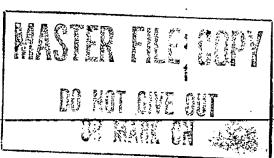




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# Soviet Azerbaijan: "Youth Bulge" Sets Stage for Unrest

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An Intelligence Assessment

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# Soviet Azerbaijan: "Youth Bulge" Sets Stage for Unrest

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**An Intelligence Assessment** 

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	Soviet Azerbaijan: "Youth Bulge" Sets Stage for Unrest	25X1
Scope Note	This Intelligence Assessment examines the role of rapid growth of the young adult population in creating conditions conducive to social instabilitin Azerbaijan.	25X1

Declassified in Part - Sanitized Copy	Approved for Release 2012/12/19 : CIA-RDP89T01451R000400510001-5	25X1
	Soviet Azerbaijan: "Youth Bulge" Sets Stage for Unrest	25X1
Key Judgments  Information available as of 1 July 1988 was used in this report.	Rapid growth of Azerbaijan's young adult population has outstripped the republic's ability to provide jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. According to Soviet estimates, more than 250,000 people in Azerbaijan do not have jobs in the public sector—they are unemployed or make their living in the private sector. The housing shortage is critical, and many young people who migrate to cities to find jobs end up in squalid shantytowns that have sprung up around urban centers. Access to higher education has also narrowed considerably over the last 15 years, limiting job opportunities and social mobility. As a result, competition for economic opportunities has increased, exacerbating tensions between the republic's principal ethnic groups, the Azeris and the Armenians.  These conditions helped fuel the unrest in Azerbaijan and Armenia that was sparked by the demand that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast—which has a predominantly Armenian population—be taken from Azerbaijani jurisdiction and reunited with Armenia. The demonstrations quickly spread from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and spilled over into Sumgait, Baku, and other areas of Azerbaijan, creating the most violent and protracted unrest since Stalin's death. Moscow responded to this unrest, in part, by granting additional funds for housing to Sumgait, and by calling on Azerbaijan to sharply increase funding for housing, jobs, and	25X1
•	Moscow confronts unattractive options for coping with pressures of the "youth bulge" not only in Azerbaijan, but also in the rest of the Caucasus, southern Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. Sustained growth of state investment for schools and jobs would mean diverting funds from important projects elsewhere in the country. The regime gives no indication of following such a strategy, and indeed has espoused the view that these regions should pull their own weight. Finally, efforts to force outmigration could worsen ethnic tensions in the south and bring ethnic conflicts into the industrial cities of the north.	25X1 25X1
•	Moreover, Gorbachev's perestroyka policies, stressing efficiency and gains in labor productivity, may magnify the effects of the youth bulge by eliminating jobs. These measures were aimed at the industrialized regions of the country—not areas such as Azerbaijan where labor is abundant, capital is relatively scarce, and skill levels are low. Layoffs in the southern republics would heighten potential for ethnic unrest over the next five years, at a time when continued outbreaks of violence would give ammunition to opponents of perestroyka.	25 <b>X</b> 1
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Soviet Azerbaijan:
"Youth Bulge" Sets Stage
for Unrest

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#### The "Youth Bulge" Strains Azerbaijan's Economy

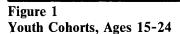
Research done by the CIA shows that the emergence of a "youth bulge" (20 percent or more of the population in the 15- to 24-year-old age group) often contributes to social instability in developing countries. Increased competition for opportunities in education, employment, and housing results in frustration and discontent among the young, frequently translating into unrest. For example, insurgencies in Sri Lanka and the Philippines coincided with youth bulges.

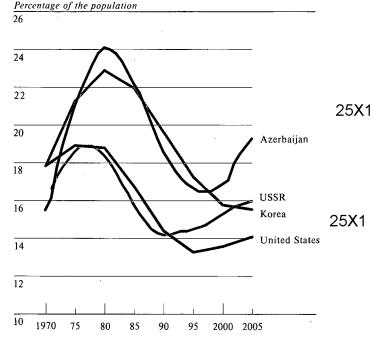
Azerbaijan has been experiencing a youth bulge for more than a decade (see figure 1). By contrast, population in the entire Soviet Union has an age structure similar to that of most developed countries, reflecting lower birthrates in the non-Muslim areas of the USSR.

Although population growth in Azerbaijan has slowed in recent years, those born in the period of the highest birthrates, the 1960s, are reaching adulthood, straining the republic's economy. Growth of the young adult population of Azerbaijan has outstripped the state's ability to provide jobs, housing, and educational opportunities. Population pressures are particularly acute in major cities (see inset). Problems related to the youth bulge received prominent play in the republic press even before the recent outbreak of unrest.

### Jobs

Azerbaijan has not been able to provide new jobs fast enough to employ its growing young adult population. In the period 1970-85, growth of the republic's ablebodied population outstripped growth in socialized employment by a wide margin (see figure 2). At a republic plenum in January, the party leadership recognized the issue of employing young people as one of Azerbaijan's "most pressing social problems."





In Azerbaijan more than 250,000 people do not have jobs in the public sector,<sup>3</sup> according to a 1987 Soviet estimate. This represents 6.3 percent of the ablebodied population of Azerbaijan. Although many are women with young children, a growing number of young men are reportedly joining the ranks of those

<sup>3</sup> The public sector includes industry, construction, transport, communications, services, and socialized agriculture. The private sector consists of individual and cooperative activities in the areas of agriculture, construction, and consumer services.

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Figure 2

#### Sumgait: A City Overwhelmed by Population Growth

Population pressures have led to overcrowding, transportation problems, and severe pollution in cities such as Sumgait, an industrial center near Baku with a population of 234,000. A report on the January 1988 plenum of the Sumgait City Council cited a number of alarming trends:

- By 1986 the population of Sumgait exceeded projections by more than 40 percent.
- In 1970, for every 10,000 residents, there were 110 hospital beds. Today that number has declined to 85. This is 13 lower than the republic average and 45 lower than the all-union standard.
- There are not enough schools in the city—only 33 percent of children are admitted to preschools compared with a national norm of 85 percent. As a result, more than 20,000 women with children, or 8 percent of the population, are not employed.
- From 1976 to 1986 growth in per capita living space in Sumgait was only one-third the average for Azerbaijan as a whole.

Source: Bakinskiy rabochiy, 20 January 1988

Percent increase Working-age Average annual population employment in public sector 80 70 60 50 40 30 20 10 0 USSR Azerbaijan Central a Men, ages 16-59, and women, ages 16-54. b 1970-84. Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kirgiziya. 317933 7-88

USSR: Growth of Working-Age Population

and Employment, 1970-85ª

who are unemployed or make a living in the private sector. According to a Soviet correspondent, "we are talking of thousands of young people left virtually without work."

Desirable jobs are hard to find in the rural and mountainous regions of Azerbaijan. Moreover, in recent years the antialcohol campaign has exacerbated the employment problem as local vineyards have switched from the labor-intensive business of winemaking to the cultivation of table grapes, which requires fewer workers. In January 1988 the republic council of ministers censured local governments of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast and surrounding areas and the Nakhichevan' Autonomous Republic for failure to employ the "significant"

number" of jobless in the public sector or to attract them to state-sanctioned forms of private activity such as cooperatives. Particularly sharp criticism was aimed at their failure to combat the growth of illegal private activity—"unearned income," speculation, and theft—that has accompanied the rise in unemployment.

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A lack of desirable jobs in mountainous areas has prompted migration into the major cities of Azerbaijan. Young men, in particular, are lured by the relatively high-paying jobs in the petroleum industry, centered in Baku and Sumgait. According to the Soviet press, up to 10,000 people move into Baku each

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year. Many, however, end up in low-skill jobs that city residents will not take, while others drift into the private sector—where high incomes are possible—and "fill the streets, markets, and stations with stalls."

#### Housing

Azerbaijan's major cities suffer from severe housing shortages. Because of the surplus of available labor, enterprises do not need to provide decent housing to attract workers. Managers can bring workers into cities on temporary residence permits and leave them to find accommodations as best they can. This practice is sharply criticized in the Soviet press. According to one correspondent, writing after the Sumgait disturbances, "giant plants are belching smoke, calling young people from all over the Republic to come and work there. But how will they live there? This question didn't worry the heads of enterprises and far-off ministries in Moscow."

Housing shortages have led to the emergence of shantytowns in the cities. According to a Soviet correspondent in Baku, "crowds of recruited workers have surged into the city, and the outskirts and waste land have been filled with homemade shacks that have grown up overnight. . . . According to Soviet data, approximately 200,000 people live in these huts, which an authoritative commission has classed as unfit for habitation." The Soviet press reveals a similar situation in Sumgait, where young people often spend years in the city's filthy, rundown youth hostels only to marry and move into "depressingly squalid shantytown areas—temporary housing improvised from scraps of sheet metal, wooden panels, and rusty wire netting." An estimated 10,000 to 18,000 people live in these settlements, which are without water, sanitation, and fuel. According to Moscow News, most of those involved in recent violence in Sumgait came from the shantytowns.

Moreover, building new apartments has not always proved a solution to the housing shortage, because apartments are usually sited on the outskirts of cities, far from jobs, services, and cultural facilities. According to a local newspaper, residents of Baku's new apartments are "in effect shut up between four walls: movies, concerts, plays, walks in the park are a thing of the past." One new housing development had so

many shortcomings that some people refused to move in, preferring to stay on waiting lists for units in the city center. Alarmed that hundreds of new apartments sat empty, Baku officials "took extreme measures," condemning apartments in the center of the city, evicting residents, and ordering them to move into the new development. According to the paper, "representatives of the court threw their things out into the street. The residents—contemptuous of papers and verdicts—dragged them back in."

#### Education

Access to higher educational institutions (VUZs) has narrowed considerably as the student-age population of Azerbaijan has grown. Between 1970 and 1985, the share of secondary school graduates going on to higher education in the republic declined from 22.8 percent to 12.6 percent (see figure 3). Some students from Azerbaijan are admitted to VUZs in other republics, but the number is small, only about 1,500 a year.

Moreover, because of mistakes in educational planning, many of those who do gain entry into VUZs will not find jobs in their field of study when they graduate. Thousands of VUZ graduates—mainly in the humanities—are out of work or underemployed. Even students sent to VUZs in other republics sometimes return to Azerbaijan after graduation to find that sponsoring ministries will not deliver promised jobs and housing. At the same time, enterprises frequently report difficulty filling vacancies for skilled jobs because the schools have trained too few people to meet the demand in key technical specialties.

Last year a Soviet newspaper highlighted some of the problems generated by the inappropriate mix of graduates, noting "in Baku alone approximately 8,000 teachers are not employed in teaching, and 3,600 of them are not working at all . . . 1,500 cultural specialists and hundreds of doctors are registered as seeking employment. . . . More than one-third of technical college graduates and one-fifth of all VUZ graduates are employed outside their own specialty. Many do not work at all." As a result of such problems, the

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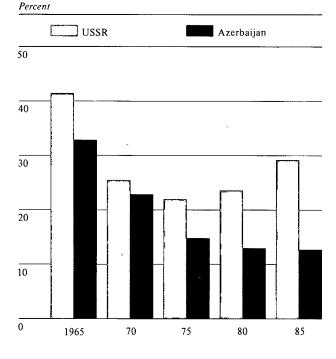
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Figure 3
USSR: Daytime Secondary Students Admitted to Higher Educational Institutions



decision has been made to cut by 4,000 admissions to secondary specialized and higher educational institutions in the republic—a move that will further limit access to higher education.

## Rising Competition for Economic Opportunity Sparks Disputes

Increasing competition for economic opportunities is breeding resentment between the two dominant ethnic groups—Azeris and Armenians—who perceive discrimination in the allocation of jobs, housing, and

access to higher education. The regional papers are full of complaints of unfairness, nepotism, and "clanishness":

- Jobs. Allocation of jobs surfaced as an issue in recent ethnic disturbances. One Soviet official admitted that the best jobs in the predominantly Armenian Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast are reserved for Azeris. And a press report recently complained that in Azerbaijan young people educated in Yerevan (Armenia), rather than Baku, have a hard time finding jobs.
- Housing. With 10- to 15-year waiting lists for housing, disputes over the allocation of apartments are bitter. According to a press report, "families who should be put into housing first get their homes last. Such circumstances generate the justifiable criticism of the people . . . [and] give rise to a flood of claims to the republic and central organs."
- Education. Last year charges of unfair admissions practices in Azerbaijan's VUZs led to the appointment of new commissions to handle the admission process. In the most celebrated case, Azerbaijan's Institute of the National Economy was shut down for "serious infractions of the rules for admissions...lack of objectivity in the conduct of entrance exams,... violating pedagogical ethics and labor discipline, nepotism, and other abuses." 4

Regional differences in living standards also generate charges of ethnic discrimination. Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh claim that living standards are lower in that oblast than in the rest of the republic. <sup>5</sup> The resentment of the Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh further increases when they compare their level of living with that of relatives in Armenia, where living standards are higher than in Azerbaijan (see appendix).

<sup>4</sup> The institute later reopened as a branch of the Leningrad Financial-Economic Institute.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> This is, in part, due to the structure of employment. In Nagorno-Karabakh, the dominant economic activities are light industry and agriculture, relatively low-paying sectors. Higher paying industrial jobs, particularly in the petroleum industry, are centered around Baku and Sumgait

The Armenian residents of Nagorno-Karabakh, along with some other Soviet observers, charge that there is economic discrimination against Nagorno-Karabakh by Azerbaijan authorities. They complain that local industry is underdeveloped, roads are neglected, and cultural facilities are almost nonexistent in the region. The level of per capita investment in Nagorno-Karabakh is the lowest of any oblast in Azerbaijan. According to a Soviet correspondent, "only 1 percent of the budget of Azerbaijan was allocated for the development of the economy of the region," even though "Karabakh constitutes 5 percent of the area of Azerbaijan and not quite 3 percent of the Azeri population."

#### Hostilities Rise to the Surface

The youth bulge created conditions in Azerbaijan conducive to social instability—overcrowding in the cities, frustrated expectations among the young, unemployment, and growing resentment between ethnic groups. Moreover, discrimination against Armenians by Azerbaijan Republic authorities has exacerbated the effects of the youth bulge. Last year one Soviet commentator predicted trouble. He called Baku "a breeding ground for crime" and warned that work would have to be quickly found for unemployed young people to "avert tragedies."

Government repression of dissent helped keep the lid on potential unrest as the youth bulge peaked in the early 1980s. With the advent of Gorbachev's policy of glasnost, however, young people began to give vent to long-simmering grievances. In early 1988 ethnic tensions erupted into demonstrations, strikes, and violence, sparked by the demand that the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast be taken from Azerbaijani jurisdiction and reunited with Armenia. The demonstrations quickly spread from Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia and spilled over into Sumgait, Baku, and other areas of Azerbaijan, creating the most violent and protracted unrest since Stalin's death.

Reports from the region have noted the youth of the demonstrators. Participants in demonstrations by approximately 10,000 Azeris in Baku were described by

American tourists as mainly "college aged." According to the Soviet prosecutors, "pogroms" against Armenians in Sumgait were carried out by youths with an average age of 20. A Moscow television report confirmed the role of the youth bulge in the violence in Sumgait:

Our city was a young one which needed young people. A large number of people... came back here after completing their army service. A certain disproportion arose in the growth of the number of inhabitants and the amount of housing it was necessary to provide.... So there were social tensions in the city which were separate from the nationality factor, and they still remain very serious.

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#### Moscow's Shortsighted Approach

#### Putting Out Brushfires . . .

When ethnic tensions erupt into violence, Moscow's standard response is to "put out the brushfire" with a quick infusion of investment to the affected area. Moscow is now attempting to direct more resources to Nagorno-Karabakh for projects that would benefit the young population. A party and state resolution of 24 March 1988 calls for a 40-percent increase in the construction of housing in the 13th Five-Year Plan (1991-95), as well as increases in the construction of recreational facilities and schools in the autonomous oblast. The resolution also instructs ministries to draw up plans for a number of large construction projects in the region—including reservoirs, roads, and water and gas pipelines—which should employ thousands of people. Most of these projects are scheduled for completion in 1991-95. According to a Soviet observer, "the main goal is to make Armenians . . . feel themselves full-fledged citizens, having equal opportunities in terms of education and welfare." Although Moscow will provide some of this financial backing, it is likely that Azerbaijan will be called on to divert more of its already scarce investment funds to Nagorno-Karabakh.

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According to Moscow News, additional funds were also made available to Sumgait. The city received five times its normal allotment for social needs in the second quarter of this year. Moreover, officials have decided to move the shantytowns and in their place grant families land and loans to build decent homes. The Soviets estimate that the city will have to build housing at twice the normal rate this year to cope with the housing crisis

#### ... While Dodging the Basic Issues

Recent decisions notwithstanding, rather than invest heavily in creating jobs in southern-tier republics, Moscow has limped along with a 15-year-old policy of attempting to manage rapid labor force growth on the cheap by encouraging ministries to site small-scale, labor-intensive shops and subsidiaries in towns and small cities near rural areas. This is meant to bring jobs into areas with the greatest labor surplus and reduce migration to overburdened big cities.

This strategy has largely failed, in part because industry attempts to operate in the same way in the south as it does in the labor-deficit regions of the north. Soviet economists complain that ministries are biased toward capital-intensive projects that are inappropriate for republics with a shortage of skilled labor and an overabundance of unskilled workers. Moreover, enterprises are reluctant to build facilities in the rural areas because they need skilled workers, who are found in the cities. The small subsidiary shops that are constructed in rural towns tend to pay low wages and provide little to their employees in terms of housing and services. Often local people shun these jobs in favor of private-sector activity. The failure to establish labor-intensive industries such as textiles in the south is reflected in the fact that, for example, only 8 percent of the cotton produced in Uzbekistan is processed in the republic; most of the spinning, weaving, knitting, and sewing is still done in the labordeficit republics of the north.

Moscow, moreover, is not planning any significant increase in state investments to bolster the economy and create more jobs in areas that are experiencing a youth bulge—the Caucasus, southern Kazakhstan, and Central Asia. On the contrary, the regime has recently espoused the view that these regions should

pull their own weight. Gorbachev blames many of the problems of labor-surplus republics on the corruption and mismanagement of local leaders. Republic leaders are now instructed to raise labor productivity, make more efficient use of their existing resources, and rely less on subsidies from Moscow.

#### Altering Perestroyka?

A key objective of Gorbachev's economic reforms is to curtail overmanning—apparently even in labor-surplus regions. Indeed, in 1987 thousands of workers in the Baku area were reportedly laid off in transportation and in the oil industry, perhaps contributing to the subsequent unrest. Tatyana Zaslavskaya, speaking in support of such measures last year at a conference in Baku, asserted "it is impossible for each enterprise to continue to retain surplus people purely to 'solve' social problems. We will never achieve high labor productivity growth rates by doing that."

It makes little sense, however, to focus on creating high labor productivity jobs in areas of labor surplus. One Soviet commentator took up this point early this year. Describing the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Republic, a region of the RSFSR located in the northern Caucasus, he reported that more than 30,000 people were out of work there in 1985 and another 14,000 to 15,000 might be displaced as a result of perestroyka.6 Although the author acknowledges that many of these will find other jobs, perhaps in the same factory, he warns that "discrepancies" will remain and will aggravate the employment situation. He argues, "perhaps, while generally intensifying the national economy, it would be possible and even necessary to allow elements of extensive development in a number of regions in order to increase employment."

#### Outlook

Youth bulges in the southern republics will continue to plague Moscow for at least three to five years. Although population growth in both Azerbaijan and

<sup>6</sup> The total population of the Kabardino-Balkar AR in 1983 was 708,000.

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#### Could It Happen in Central Asia?

Central Asia's social infrastructure is even less developed than that of Azerbaijan, its population is less educated, per capita investment is lower, and the growth of its young adult population more rapid. This suggests that tensions and the potential for ethnic conflict could increase in that region as well.

In the past a number of factors have mitigated problems related to the youth bulge and decreased the potential for unrest in Central Asia:

- The local Slavic population clusters in the cities, while Asians tend to stay in the countryside. This reduces the competition between nationality groups for housing.
- Competition for jobs is reduced by an ethnic division of labor. Asians generally choose jobs in trade and agriculture—activities that give them easier access to the lucrative second economy, while the European settlers seek jobs in industry.
- Finally, an active policy of reverse discrimination in Central Asia assured that members of the indigenous nationalities would occupy a substantial share of leadership positions in VUZs, local government, and industry.

The balance that has been established could potentially be upset over the near term by Gorbachev's policies and in the longer term by increased ruralurban migration. Gorbachev's initiatives have already produced layoffs, an end to reverse discrimination, and a crackdown on corruption in local governments. Moreover, population pressures in the countryside shortages of water and arable land—may eventually generate increased movement to the cities, heightening interethnic competition for jobs, housing, and other opportunities. At that point, the potential for unrest would greatly increase. If measures are not taken to significantly bolster the economy of the cities, social problems could be generated by even a modest acceleration in the rate of rural-urban migration.

Central Asia will remain high relative to the rest of the Soviet Union, the share of the population in the 15- to 24-year-old age group will dip in the 1990s. After the year 2000, another youth bulge will begin to

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Ongoing disturbances in the Caucasus and continuing population pressures in Central Asia may lead Moscow to adjust or rethink its policies in the southern tier (see inset). The regime's options, however, are not attractive. Easing up on the labor-saving aspects of perestroyka in the southern tier makes sense, but it is not clear if the Soviet campaign style of implementing policies across the board can accommodate such flexibility. Increasing investment in that region would mean diverting funds from important projects elsewhere in the country. Efforts to force outmigration could worsen ethnic tensions within the southern tier and bring ethnic conflicts into the cities of the industrialized regions of the north. Finally, allowing the private sector to soak up even more excess labor could produce results that would be unpalatable to Moscow, including greater income inequalities, and an increase in illegal diversion of state resources to private activity. Moreover, this would put more of the region's economy beyond state control.

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Youth bulges in the south represent a serious challenge for Gorbachev as he attempts to implement perestroyka. His economic policies were aimed at the industrialized regions of the country, where labor—relative to the south—is scarce and well educated. Measures that encourage the substitution of capital for labor and elimination of low-skill jobs are ill suited to regions where labor is abundant, capital is relatively scarce, and skill levels are low. If firms and entrepreneurs are not given flexibility to adapt production processes and wages to local conditions, perestroyka may magnify the effects of the youth bulge by eliminating jobs. This would heighten the potential for more ethnic unrest and provide ammunition to opponents of reform.

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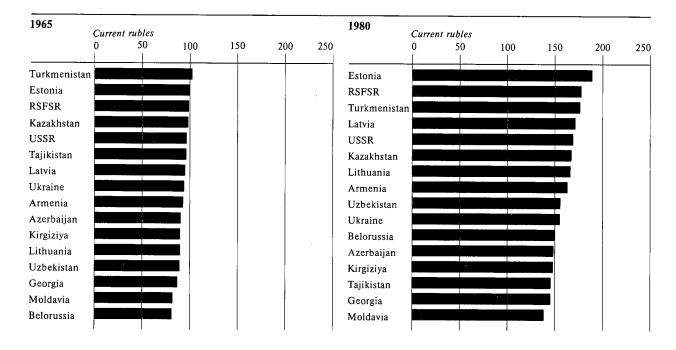
#### **Appendix**

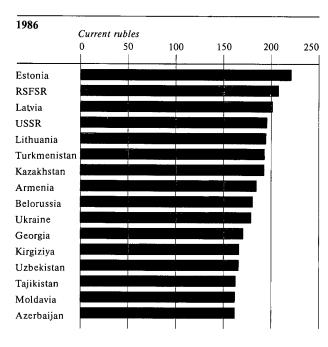
## Regional Differences in Living Standards

In part because of rapid population growth, Azerbaijan and other labor-surplus republics rank at the bottom of the scale among Soviet republics in terms of wages, expenditures for social welfare, and housing (see figures 4-7). Baku, Azerbaijan's capital and the fifth-largest city in the Soviet Union, also compares poorly with the other major cities of the USSR (see table on page 14).

Figure 4

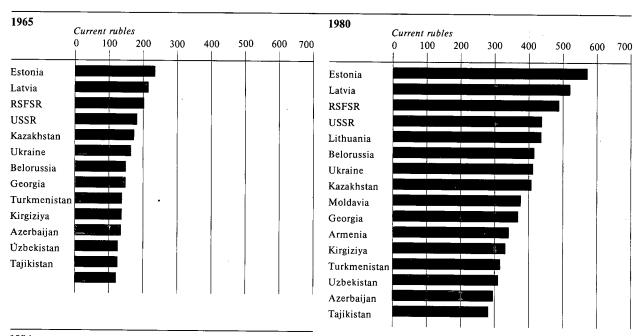
**USSR: Average Monthly Earnings** 

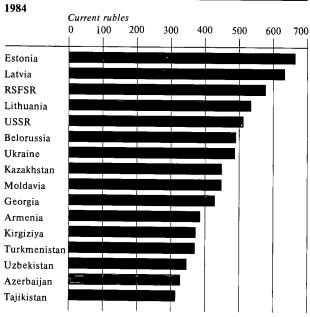




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Figure 5
USSR: Per Capita Expenditures for Social Welfare<sup>a</sup>

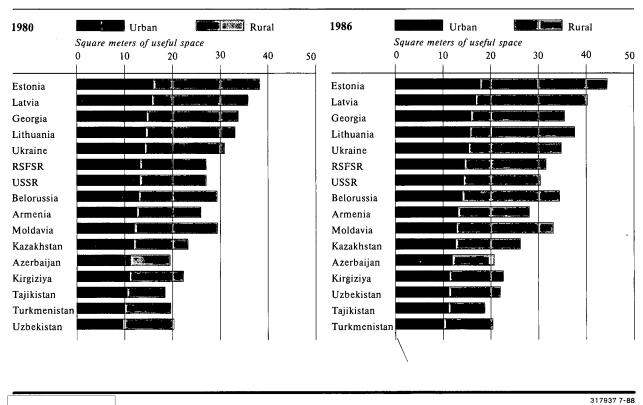




a Includes expenditures for education, medical services, children's preschools, rest homes, sanatoriums, communal housing, and a few other types of cultural services.

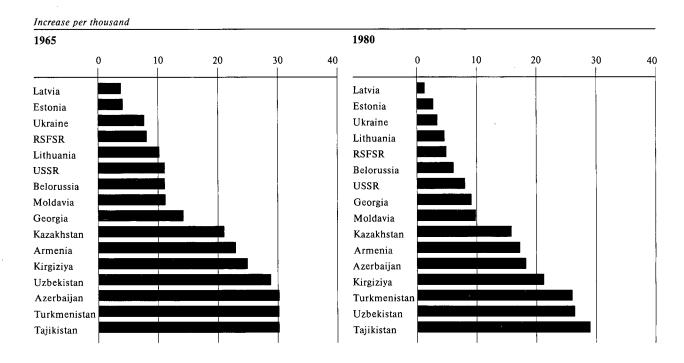
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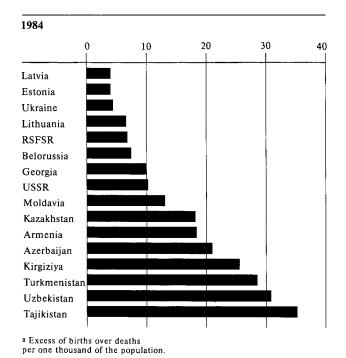
Figure 6 USSR: Per Capita Housing Space



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Figure 7
USSR: Natural Population Growth<sup>a</sup>





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# Soviet Cities: Baku's Rapid Population Growth Strains the Infrastructure

Top 10 Cities by Population	Population 1 January 1986 (thousands)	Natural Pop. Growth per 1,000	Apartments Built per 1,000 Natural Pop. Increase (1985)	Per Capita Retail Trade Turnover (1985)	Million Passengers Carried (bus, trolley, metro)
Moscow	(1) 8714	(10) 1.7	(1) 3822	(1) 2612	(1) 3856.2
Leningrad	(2) 4904	(9) 2.3	(2) 2059	(2) 1661	(2) 2205.2
Kiev	(3) 2495	(4) 7.2	(7) 1311	(3) 1649	(3) 1111.8
Tashkent	(4) 2077	(1) 13.7	(9) 515	(7) 1254	(6) 371.2
Baku	(5) 1722	(2) 13.0	(10) 425	(10) 1078	(9) 244.2
Khar'kov	(6) 1567	(7) 3.9	(5) 1734	(5) 1395	(4) 703.6
Minsk	(7) 1510	(3) 12.1	(8) 848	(4) 1617	(5) 518.3
Novosibirsk	(8) 1405	(6) 5.0	(6) 1589	(8) 1194	(8) 245.3
Sverdlovsk	(9) 1315	(5) 5.9	(4) 1615	(6) 1358	(7) 324.2
Kuybyshev	(10) 1267	(8) 3.2	(3) 2050	(9) 1189	(10) 205.8

Source: Vestnik statistiki, 1986.

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