

STATEHOOD, LANGUAGE, AND ALPHABET: A KAZAKHSTAN CASE STUDY

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As a young state, just 15 years old, the Republic of Kazakhstan is still developing its national identity and civic spirit formula. The absence or, at least, precariousness of the basis on which a *civic nation* united by a *shared system of values* could emerge is a popular topic of discussion. More often than not this problem is seen through the prism of ethnic relations, which, in turn, are reduced to the “autochthonous population”-the Russian speakers dichotomy.¹ Today, this dichotomy is still dominated by a language issue of great symbolic significance. Reform of the alphabet came to the fore as one of the aspects of the country’s state language problem in the wake of President Nazarbaev’s speech at the 12th Session of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan. It seems, however, that vague and often confusing interpretations of everything related to the concepts of *ethnos*, *nation*, *nationalism*, *national state*, and *civil society* are the real stumbling blocks. We have inherited this from the Soviet times; today, this part of Soviet legacy causes misunderstandings fraught with conflicts, at least among politicians. We intend to outline our approaches to a few of the most burning issues within the statehood-language-alphabet triangle.

Today, ethnic relations in Kazakhstan are associated with the relations between the “locals” and the “Russian speakers.” In fact, the situation is not that simple: not only is *Kazakhstani society* divided, the state-forming *Kazakh ethnos* is too. There is a vast cultural-psychological gap between the urban Kazakhs, who speak Russian and are integrated into the post-Soviet (to a certain extent Western-oriented) culture that uses the Russian language, and the population that speaks the Kazakh tongue and is guided by traditional values. The objective social distinctions between the two groups make it even harder to bridge the cultural-psychological gap. The “rupture syndrome” of the Kazakh cultural and spiritual expanse presents the main obstacle on the road toward forming a common civil self-awareness among the Kazakhstanis. Below we shall dwell on this in greater detail.

¹ N.I. Kharitonova, “Natsional’ny vopros v Kazakhstane,” available at [http://www.ia-centr/public_php?id=30], 15 June, 2006.

The far from simple relations between the “locals” and the “Russian-speaking population” are also pertinent, but in order to bring the two groups together into a real (rather than proclaimed) political entity, the Kazakhs themselves must achieve spiritual unification and national revival lest the entity known as the Kazakhstanis is left without a *supporting structure* and a firm foundation on which their statehood can be built. We shall demonstrate below that the *ethnic* structure does not contradict the idea of the nation’s *civic* model.

President Nazarbaev has posed himself the task of building a Kazakhstani *political nation* patterned on the French model,² which can be described as a prime example for civil and democratic states ruled by law. Not infrequently, the idea of a political nation is erroneously interpreted as a purely political community that has nothing to do with ethnic values (language and culture in particular). In this context, political or civil nationalism is perceived as political loyalty to any given state. This leads, on the one hand, to the illusion that it is possible to build a nation without a common tongue or cultural standards. The demand to make Russian the second state language is an example of such delusions. The opposite camp criticizes the erroneously interpreted idea of civil nationalism; the critics argue that it will not survive the simplest of tests and that a “nation” of this sort will be a community made out of whole cloth. From this it follows that purely ethnic nationalism, Kazakh nationalism in our case, is the only acceptable form of nationalism. The ideological and theoretical misunderstanding described above produced two irreconcilable positions. There is the danger of a split along ethnic lines, which is the most dangerous prospect of all.

Nationalism is the key idea. Under Soviet power, this was a term of abuse that meant either “hatred of other nations” or “the idea of superiority of one nation over the others,” or both put together. Perestroika taught us to distinguish between “correct” nationalism (“love of one’s own nation and respect of others”) and the “extreme” nationalism described above. This, however, failed to explain the deep-seated meaning of nationalism. We can even describe nationalism in general as a broad idea without negative connotations very close to what was habitually described as “national self-awareness.” Strictly speaking, nationalism is a global trend in which *ethnicity (language and culture* in particular) becomes a tool of *politics* and *power*, as well as an inalienable part of *civil self-awareness*. As distinct from the pre-capitalist states of the pre-industrial era, the state today cannot function without a common language understood by all and common cultural standards (see above about the ethnic-supporting structure of statehood). The opposite is also true: to survive in the world today an *ethnos* needs *statehood*.³ It would be no exaggeration to say that in the 21st century, nations without statehoods are either doomed to oblivion and loss of individuality, or isolation and backwardness will be the price they pay for survival (this is best illustrated by the tribes of the Amazon jungles).

This situation, which first emerged in Western Europe throughout the 18th and 19th centuries, was rooted in socioeconomic and ideological conditions. On the one hand, developing technologies required at least a universally literate population able to read and write in a particular *language*. The developing market called for mutual understanding, at least within the same state; destroyed social obstacles and increased social mobility accelerated the process of linguistic and cultural *unification*. During the pre-capitalist period, the cultural gap between a peasant and a feudal lord from one country, for example, was much more obvious than between two peasants or two feudal lords from different countries, during industrialization and capitalism, this gap became a problem. On the other hand, in the pre-capitalist world, there was uncontested faith in the holy and divine nature of power (this explains why the Ottoman sultans preferred to call themselves caliphs, that is, representatives of the Prophet, the Chinese emperors referred to themselves as “sons of Heaven,” and the Christian mon-

² Ibidem.

³ See: E. Gellner, “Prishestvie natsionalizma. Mify natsii i klassa,” *Put*, No. 1, 1992, pp. 19, 22.

archs were crowned in churches and were believed to be “the Lord’s anointed”). In the 18th and 19th centuries, when religion loosened its grip on people’s minds, the European intellectual class came to the conclusion that *the people*, rather than a supra-human Higher instance, were the source of the legitimacy of power. Only power elected by the people or acting in the interests of the people or, at least, pretending to act in the interests of *the people* (a habit of all 20th-century dictators) can be accepted as legitimate. The greater political role of language and culture led to a situation in which the people were identified with the *ethnos* as a community based on a common language and culture, while statehood began to be perceived as the “servant of the people.” Hence the slogan: every *nation* should have a *state* of its own, that is, the familiar idea of the *right of nations to self-determination*. The *nation* can be described as an *ethnos* perceived as an object of the political loyalty of its members, which recognized itself as an entity of politics and, therefore, strove for political self-organization, of which the *national state* is the highest form. The political element means that despite its ethnic foundation, the nation can no longer be regarded as a purely ethnic category.

Until the 1980s, nationalism was banned in the Soviet Union as a topic of discussion. A contemporary expert has aptly remarked: “The very lexical field in which a discussion of nationalism could have unfolded remained occupied and ideologically distorted to the extent that it was very hard to translate into Russian any Western work on national issues.”⁴ In the West, Nationalism Studies became a developed branch of sociology. There are many outstanding experts in this field: Ernest Gellner, Anthony Smith, Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, Miroslav Hroch, and others. So far there are only Russian translations of works by E. Gellner; there are no Kazakh translations of his works or the works of others. Meanwhile, the academic communities of young states, of which Kazakhstan is one, busy shaping their national identities badly need academic knowledge of the theory of nationalism.

The contemporary theory of nationalism distinguishes two main models of nation-building—civic and ethnic.⁵ In the past, France was a model civic nation, today the term applies to the United States and Canada. Japan, a mono-racial and mono-ethnic country, is the best example of an ethnic nation. The classics of nationalism admit that hardly any of the now existing nations can be described as totally “ethnic” or totally “civic.” Both elements are invariably present to different degrees.⁶ The Republic of Kazakhstan, still undecided about the best version of nation-building, is at a crossroads. The local situation can be placed somewhere in the middle between the two extremes of the American and the Turkish model. As the world’s largest superpower, America attracts a lot of interest, while Turkey is interesting as a linguistically, culturally, and religiously kindred country. Let’s look at both models.

America is a classical country of emigrants where the Anglo-Saxon *ethnos*, its culture, and its Protestant religion dominated from the very beginning. Today, however, multiculturalism is the predominant ideology, according to which the Americans are united in a single society by the ideal of political freedom and democracy shared by the majority. Ethnic, racial, and confessional differences have survived and are recognized by the state, but they have no decisive role to play. In real life, the state has moved away from this ideology several times. During World War II, the American Japanese were interned; today Muslims are under strong pressure. Despite this, American society is commonly regarded as a civic (political) nation united by the emotionally-charged *ideal* of political freedom and democracy.

In 1923, the Republic of Turkey replaced the Ottoman Empire, which fell apart as a result of World War I. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), a leader who managed to mobilize the masses and

⁴ *Natsionalizm i formirovanie natsiy. Teorii—modeli—kontseptsii*, ed. by A.I. Miller, Moscow, 1994, pp. I-II.

⁵ See: H. Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism*, New York, 1967.

⁶ See: C. Calhoun, “Nationalism and Ethnicity,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, No. 19, 1993.

save the country on the brink of a national catastrophe, played an outstanding role in the development of the new Turkish state. Later he showed the way to modernization European-style. As the center of the former empire, Turkey was a polyethnic country in which the Turks of Asia Minor (Turks proper) lived (and are living) side by side with Greeks, Armenians, Jews, Kurds, Bosnians, Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims), Lazes, Georgians, “Circassians” (a blanket term for the North Caucasian peoples), as well as members of nearly all the Turkic-speaking ethnoses of the former Soviet Union. Turkey followed the road that France and some other West European countries took in the 19th century. For the purpose of nation-building, the groups that differed ethnically and confessionally from the majority were officially recognized as minorities—Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. All Muslims, their ethnic origins notwithstanding, were regarded as Turks. The following decades saw uncompromising efforts to impose on the people a single culture that used one literary language based on the Istanbul dialect. Until recently the state refused to recognize the fact that there are more than three minorities in Turkey. At the same time, ethnic origin has never been an obstacle: all citizens are equal and all can aspire to fill any official post if they voluntarily assume the Turkish identity on which the state insists. Presidents İsmet İnönü and Turgut Özal, for example, were Kurds.

All Turkish citizens are aware of their ethnic roots, so far ethnic origins have not become a political issue; the subject is not taboo, but shared self-awareness is real and the level of shared Turkish patriotism is very high. The Kurds who live in compact groups in the country’s southeastern corner—an economically and socially backward area—refuse to accept the Turkic identity. Most of the population willingly accepts everything said above.

On the whole Turkish patriotism rests on:

- the *idea of Motherland (Vatan)*, understood as the territory, statehood, and its long history (joint opposition to the Christian world within the united Ottoman state);
- the successful idea of the people’s *cultural unity*; and
- the Muslim *religious feeling*, which the secular state does not openly promote; this factor, however, plays a very important role.

Turkish nationalism is closer to ethnic rather than to civil nationalism, even though it rests on a heterogeneous ethnic substratum. It should be said that its obvious etatist bias makes Turkish nationalism very similar to Russian nationalism.

The above demonstrates how the principle “many ethnoses—one *nation*” can be realized. In the case of America, this principle was realized through the unique nature of American society as a community of emigrants who share an ambitious, and emotionally uplifting political ideal. The English language, as an element of culture, plays an important role despite the ideology of multiculturalism. In Turkey, the Turkish tongue, as a cultural value and element that binds the nation together, is nothing short of an object of veneration. The confessional uniformity of the larger part of Turkish society and the long history of shared statehood are no less important.

The time has come to look at Kazakhstan, another polyethnic country, and identify the features that make it different from the U.S. and Turkey. What pattern should the Kazakhstanis follow: the American melting pot or the Turkish Kemalist nation? Kazakhstan shares the following features with the United States:

- Ethnic and confessional variety;
- Official recognition and support, to a certain extent, of cultural diversity;
- The short period that the *entire* population can regard as its *common* history (essentially the post-1917 period).

Kazakhstan shares the following features with Turkey:

- A trend toward domination of the Turkic-speaking Muslims (today, over 60 percent of the total population);
- The absence of a purely *political* (that is, non-ethnic and non-religious) ideal able to inspire and mobilize the *entire* population.

The linguistic situation in Kazakhstan sets it apart from both models: for well-known historical reasons, the Kazakh language and Kazakh culture are so far neither dominant nor venerated.

Here are several general conclusions. First, for the reasons described above, it is impossible to apply either the American or the Turkish model of nation-building to Kazakhstan; it should look for a path of its own; America and Turkey have successfully solved the problem, while following their own, very different, paths. Kazakhstan cannot emulate Turkey; it stands *even less* chance by emulating America. The French model of nation-building that President Nazarbaev selected lies between the American and the Turkish model. On the one hand, in France, like in the United States, the ambitious and emotionally charged ideal Libert ,  galit , Fraternit  played a huge role in bringing the initially heterogeneous population together. People of different ethnic origins could regard themselves as part of the French nation. On the other hand, the French culture, the French language in particular, was expected to play one of the key roles. By the time of the French Revolution, less than half of the country used the French tongue. Until the mid-20th century, the state ruthlessly imposed it on the nation. Even though the pressure was lifted, in the last few decades “linguistic chauvinism” is still very strong in France.

The linguistic side of the French model is not stressed at random. The idea of a civic nation in Kazakhstan has many ardent supporters and no less ardent opponents for the simple reason that it is erroneously understood as an idea of a complete abandonment of the ethnic element of the Kazakhstani civic spirit. In other words, the idea of a civic nation is reduced to the primitive “there is no need to study the Kazakh language.” The ardent supporters refer to Switzerland, which uses three languages, and Canada, with two state tongues, and point out that both are highly successful states at the top of the list of 50 most successful countries. They prefer to ignore the fact that the former is a confederation, while Canada is a federation with strong separatist sentiments in French-speaking Quebec. If applied in Kazakhstan, the Swiss-Canadian model would mean federalization of the single country into two semi-independent units: the Kazakh-speaking south and west and the Russian-speaking north and east coexisting under the national flag as a symbol of formal unity. This is *unacceptable in principle* as well as for many other important reasons. Those busy promoting the Swiss model are either sincerely deluded or are Kazakhstan’s secret ill-wishers.

No unitary state—Kazakhstan is and will remain one—uses two official languages. Sweden and Finland are two legal, and purely formal, exceptions: their Finnish and Swedish minorities comprise several percent of the total population. For this reason, the Finnish language in Sweden and the Swedish language in Finland are used as second state tongues. In real life, this is merely a goodwill gesture because both countries use only one tongue: Swedish in Sweden and Finnish in Finland. Russia could have displayed its goodwill in the same way in relation to Kazakhstan by making the Kazakh tongue the second state language. An impressive, but completely meaningless gesture. To sum up: only federations and confederations use more than one official language (an alternative that is completely unacceptable in Kazakhstan’s case), or such use is reduced to fiction, no matter how impressive (those who insist on two tongues for Kazakhstan will not like this⁷).

In other words, worldwide experience has already rejected the idea of two equal state languages in a unitary state. This means that Kazakhstan should use one of two alternatives for dealing with its

⁷ Interview with I.S. Klimoshenko, Chairman of the LAD Republican Slavic Movement, available at [http://www.russians.kz/2006/12/12/intervju_s_predsedatelem_respublikanskogo_slavjanskogo_dvizhenija_lad_is_klimoshenko.html].

linguistic predicament: either (a) the state should insist that sooner or later all its citizens master the Kazakh language as the state tongue. It will become the dominant one and gradually develop into a tool of communication among ethnic groups, or (b) the state must go back to Soviet times when the Russian language dominated in almost all spheres of life, while the Kazakh language was driven to the social margins.

No compromise is possible for the very deep-rooted reasons explained above. The idea of the Kazakh-speakers and Russian-speakers existing in parallel dimensions and using their own languages in all spheres without infringing on the rights of each other is a utopian one that cannot be realized. For historical reasons, sooner or later, one of the languages will be forced to retreat.

We shall demonstrate below why the (a) alternative is the only acceptable one and why the (b) alternative will destroy Kazakhstani society. The utopian effort to perpetuate domination of the Russian language in Kazakhstan would have been a crying injustice to the Kazaks from the moral point of view. There is also a pragmatic side. Continued domination of Russian would have preserved the still obvious cultural and psychological rupture and a linguistic and ethnic gap. This means that the pernicious situation in which part of the nation can use two languages, while the other part uses only one and does not understand the native language of the other part will be preserved. Indeed, who will learn a language that is useless for everyday and career purposes? In other words, the two groups will continue living in different cultural and in partly different information environments. They will never blend into a single civil society and will remain two separate communities living under one, fragile, political roof that may collapse at any moment. To bring all those who live in Kazakhstan together into a *single cultural and information expanse* so that they recognize themselves as a *united civil society*, it is absolutely necessary for the Russian speakers to learn the Kazakh language. Even if we do accept bilingualism as Kazakhstan's hallmark, it should become a *universal* feature that would unite *all* Kazakhstanis. Since Russian is fairly widespread, the problem is reduced to the need to master the state tongue: this is the *civic duty* of all who do not know it, but who sincerely regard themselves as citizens of Kazakhstan and wish the country well.

There is another important aspect: we have written above that one language will be forced to retreat and tried to prove that in the Republic of Kazakhstan it is the Russian language that should retreat for the sake of the Kazakh and not vice versa. This should not be taken to mean that we want to drive the Russian language from the republic's social life. We do not mean that. Even if we imagine that in future the Russian language will be deprived of any special status (that is, have no legal advantages over the German, Korean, or Dungan languages—this is suggested merely for the sake of argument), it will never be forgotten and never be excluded from the social sphere. The Russian diaspora has a strong metropolitan country just across the border that produces and will continue to produce a stream of cultural products in Russian. They are used today by all Kazakhstanis, not only ethnic Russians, and will be used in the future as well. In the future, the Russian language's status in the "linguistic hierarchy" will be lower than that of the state tongue, but much higher than of any other language used by the ethnic groups.

The time has come to discuss a switch from the Cyrillic to the Latin script. This is a pet idea of the nationally-oriented sector of the Kazakhstani public, which has been a topic of discussion since the late 1980s. The president, who officially voiced it at the 12th Session of the Assembly of the Peoples of Kazakhstan, triggered a heated discussion. We are convinced that (a) this switch is inevitable and (b) it should be realized immediately without waiting for a "more opportune moment." Here are our reasons.

First: why should the alphabet be changed? Here is an example: recently one of us witnessed a disgusting and humiliating situation in which a Kazakh family, when selecting a name for their newborn daughter, rejected the alternatives Møldir and Rabiřa because the older generation feared, not without reason, that the girl would be called Moldir or Rabiřa, which sounded wrong to their ears. To

put it simply, they were concerned about how the name would sound in Russian. In academic parlance, they took into account the objective fact of the domination of the Russian orthoepic norm in the Kazakhstanis' linguistic perception (this is true not only of the Russian speakers, but also of a large number of locals. To better understand the depth of the Kazakhs' national humiliation, let's imagine that a Russian family declines the names of Ivan or Timofey because they would sound wrong in English. We do hope that this black day for the Russians will never come).

Is Cyrillic at the bottom of all the problems? Yes, but this is only part of the answer. It would be more correct to say that the switch to the Latin script is not so much a linguistic as a political issue. This does not make the change of alphabet less urgent. Linguistically, the Latin and Cyrillic scripts are two kindred graphic systems that can be used for an absolutely adequate alphabet for any of the Turkic languages, the Kazakh language included. In real life, however, the purely linguistic approach turns out to be one-sided and therefore insufficient. Under the strong and permanent impact of the Russian culture and the Russian language, Cyrillic, an absolutely harmless system per se, becomes a factor of powerful cultural pressure. The sounds absent from the Russian and denoted by additional letters in the Kazakh Cyrillic alphabet are seen to be of secondary importance and little suited for official use. In the episode described above, the elegant Kazakh names of Møldir and Rabira, with the suspect sounds denoted by letters "ø," "i," and "r," were rejected. The fact that the Russian tongue dominated in Soviet times irrespective of the alphabet used by the Kazakh language could have produced similar attitudes. The Cyrillic script merely enhances this effect and will continue doing this. If the Kazakh language started using another script and all letters became "non-Russian," the involuntary psychological attitude toward the sounds of the native tongue as "normal" and "specific" will disappear.

This raises another question: Will another language, English, take the place of Russian? This means: Will we trade bad for worse at our own expense? The answer is "No." The alphabet is the hallmark of any civilization and the choice of alphabet is the choice of a country's civilizational future. This is what the reform's opponents say.⁸ It is too early to speak about a shift to the Latin script as a "drift toward the West."⁹ The Latin script holds a very special place in the world today: it is used by many countries geographically and civilizationally far removed from each other. It is used by Muslim states of the far abroad—Turkey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Kenya, and Nigeria (the first three are among the leaders of the Islamic world); Turkic-speaking CIS countries—Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Azerbaijan; Vietnam and the Philippines in the non-Muslim part of Asia, as well as Latin America, Africa, and Oceania. This makes the Latin script an international alphabet. It arrived along with the Western civilization, but it became detached from it long ago. Today it is a *universal cosmopolitan phenomenon*.

The Cyrillic script, on the other hand, is one of the *regional alphabets* clearly associated with the civilizational area of the Orthodox Slavs. The switch to the Latin script will mean that Kazakhstan joins the world community as an equal member, while the Cyrillic remains a symbol of our country's cultural, psychological and, therefore, political dependence on Russia. (We have cited above the ugly and degrading forms of this dependence.) In fact, this does nothing to promote healthy and mutually advantageous relations between Kazakhstan and Russia. The switch to the Latin script will indeed symbolize a certain "distancing from Russia,"¹⁰ but by the same token it will help us leave the negative legacy of the past behind for the sake of both countries and their nations.

Why should this be done now? Is haste advisable or inevitable? Would it not be wiser to wait until the end of the transition period when the national economy becomes strong enough to cope with this far from simple—and far from cheap—task? We cannot and we should not wait. This important

⁸ Interview with I.S. Klimoshenko, Chairman of the LAD Republican Slavic Movement, available at [http://www.russians.kz/2006/12/12/intervju_s_predsedatelem_respublikanskogo_slavjanskogo_dvizhenija_lad_is_klimoshenko.html].

⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁰ Ibidem.

task should be completed now: the cultural-political issue has not only an economic aspect (the state can find the necessary means), but also a psychological, or even moral-psychological, aspect. In other words, the reform should cause as little discomfort for the nation as possible. Today, when the absolute majority of the non-Kazakhs do not know the state language, while knowledge of the Kazakh language is limited to its oral form among a large share of the Kazakhs, a change in alphabet will be a relatively painless process. Those who do not know Kazakh will learn it in its Latin form. In 10 or 20 years, when most Kazakhs and people of other ethnic groups have mastered the state language in its Cyrillic form, it will be much harder (although probably slightly cheaper) to reform the alphabet. Moral and psychological traumas will be inevitable.

There is another fairly sensitive issue. We mentioned at the beginning of this article that the state-forming Kazakh ethnos and its cultural and spiritual expanse are ruptured. This is not an issue of domestic political importance alone. The Kazakh tongue, which will become *de jure* and *de facto* the state language, should be restored not only among the Russified urban Kazakhs. There is another, no less important, aspect. The state and the academic community should concentrate on the *Kazakhs living abroad* (the *oralmans*); much attention should be paid to those who are prepared to return to their historical homeland from the Far Abroad. The problem is a grave one: even those Kazakhs who lived in Kazakhstan and avoided assimilation under Soviet power (that is, preserved the native tongue and many of the ethnic traditions) had to perform a “leap forward” together with the rest of the country, losing in the process some of their traditional culture and mentality. The Kazakhs of the Far Abroad (especially those living in the Muslim world) preserved what had been a common heritage on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution.

These two groups (separated in the physical sense) need each other and seek mutual assistance. The heritage that the *oralmans* have preserved should be restored to the Kazakhstanis: we should launch systematic studies of their linguistic features and folklore as well as the traditions and myths preserved by the older generation. (It should be said here that nothing is being done on the international scale to restore and to study the overall picture of the Kazakhs’ language and their literary and folklore heritage.) On the other hand, the *oralmans* will find it hard to adjust to contemporary Kazakhstani society and its mentality, which is very different from what it was in the past. This means that they will need assistance in the form of adaptation centers where they can study the Russian language and the history of Kazakhstan (the Soviet period especially) and profit from psychological and consultative services. Everything should be done to help these people adjust to the land of their ancestors and to ensure that others, including the local Kazakhs, not regard them as aliens.

Not all Kazakhs living abroad are prepared to move to their historical homeland. There are many who want to return, while just as many prefer to live where they are. This is true, in the first place, of the Kazakhs in Western Europe and Turkey, as well as in some other countries. The metropolitan country, that is, the Republic of Kazakhstan, should remain in contact with the entire diaspora; it should not restrict itself to persuading people to come back “home.” Those who prefer to stay abroad and who will not come to Kazakhstan in the near future should receive their share of the attention. Israel, Armenia, Greece, and Ireland are doing precisely this. This calls for a single information expanse in the form of a high-quality informative international Kazakh website equally interesting to the Kazakhstanis and the Kazakh diaspora. This is very important: the Kazakhs inside and outside Kazakhstan need cultural and spiritual reunification. The distance between a Kazakh in Afghanistan and a Kazakh in Sweden is no shorter than the distance between the Russified “shala-қazaқ” and the Kazakhs of the remote auls inside the country. The gap should be bridged. We also need a complete database on Kazakh academics, businessmen, and people of the creative arts living in the Near and Far Abroad to be able to invite them to cooperate with their historical homeland.

Finally, Kazakhstan should extend cultural assistance on a regular basis to those parts of the Kazakh diaspora that have chosen to stay in the country they are living in and to remain *Kazakhs*: they

prefer to use their native tongue and be aware of their history and culture. Kazakhstan can encourage these determined people by providing them, at their request, with language and history teachers, musical folk instruments, etc. Such groups should receive Kazakh films, music, etc. on a regular basis. So far the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan has established contacts with the Kazakhs of Turkey. It seems that a specialized agency working together with a network of adaptation centers mentioned above would be better suited to the task.

Obviously, the Cyrillic-Latin script issue should be resolved in favor of determined promotion of the Kazakh tongue as the state language based on the Latin script. This is of vital importance for establishing closer contacts with the Kazakh diaspora and for successful adaptation of the *oralmans* to Kazakhstani society. On the one hand, the Latin script is much better suited for Kazakhstan's emerging international information expanse. On the other, it is needed to let those who return to their historical homeland feel at ease once they master the Kazakh language. Finally, the very fact that the two issues—the language/alphabet and the emergence of an international Kazakh community under the aegis of the independent Republic of Kazakhstan—are closely connected is another argument in favor of the state language/alphabet alternative.

To sum up. We are convinced that a single civic nation in the Republic of Kazakhstan stands a good chance of emerging. To achieve this we should realize that the *nation* is not merely an ethnos, it is larger than an ethnos, and the *civic* model of a nation is an open door for all who wish to naturalize. In no way can the civic model be interpreted as linguistic and cultural “omnivorousness” and rejection of the language and culture of the state-forming ethnos. To become the supporting structure of the civic nation and the state, the state-forming ethnos of Kazakhstan, in turn, urgently needs inner reunification. We are much closer to this aim than it might seem, therefore we should go on ahead until we perform the last and critically important thrust. Success is not guaranteed. To negotiate all the obstacles on this path, we must work hard, while our leaders, the academic community, and the public should develop a clear understanding of what they want to achieve.