Peoples and Cultures of Post-Soviet Eurasia

Week 1

Theme: Overview of map and languages; history of nationalities policy

I. History
   A. Lenin (roughly 1917-1928)
      1. Nativization policy: recognized need to equalize socioeconomic status of non-Russians
      2. affirmative action policies for universities and leadership positions, among other areas
      3. believed Russia could not be a republic in the sense of the other republics
   B. Stalin (roughly 1928-1953)
      1. Reversed much of what Lenin had done
      2. Arrested and killed most of Lenin’s leaders
      3. Loss of some native language instruction and use
      4. extermination and deportation of whole ethnic groups
      5. Anti-cosmopolitan (anti-Semitism) campaign
   C. Khrushchev (1953-1964)
      1. 1956 Congress exposing what Stalin did
      2. Back to modified nativization, called it flourishing of peoples
      3. Merging of nations the goal
   D. Brezhnev (1964-1983/84)
      1. Believed Soviet identity was becoming more important to the people than national identities
      2. Indigenous leaders consolidated their power
   E. Gorbachev (1985 – 1990/91)
      1. did not understand nationalities problems; did not have coherent nationalities policies
      2. His responses to ethnic situations led the Communist Party elite and its opposition to unite against him
Week 2 Notes

Peoples and Cultures of Post-Soviet Eurasia

Week 2

Theme: History continued, Yeltsin; general situation in republics at collapse of the USSR; Russians; Volga Tatars

I. Yeltsin
   A. Finalized break-up of USSR

II. General State of Affairs
   A. Nationalities policies and issues in the post-Soviet republics
      1. Classic nation-state is consolidated around one ethnic core
      2. Russians tended to be large minorities without identifying with titular nationalities
      3. Moldova had ethnic Gagauz, who had secessionist desires
      4. Wars in several republics in process of setting up nation-state—predominantly
         Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh seceded from Azerbaijan; Abkhaz broke away from
         Georgia
      5. Tensions as result of people wanting to return to lands from which Stalin
         deported them—Crimean Tatars, Mskhetian Turks, Volga Germans
   B. Models for relations between titular nationalities and others
      1. Smith suggests 8 on p. 36

III. Russians
   A. Pertinent Information
      1. Indo-European lang. Group; christianized 10th century; part of Eastern Slavic
         tribes that developed around Kiev
      2. Russian nationalism in 1970s took form of environmental movements
      3. 1980s nationalism came into open, a reaction against other nationalist, anti-
         Russian movements
      4. Russians and Moscow gave non-Russian ethnic groups something to unite against
         (Russian chauvinism), Russian nationalism lacked such a common enemy