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## LINGUICIDE and LINGUICISM

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1. Definitions and interpretations

Although sociolinguists and language planners are concerned with many aspects of **linguistic inequality**, and have documented how languages contribute to the constitution and maintenance of **social inequality**, there is a dearth of unifying theories in this area (as noted by Hymes, 1985, v). The concepts linguicide and linguicism serve to clarify the ideologies, structures and processes involved in linguistic inequality, and their results. This requires distinctions between the fate of languages vs. the fate of their speakers, the fate of individuals vs. the fate of groups, ideologies, structures and processes vs. results.

**LINGUICIDE** is the **extermination of languages**, an analogous concept to (physical) *genocide*. **LANGUAGE DEATH** is the **withering away of languages**, an analogous concept to *natural death*. There has been extensive study of language maintenance and shift, and factors contributing to language death (see Fishman 1989 and, for a survey article, Dressler 1987). Linguicide and language death should be seen as pertaining to languages, not their speakers: the speakers or their descendants will be assimilated, i.e. the speakers will experience language shift or loss at an individual level, but language loss only leads to linguicide or language death if ALL speakers of a certain language experience language loss. Linguicide and language death describe the end results of processes, not the processes themselves.

**LINGUICISM**, an analogous concept to *racism*, *sexism*, *classism* etc (and coarticulating with these), has been defined as "ideologies, structures and practices which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources (both material and immaterial) between groups which are defined on the basis of language" (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988, 13). Linguicism can relate to both languages and their speakers. It precedes (but does not necessarily lead to) linguicide and/or language death. Linguicism has mainly been studied in connection with the education of immigrant and indigenous linguistic minorities (Skutnabb-Kangas 1988) and in relation to the prominence of English as a "world" language and the role of applied linguists in promoting English (Phillipson 1992).

Some languages may have died. A great many of the world's languages have been eliminated in recent centuries as a (direct or indirect) result of European settlement and colonisation. The remaining ones have, through linguist processes, been hierarchized so that speakers of some languages and varieties have more power and material resources than their numbers would justify, simply because of being speakers of those languages and varieties. These dominant or majority languages expand at the expense of minority (or minorized) languages. Learning dominant languages has often been a **subtractive** experience for minority language speakers, whereas those dominant language speakers who learn other languages mostly do so in an **additive** way (see Lambert & Tucker 1972 for these concepts).

Juan Cobarrubias (1983) has elaborated a taxonomy of policies which a state can adopt towards minority

languages. For some, only the first policy would be linguicidal, for others the first three:

- (1) attempting to kill a language;
- (2) letting a language die;
- (3) unsupported coexistence;
- (4) partial support of specific language functions;
- (5) adoption as an official language.

The concept LANGUAGE DEATH does not necessarily imply a causal agent. Language death is seen as occurring because of circumstances beyond the control of any agents. The "effects", for instance language death as a result of "modernization", are often regarded as inevitable concomitants of social change. Language death is seen as comparable to the evolution of natural organisms which develop, bloom and wither away. When some liberal economists (e.g. Friedrich List, 1885, 174ff.) a century ago considered that nations had to be of a "sufficient size" to be viable, it followed that smaller nationalities **and languages** were doomed to disappear, as collective victims of "the law of progress". Their speakers were advised to reconcile themselves to "the loss of what could not be adapted to the modern age" (Hobsbawm 1991, 29-39). Several Western European liberal ideologists and Soviet language planners in the early part of this century held that nations (each with their own language) were but one phase in a development towards a unified world with a world language, coexisting with national languages which would be "reduced to the domestic and sentimental role of dialects" (ibid., 38). This liberal ideology of development is still alive and well. When discussing "small ethnic groups and languages", we are warned not to "be idealistic and feel blind pity for everything which *in its natural course* is transformed, becomes outdated or even extinct", (Šatava 1992, 80; our emphasis). The concept of language death can be associated with this type of liberal ideology, whether in Eastern Europe, North America (the "English Only" movement), or in aid policies worldwide, these invariably supporting dominant languages. At the individual level, language death would within this paradigm be seen as a result of a voluntary language shift by each speaker.

LINGUICIDE, by contrast, implies that there is an **agent** involved in **causing** the death of languages. The agent can be **active** ("attempting to kill a language") or **passive** ("letting a language die", or "unsupported coexistence", also often leading to the death of minority languages). In liberal ideology, only an **active** agent with the **intention** to kill languages would cause linguicide, whereas the other two would fall within the domain of language death. Linguicide is the extreme end result of linguisticism at the group level. Seen from the perspective of a conflict paradigm, the **causes** of linguicide and linguisticism have to be analyzed from both **structural** and **ideological** angles, covering the struggle for structural power and material resources, and the legitimation, effectuation and reproduction of the unequal division of power and resources between groups based on language. The **agents** of linguicide/linguicism can also be **structural** (a state, e.g. Turkey vis-a-vis Kurds; an institution, e.g. schools; laws and regulations, e.g. those covering linguistic rights or the position of different languages on time-tables in schools; budgets, e.g. for teacher training or materials in certain languages) or **ideological** (norms and values ascribed to different languages and their speakers). There is thus nothing "natural" in language death. Languages cannot be treated in an anthropomorphic way, as organisms with a natural life-span. Language death has causes, which can be identified and analysed.

The analysis necessarily also involves an ethical dimension. Whether humanity has a moral obligation to prevent linguicide, or whether this would be interference in an inevitable process in which only the fittest survive, has been debated at several levels, some partly inspired by primordial romanticism, some by instrumentalist "modernism". An attachment to one's language or mother tongue as a central cultural core value seems, like ethnicity, to draw on primordial, ascribed sources but to be shaped and actualised by (achieved) economic/political concerns (Fishman 1989, Smolicz 1979). This also means that language shift **can** be "voluntary" at an individual level: a result of more benefits accruing to the individual who agrees to shift than to someone who maintains her mother tongue. "Preservation of the linguistic and cultural heritage of humankind" (one of Unesco's declared goals) presupposes preventing linguicide. This has been seen by some researchers and politicians as a nostalgic primordialist dream (creating employment for the world's linguists). The perpetuation of linguistic diversity can, however, be seen as a recognition that all individuals and groups have basic linguistic human rights, and as a necessity for the survival of the planet, in a similar way to biodiversity.

When the United Nations did preparatory work for what was to become the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE (E 793, 1948), **linguistic and cultural genocide** were discussed alongside physical genocide, and were seen as serious crimes against humanity. When the Convention was accepted, Article 3, which covered linguistic and cultural genocide, was vetoed by some nation states (the "great powers"), and it is thus *not included* in the final Convention of 1948 (see Capotorti 1979, 37). What remains, however, is a **definition of linguistic genocide**, which most states then in the UN were prepared to accept. Linguistic genocide is

defined (in Art. 3, 1) as

"Prohibiting the use of the language of the group in daily intercourse or in schools, or the printing and circulation of publications in the language of the group".

## 2. Processes and causes of linguicide and linguisticism

2.1. Genocide involves the destruction of "the Other", which can be those who are linguistically different. Appropriate in-group pronunciation is recorded as a test of ethnic identity in the Old Testament, where an "alien" way of saying "shibboleth" resulted in the deaths of 40,000 people (Judges XII, 6). The Greeks stigmatized non-Greek speakers as "barbarian", meaning speakers of a non-language, mumbo-jumbo. The "Welsh" were foreigners, people who spoke a "strange language" that "one does not understand" (cited in the Oxford English Dictionary, 1648). Language is a significant group boundary marker, and the dominant group has frequently taken it upon itself to label outsiders pejoratively.

Several scholars have noted the occurrence of linguicide. It was, for instance, an element of US policy in Pacific islands such as Guam (Kloss 1977, 255). Calvet's **Linguistique et colonialisme: petit traité de glottophagie** (1974) is a detailed analysis of the links between linguistics and the furtherance of the French colonial cause. He describes as "glottophagie" (linguistic cannibalism, Sprachenfressen) the pattern of dominant languages eating up and extinguishing dominated languages. In other words they, or more rightly their speakers, commit linguicide.

2.2. From the 17th century French gradually took over from Latin the role of a European lingua franca in international affairs, a position it maintained until 1919. Belief in the intrinsic superiority of French was widespread throughout Europe. A grammar written in 1660 declares that the structure of the French language corresponds more closely to the natural order and expression of thoughts than do other languages (quoted in Chomsky 1965). Diderot, the main editor of the French **Encyclopédie**, endorses this principle, and concludes that French is the most appropriate language for the sciences, enlightenment and wisdom, whereas Greek, Latin, Italian and English are better suited to literature, persuasion and the emotions (ibid.). A cannibalistic hierarchy of languages, and their correspondent cultures, was a logical consequence of an ethnocentric belief in cultural evolution (Calvet 1974, 31). The languages of the "Other" were regarded as needing to go through the same processes of refinement as the dominant language had. They were by definition imperfect rather than merely different. "Other" languages therefore serve the purpose of demonstrating the superiority of "Our" language.

The Academy of Berlin held a competition in 1782 on the theme of why French was a "universal" language (Calvet 1987, 71). One of the winning essays, by Rivarol, argues that languages which do not follow the syntax of French, with subject, verb and object in that order, are illogical and inadequate. In fact it is only the syntax of French which is "incorruptible. C'est de là que résulte cette admirable clarté, base éternelle de notre langue. Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français." (cited ibid., 74) This linguistic racism was in place long before it was needed in the dissemination of the message of the French Revolution and in the justification of the colonial venture.

Maintenance of a linguistic hierarchy typically involves a pattern of **stigmatization** of dominated languages (mere "dialects", "vernaculars" or "patois"), **glorification** of the dominant language, and **rationalization** of the relationship between the languages, always to the benefit of the dominant one. One's own language was therefore projected as the language of God (Sanskrit, Arabic in the Islamic world, Dutch in South Africa), the language of reason, logic and human rights (French both before and more generally after the French Revolution), the language of the superior ethno-national group (German in Nazi ideology), the language of progress, modernity, and national unity (English in much post-colonial discourse). As other languages are explicitly or implicitly deprived of such functions and qualities, it is "logical" that speakers of stigmatized languages can only benefit from using the "superior" languages.

2.3. Linguist policies were an important weapon in the colonial armoury. In French colonies an elaborate belief system bolstered the idea of a "mission civilisatrice", with proficiency in the dominant language as the key to the "superior" culture. This required the sacrifice of the cultures and languages of origin. These were in any case branded as being less than full or real languages by being referred to as "patois", "dialects", mere "vernaculars".

Although the British were less verbal about the merits of their dominant language, in the British empire linguist policies favoured English in an equivalent way. In the mid 19th century a grammatical knowledge of the English language was regarded as "the most important agent for the coloured population of the colonies" (quoted in Ashby 1966, 150). Education fulfilled the same structural role in each empire. Even though greater use was made of local languages in the early stages of education in the British empire than in the French, local languages had low status, and education through the exclusive medium of English was the norm after the initial years - English was the key to success in a colonized society (Phillipson 1992, chapter 5).

A study of language policy in the Pacific region (Mühlhäusler 1990) challenges the belief that the alphabetization of indigenous languages has served to strengthen these cultures and languages. Those who introduced literacy (often missionaries) and those who accepted it were unaware of the consequences, and the most general long-term effect of literacy in the vernacular has been language decline and linguistic (ibid., 190). Literacy has not been a medium for expressing the indigenous point of view, as it effectively involves acculturation to the dominant group. When education in a local language is merely transitional to education through the medium of French or English, the languages which give expression to a centuries-old heritage are destroyed.

2.4. This is the situation in many former colonies. The language of the colonial power has been reinforced as the key language of power internally and externally. Educational policies have changed little and tend to neglect the potential of the indigenous languages. European languages are inappropriate in most Asian and African contexts (Bamgbose 1991, Mateene 1985, Ngugi 1986, Pattanayak 1986, Rubagumya 1990). Linguicist policies ensure the allocation of resources to the dominant language in education, the media, public life and the "modern" sector of the economy. As a result, most people in the "Third World" are governed in a language that they do not understand. The presumed superiority of the West is now less represented by the gun and the bible than technology and the textbook. Language is therefore of even more central importance in the maintenance of social structure nationally and internationally.

2.5. Some countries commit linguistic genocide openly and brutally. Turkey is the most blatant example in the contemporary world. The 1982 constitution states in its Articles 3 and 66 the congruence of state, territory, nation and language unambiguously: "The state of Turkey is in its state territory and state citizens an indivisible whole. Its language is Turkish." "Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk". "No language prohibited by law may be used for disclosure or publication of ideas and opinions. Written or printed materials, records, tapes, videotapes as well as other means of expression that are in violation of this prohibition will be confiscated..." (Art. 26/3). "No language other than Turkish may be taught as a native language to citizens of Turkey in instructional and educational institutions." (Art. 42/9). When some of the most linguicidal paragraphs (e.g. Section 81 of Law No. 2820 on Political Parties, 1983: "It is forbidden to claim that there exist minorities in Turkey. It is forbidden to protect or develop non-Turkish cultures and languages") were repealed on the 12 April 1991, a Law to Fight Terrorism (3713) was passed. Anyone stating that the Kurdish language or speakers of the Kurdish language should have rights or that Kurdish children should have the right to have Kurdish as the medium of education can be defined as "a terrorist", involved in an act of "terrorism". The people involved are committing a terrorist crime, according to Art. 3 (Terrorist Crimes), 4 (Crimes Committed for Terrorist Purposes) and 8 (Propaganda against the indivisible unity of the State). Art. 8 stipulates that "written and oral propaganda and assemblies, meetings and demonstrations aiming at **damaging the indivisible unity of the State of the Turkish Republic with its territory and nation** are forbidden, regardless of the method, intention and ideas behind it" (our emphasis). A "terrorist organization" can consist of two persons "gathering under a common aim". Thus claiming linguistic human rights for the Kurds (see Skutnabb-Kangas & Bucak 1994) makes us a "terrorist organization". The linguicidal laws have led to the imprisonment, torture and killing of thousands of people in Turkey, in addition to threats, hefty fines and confiscation of books, journals and property.

The oppression of minority languages has been severe in many countries. There is widespread evidence of schoolchildren being subjected to corporal punishment for the "crime" of speaking their mother tongue, for instance the Celtic languages in Britain or France or Sami in Scandinavia. The same system was used in the Europeanised countries of the Americas and Australasia, and in colonial Africa. It has also often been the experience of immigrant children.

2.6. By contrast, linguistic genocide is today mostly committed in a more covert and sophisticated way, e.g. in educational systems. Here the use of a minority language is prohibited more indirectly, by ideological and structural means. The use of a minority language is in fact prohibited "in daily intercourse or in schools" every time there are minority children in day care centres and schools, but no bilingual teachers who are authorized to use the languages of the minority children as the media of teaching and child care most of the time. This is the situation for most immigrant and refugee minority children in all Western European countries and in the US, Canada and Australia. Immigrant minority education in these countries is thus guilty of linguistic genocide, as defined by the UN. So is the education that most indigenous first nations have had and that many of them still have (see, for instance, on Latin America, Hamel 1994).

### 3. Linguicide and the nation state

Linguicide is a logical expression of belief in a monolingual nation state ("one nation - one language" seen as normal, desirable and inevitable). A common language for the state was a principle of the French

Revolution, for mainly instrumental reasons, and Herder-inspired German romanticism, for more primordial reasons. Whenever definitions of **STATE**, **NATION**, or **NATION-STATE** specify anything about communication between the people belonging to the entity in question, they refer to a (common, unifying, developed, official) **LANGUAGE** for the entity. **In order to form a nation or a state you have to have a language.** Having a language thus becomes symbolic of a nation and a state (and even a people), in much the same way as a national flag, a national anthem, etc. Every state "needs" a (highly developed) language which can function as its **official** language (regardless of whether this is formalized in its constitution or not). If it does not have one which is "developed" enough, it may borrow one from a "developed" state, often the old colonial power. This is also often done if there are several candidates, the implication being that a state only has **one** official language (or two or, at the most, three - see Pattanayak's critique of this Western idea, 1986). The other languages, which by implication are not "developed" enough, may then be ignored or their existence denied altogether.

There are, according to current estimates, approximately 7,000 languages in the world, whereas the number of states is less than 250. If one was to believe in the myth of the nation-state as the most developed form of social organisation, and if the principle of **self-determination** were to be applied fully, so that every language group (every "nation") was to have its own nation-state, the present states would disintegrate into around 7,000 states. One way of avoiding the "threat" of disintegration is to redefine and restrict the concept of self-determination as presently understood in international law. Another is **to reduce the number of potential nations.** This includes preventing groups from acquiring or maintaining their own languages, one of the central prerequisites "needed" for nation-building.

Reducing the number of languages and thus potential nation-states is being attempted in a variety of ways, of which **physical genocide** is the most dramatic one. This was one of the routes chosen by Europeans in Australia and the Americas. It has resulted in the permanent loss of hundreds of languages. Even though the prevention and punishment of physical genocide is regulated by a UN Convention, physical genocide is nevertheless still attempted in relation to some groups in Latin America and Asia. Committing **linguistic genocide, killing a language without killing its speakers** (as in physical genocide), is another way of reducing the number of potential nations.

But languages can also be made invisible qua languages, by labelling them dialects, vernaculars or patois. None of the definitions of a nation-state or state (see above) use **DIALECT**, **VERNACULAR** or **PATOIS** in their definitions, the implication being that speakers who form a dialect, vernacular or patois community do not and cannot form a nation or a state or a nation-state. It is thus possible to hierarchize different groups which might want to form a nation and therefore eventually a nation-state, through **labelling** them so that **only some groups are seen as possessing the necessary prerequisite, a language**, whereas others are labelled as not possessing a language, but only a way of communicating, an idiom, which is **not** a language. This idiom can then be called something else, in order to differentiate it from a language. Dialects (or vernaculars or patois) are not seen as developed enough to fulfil all the official functions of a nation or a state. The same linguistic policy which deprives them of recognition also deprives them of resources for building on their potential. In some states, some idioms may also be invisibilized by being designated **national** (as opposed to official) languages, thus confining them to the type of emotional role envisaged by liberal ideologists in the late 1800s.

The hierarchization, the creation of Us and Them, Self and Other, typical of most negative -ismic discourses, can be seen in how a **language** is defined, as opposed to how a **dialect**, a **vernacular** or a **patois** is defined. Languages are defined positively or neutrally, as the general, abstract, unspoken norm, whereas dialects, vernaculars and patois are defined partly negatively, with connotations of some kind of deficiency, commonness, lack of cultivation and civilisation, partly as undeveloped or underdeveloped forms of communication, something to be got rid of, to be subsumed under languages (see e.g. the definitions of these in The Random House Dictionary of the English Language, Second Edition, Unabridged, 1987, New York: Random House, pp. 546-547, 1081, 1421 and 2114).

Just as the underdeveloped Other has tribes, we the developed Self have nations. The Other has chiefs, Self has presidents or kings. The Other has primitive rituals, Self has civilized ceremonies. The Other has medicine men, Self has doctors. When the Other comes to our country, the Other's children become NEP- or LEP-children (No English Proficiency or Limited English Proficiency) or LOTEs (Languages Other Than English) or NESBs (Non-English Speaking Background), i.e. they are defined with Self as the norm, negatively, in terms of what they are not, do not know or do not represent, whereas Self is taken as the self-evident norm. What the Others are, know and represent, is made invisible, negated, or reconstructed as a non-resource, a handicap, stigmatized as of less value. We, Self, speak languages, they, the Other, speak only dialects, vernaculars or patois.

#### 4. Colonising consciousness

Control of access to structural power and material resources has changed form. Where colonisers earlier colonised land, water and natural resources (colonialism proper) or the bodies of the dominated (slavery), the focus is now on the colonisation of the mind, via the consciousness industry (education, mass media, religion, etc.). Understanding the language of the coloniser is a prerequisite for this type of control. Where control was earlier accomplished through physically punitive means, physical violence, the focus is today more on psychologically punitive means (shame), remunerative means (bargaining for benefits and rewards) and ideological means (making the victims feel guilty if they do not obey, and persuading them to believe that it is in their best interest to do so).

Covert linguicide (e.g. of the type that most Western states use in their educational systems) appears to be extremely effective, as compared with the overt version (as in Turkey). Within 2-4 generations, there are fewer speakers of most minority languages in these countries than in more openly linguicidal countries. Kurds still speak Kurdish and resist linguistic oppression, whereas many former Spanish-speakers in the USA have assimilated. It is often more difficult to struggle against covert violence, against the colonization of the mind, where short-term "benefits" may obscure longer-term losses.

Just as colonialism has been superseded by more sophisticated forms of exploitation, crude **biologically argued racism** (Miles 1989) has, as official state ideology, largely been superseded by **ethnicism** (Mullard 1988) and **linguicism**. Instead of superior "races", certain ethnic groups (or cultures) and languages are now presented as fitter to rule and expand. Others are expected to adopt these cultures and learn the languages for the sake of "modernisation", "development", "democracy" and the technology and values associated with dominant market forces.

## 5. Resistance to linguicide and linguicism

Linguicide and linguicism are being successfully resisted in many ways. Many national minorities are involved in counteracting linguicide and demanding linguistic rights (for Europe, see Contact Bulletin of the European Bureau for Lesser Used Languages). Information about comparable minorities needs to be collated and coordinated, as is done, e.g., in the Mercator project in Friesland. Linguistic revitalisation movements among the Māori (Kāretu 1994), the Sámi (Magga 1994), the Cree, the Inuit and other indigenous peoples may benefit from the UN Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights (see below). Immigrant and refugee minorities are less well placed, with fewer legal rights, but linguistic hegemony has been successfully challenged (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas & Cummins 1988, Peura & Skutnabb-Kangas 1995, Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994).

Obtaining substantial support from the human rights system and international law presupposes enforceable, codified linguistic rights which are both individual and collective. In principle, human rights should apply to everyone, without discrimination on grounds of, e.g., language. Most human rights are individual. There are as yet no binding international covenants specifically on **linguistic rights**. Most language-related rights are to be found in articles on minority rights, and these have so far also been individual. Collective minority rights are essential tools through which minorities can get access to those rights which majorities are granted through individual rights.

Article 27 of the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966, in force since 1976) grants the best binding minority language protection so far:

"In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language."

This article has been one of the most important for the protection of linguistic minorities, as both Capotorti (1979, the UN Special Rapporteur on minorities) and more recent UN reports confirm. Both the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (1959 and 1989), and several Council of Europe and CSCE documents have used approximately the same formulation. Still, rights are only granted to individuals, not collectivities.

To assess the degree of linguistic rights in covenants, especially educational rights, we have developed a grid with two dimensions, the degree of overtness (from overt to covert) and the degree of support for minority languages (prohibition - toleration - non-discrimination prescription - permission - promotion) (e.g. Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson 1994). In our assessment, no legally binding clauses in any international covenants (including Art. 27 above) go beyond semi-overt non-discrimination prescription. What is needed for minority languages to be maintained over several generations in countries where obligatory education is enforced is overt promotion of these languages ("partial support of specific language functions" or "adoption as an official language" in Cobarrubias' taxonomy in 1.).

There have been numerous suggestions for including binding language-related rights in international human rights instruments (i.e. not only recommendations, like, for instance, CSCE-process documents). Thus far, this has not succeeded. It seems that it is often the same states objecting to international or

regional instruments for protecting minority languages. The victorious states in the First World War who imposed clauses on language-related minority rights on the losers in the Peace Treaties, did not grant the same rights to minorities in their own countries, and voted down proposed internationally binding rights (Capotorti 1979, 16-26). The same countries vetoed Article 3 on linguistic genocide (see above) after the Second World War. Greece, Turkey and the United States, for instance, have not signed the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Art. 27 of which we have quoted). Germany, and the United Kingdom have not ratified its Optional Protocol. At the CSCE Copenhagen meeting on the Human Dimension (June 1990), France, Greece and Turkey did not go along with some far-reaching formulations for the benefit of minorities. When the Council of Europe's European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages was accepted (June 1992), France, Turkey and United Kingdom abstained, Greece voted against (**Contact Bulletin** 9:2, 1992, 1).

Among the bodies currently codifying language rights for minorities are the Council of Europe, the European Parliament, the CSCE, the UN and UNESCO. **The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages** has great symbolic value, but explicitly excludes migrant languages. The European Parliament's **Directive on the education of the children of migrant workers** (77/466/EEC of 25.7.77) is fraught with difficulties of interpretation and implementation, as the Parliament's own **Report drawn up on behalf of the Committee of Inquiry into RACISM and XENOPHOBIA** indicates (A3-195/90, PE 141.205/FIN, 111). The **Council of Europe's** European Commission for Democracy through Law, has drafted a **Proposal for a European Convention for the Protection of Minorities** (CDL 91 - 7), which could also apply to those migrants who have changed citizenship, but it includes very little on language rights. **The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE)** states unambiguously in its **Document of the Copenhagen Meeting of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the CSCE** (1990) that national minorities should have the right to maintain their ethnic, cultural, linguistic or religious identity, the right to seek voluntary and public assistance to do so in educational institutions, and should not be subjected to assimilation against their will (CSCE 1990a, 40), but has so far not agreed on any binding conventions. A CSCE High Commissioner on Minorities was appointed in 1992. The **UN Draft Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights** would give indigenous peoples "The right to all forms of education, including in particular the right of children to have access to education in their own languages, and to establish, structure, conduct and control their own educational systems and institutions." (Art. 10, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1988/25). It is in striking contrast to the **UN Convention on Migrant Workers and Their Families**, which accords minimal rights to the mother tongues and is assimilation-oriented (see Hasenau 1990). An international seminar under Unesco auspices in Recife, Brazil, in 1987, recommended "that steps be taken by the United Nations to adopt and implement a UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF LINGUISTIC RIGHTS which would require a reformulation of national, regional, and international language policies." Follow-up gatherings were organised at Unesco in Paris in 1989, and Pécs, Hungary in August 1991. The **UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities** was adopted by the General Assembly in December 1992. It considers "that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to the political and social stability of States in which they live" (Preamble). This contests the popular but mistaken belief that the existence of minorities is divisive for nation states, as do several of the draft instruments in their preambles.

The nation-state is currently under pressure from globalization, transnational regionalization and local decentralization (democratic, root-seeking, environment-saving), and has probably outlived itself. States are by many researchers no longer seen as permanent constructions but negotiable. Linguicide as a strategy for preventing the disintegration of present day states has also become outmoded. Linguistic diversity at local levels is a necessary counterweight to the hegemony of a few "international" languages. The "world languages" should, just as roads and bridges, be seen as **tools** for communication of ideas and matter, but the creation of authentic ideas and products (instead of mass-products) is in most cases necessarily best done locally.

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