Literature*, 1 (334), 1976, is devoted to works by Siberian Native authors.

School textbooks in Siberian Native languages often have poems or prose selections by or about well-known Native authors. For example, the introductory reader in the

Chukchi language has two poems by Ritkheu (Vkovin, Karavaeva, Lutfullina, and Uvaurgina, 1977: 101; 123). The introductory reader in the Nivkh language has several poems by the Nivkh poet, Sangi (Sangi and Otaina, 1981: 116; 120). The introductory reader in the Evenk language has a page about the Evenk artist, Zharov (Boitsova, Kudria and Romanova, 1976: 90).

12. Vestiges of shamanism exist among some Native groups (Balzer, 1983: 642; Taksami, 1978), but evidently do not serve as a focus of ethnic identity or resistance to the Soviet state (Balzer, 1983: 643).

13. A Soviet ethnographer told us that caribou, hunted mainly by Native People, provide one-third of the meat supply for the industrial city of Norilsk.

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