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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The thesis examines the impact Soviet nationality policy had in the outburst of ethnic conflict in Georgia. The relations of five different minority groups (Abkhazians, Ossetians, Ajarians, Armenians and Azeris) with the central state are examined and analyzed with the purpose of coming to an understanding of how Soviet-era policies have affected the current state of those relations.</p> <p>The discrepancy between nationalism and communism is also presented. The development of socialist thinking on nationalism is examined in order to comprehend how Soviet nationality policy was developed. Although Lenin's ideas were not the only socialist theories on nationality questions, they became the foundation of all future Soviet nationality policy. Being contradictory in themselves, Lenin's theories proved to be a poor basis for policy, removing any coherence from Soviet nationality policy. Later Soviet leaders were free to pursue any kind of policy at all and still claim to be following in Lenin's footsteps.</p> <p>With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Abkhazians and Ossetians took to arms and fought violent wars with the Georgian central state. In Ajaria, local leadership turned the region into a personal dictatorship, which Tbilisi has no practical control over. Only Armenians and Azeris have remained pacific for the time being and it is shown in the thesis that this is partially because of Soviet non-involvement.</p> <p>The effects of Soviet nationality policy are divided into four categories: tying of nationality to territory, articulating ethnic differences, creation of a hierarchical system between different ethnic groups and granting of autonomy. The three first mechanisms of involvement are used to examine the effects of Soviet nationality policy on each of the five ethnic groups.</p> <p>The main empirical sources of the thesis are Ronald Suny's The Making of the Georgian Nation and Svante E. Cornell's works on the Caucasus. Some interviews were also done in Georgia. Methodologically the thesis is a case-study with controlled comparison of five cases within Georgia. Theory is derived from Michael E. Brown's work on ethnic conflicts and from several works on communism and nationalism, e.g. Jeremy Smith, Richard Pipes and Hélène Carrère d'Encausse.</p>			
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