

SOME PROBLEMS OF ALPHABETS AND THE RUSSIAN ORTHOGRAPHY

Uzbek Sh. Baitchura, Leningrad

Problems of Russian orthography (and of other languages in Russia) have been much discussed, thousands of improvements have been suggested lately, and this gives evidence of the unfitness of the Cyrillic alphabet adopted together with the Greek branch of Christianity and ever since being gradually latinized, although the process has not yet been completed.

In the 20es, after the Arabian alphabet of the Moslems of Russia was replaced by the Latin alphabet "to bring these peoples nearer to the higher European culture", although the Arabic script (as other alphabets of Semitic origin) was superior to the Latin and especially to the Cyrillic ones (G. Sharaf et al., 1926), the problem of replacing the Cyrillic alphabet of Russians by the Latin one arose. The idea was supported by V.I. Lenin, by the 1st Minister of Education A.V. Lunačarskij, a.o., a "Subcommittee on Latinization of the Russian Alphabet" was established at the Ministry of Education; its president was Prof. N.F. Yakovlev, and its resolution (1930) stated that the Russian alphabet was "an anachronism", separating us from the West and the East, a means of "russification", of "national oppression" and that "a new alphabet must be adopted... in keeping with the international content of socialistic culture" (i.e. Latin). But Lenin and Lunačarskij died, the project was dropped, even the new national Latin alphabets were replaced by the Russian one without discussions or explanations.

Nowadays, when the Latin alphabet has become the principal means of international contacts, it is time to revive the plan of replacing the Cyrillic alphabet by the Latin one (used also by many Slav peoples, Estonians, Letts, etc.), which is justified from the scientific and practical points of view, as the Latin alphabet is superior to the Cyrillic one in all respects and answers the spirit of our time, consisting in a general trend toward international collaboration, but not in national or governmental isolation or confrontation (including that on the level of alphabets).

References

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