

STALIN :

MARXISM AND THE

NATIONAL QUESTION

IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION

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The pamphlet reprinted here is the first systematic Marxist analysis of the national question. It was published in 1913, and on Lenin's recommendation it became a policy document of Bolshevism.

In the first section Stalin defines what a nation is. In the subsequent sections he deals with particular aspects of the national movement, and its relation to the working class movement. The confusion national contradictions in the Russian Empire of the time makes it necessary for him to carry out a very comprehensive investigation of the national question. At first glance it might seem that this part of the pamphlet is mainly of historical interest. But in the course of it Stalin establishes certain principles which have not been theoretically summed up elsewhere and which are absolutely necessary to an understanding of the national question.

It should be borne in mind when reading the remarks on the Jewish question that the pamphlet was written long before the formation of the Jewish nation in Palestine.

A second volume, including extracts from Stalin's writings on the national question after 1917, is in preparation. It will deal with the national question in relation to imperialism and socialism.

In his Preface to this Pamphlet (which has been excluded here for reasons of space) Stalin remarks that following the defeat of the revolution in 1905,

a "wave of nationalism swept onward with increasing force, threatening to engulf the working class masses. And the more the movement for emancipation declined, the more plentifully nationalism pushed forth its blossoms. At this crucial moment a high mission devolved upon the Social-Democratic Party - to resist nationalism, and to protect the masses from the general 'epidemic'. For the Social-Democrats, and they alone, could do this, by bring-

ing against nationalism the tried weapon of internationalism, the unity and indivisibility of the class struggle. And the more precipitately the wave of nationalism advanced, the louder had to be the call of the Social-Democratic Party for fraternity and unity among the proletarians of all the nationalities of Russia. And in this connection particular firmness was demanded of the Social-Democrats of the border regions, who came into direct contact with the nationalist movement.

"But not all the Social-Democrats proved equal to the task - and this applies particularly to the Social-Democrats of the border regions..."

The situation today is very similar. The leadership of the international Communist movement collapsed into revisionism in the mid fifties, and the recovery has been very slow and very partial. Nationalism shared in the general extension of bourgeois political influence over the working class. The situation became so bad that there were, and are, even many 'anti-revisionist' groupings who regard nationalism as a proletarian virtue.

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S T A L I N :

M A R X I S M A N D T H E N A T I O N A L Q U E S T I O N

I . A N A T I O N

What is a nation?

A nation is primarily a community, a definite community of people.

This community is not racial, nor is it tribal. The modern Italian nation was formed from Romans, Teutons, Etruscans, Greeks, Arabs, and so forth. The French nation was formed from Gauls, Romans, Britons, Teutons, and so on. The same should be said of the British, the Germans and others, who were formed into nations from peoples of different races and tribes.

Thus, a nation is not a racial or tribal, but a historically constituted community of people.

On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the great empires of Cyrus and Alexander could not be called nations, although they came to be constituted historically and were formed out of different tribes and races. They were not nations, but casual and loosely connected conglomerations of groups, which fell apart or joined together depending upon the victories or defeats of this or that conqueror.

Thus, a nation is not a casual or ephemeral conglomeration, but a stable community of people.

But not every stable community constitutes a nation. Austria and Russia are also stable communities, but nobody calls them nations. What distinguishes a national community from a political community? One of the distinguishing features is that a national community^{is} inconceivable without a common language, while a state need not necessarily have a common language. The Czech nation in Austria and the Polish in Russia would be impossible if each did not have a common language, whereas the integrity of Russia and Austria is not affected by the fact that there are several different languages within their borders. We are referring, of course, to the colloquial language of the people and not to the official government language.

Thus community of language is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

This, of course, does not mean that different nations always and everywhere necessarily speak different languages, or that all who speak one language neces-

carily constitute one nation. A common language for every nation, but not necessarily different languages for different nations. There is no nation which at one and the same time speaks several languages, but this does not mean that there may not be two nations speaking the same language. Englishmen and Americans speak one language, but they do not constitute one nation. The same is true of the Norwegians and the Danes, the English and the Irish.

But why, for instance, do not the English and the Americans constitute one nation in spite of their common language?

Firstly, because they do not live together, but inhabit different territories. A nation is formed only as a result of lengthy and systematic intercourse, as a result of the fact that people live together from generation to generation. But people cannot live together for lengthy periods unless they have a common territory. Englishmen and Americans originally inhabited the same territory, England and constituted one nation. Later, one section of the English emigrated from England to a new territory, America, and here, in the new territory, in the course of time came to form the new American nation. Difference of territory led to the formation of different nations.

This community of territory is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But this is not all. Community of territory in itself does not create a nation. This requires, in addition, an internal economic bond which welds the various parts of a nation into a single whole. There is no such bond between England and America, and so they constitute two different nations. But the Americans themselves would not deserve to be called a nation were not the different parts of America bound together into an economic whole, as a result of division of labour between them, the development of means of communication, and so forth.

Take the Georgians, for instance. The Georgians before the Reform* inhabited a common territory and spoke one language. Nevertheless, they did not, strictly speaking, constitute one nation, for, being split up into a number of disconnected principalities, they could not share a common economic life; for centuries they waged war against each other and pillaged each other, inciting the Persians and Turks against each other. The ephemeral and accidental amalgamation of the principalities which some successful king sometimes managed to bring about affected at best a superficial administrative sphere and rapidly disintegrated owing to the caprices of the princes and the indifference of the peasants. Nor could it be otherwise in economically disunited Georgia. Georgia came on to the scene as a nation only in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when the fall of serfdom and the growth of the economic life of the country, the development of means of communication and the rise of capitalism, instituted a division of labour between the various districts of Georgia, completely shattered the economic self-sufficiency of the principalities and bound them together into a single whole.

The same must be said of the other nations which have passed through the stage of feudalism and have developed capitalism.

This community of economic life, economic cohesion, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

But even this is not all. Apart from the foregoing, one must take into consideration the specific spiritual complexion of the people constituting a nation. Nations differ not only in their conditions of life, but also in spiritual

*I.e., the abolition of serfdom in 1861 - Editor.

complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland, which speak one language, nevertheless constitute three distinct nations, it is in no small measure due to the peculiar psychological make-up which they developed from generation to generation as a result of dissimilar conditions of existence.

Of course, by itself the psychological make-up, or, as it is otherwise called, the 'national character,' is something indefinable to the observer, but inasmuch as it manifests itself in a distinctive culture common to the nation it is definable and cannot be ignored.

Needless to say, 'national character' is not a thing that is fixed once and for all, but is modified by changes in the conditions of life; but since it exists at every given moment, it leaves its imprint on the physiognomy of the nation.

Thus community of psychological make-up, which manifests itself in a community of culture, is one of the characteristic features of a nation.

We have now exhausted the characteristic features of a nation.

A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture.

It goes without saying that a nation, like every other historical phenomenon, is subject to the law of change, has its history, its beginning and end.

It must be emphasised that none of the above characteristics is by itself sufficient to define a nation. On the other hand, it is sufficient for a single one of these characteristics to be absent and the nation ceases to be a nation.

It is possible to conceive people possessing a common 'national character' but they cannot be said to constitute a single nation if they are economically dis-united, inhabit different territories, speak different languages and so forth. Such, for instance, are the Russian, Galician, American, Georgian and Caucasian Highland Jews, who do not, in our opinion, constitute a single nation.

It is possible to conceive people with a common territory and economic life who nevertheless would not constitute a single nation because they have no common language and no common 'national character.' Such, for instance, are the Germans and Letts in the Baltic Region.

Finally, the Norwegians and the Danes speak one language, but they do not constitute a single nation owing to the absence of the other characteristics.

It is only when all these characteristics are present that we have a nation.

It might appear that 'national character' is not one of the characteristics but the only essential characteristic of a nation, and that all the other characteristics are only factors in the development of a nation, rather than its characteristics. Such, for instance, is the view held by R. Springer, and particularly by O. Bauer, Social-Democratic theoreticians on the national question well known in Austria.

Let us examine their theory of nations. According to Springer:

"A nation is a union of similarly thinking and similarly speaking persons. /It is/ a cultural community of modern people no longer tied to the soil." (Our italics.) (R. Springer, Das nationale Problem. 1902. p35)

Thus, a 'union' of similarly thinking people speaking one language, no matter how

disunited they may be, no matter where they live, is a nation.

Bauer goes even further.

"What is a nation?" he asks. "Is it community of language which makes people a nation? But the English and the Irish...speak the same language without, however, being one people; the Jews have no common language and yet are a nation."

What, then, is a nation? (O. Bauer, Die Nationalitätenfrage & die Sozialdemokratie 1924 p2)

"A nation is a relative community of character." (ibid, p6)

But what is character, in this case national character? National character is

"...the sum total of characteristics which distinguish the people of one nationality from the people of another nationality - the complex of physical and spiritual characteristics which distinguish one nation from another." (ibid) p2

Bauer knows, of course, that national character does not fall from the skies, and he therefore adds:

"The character of people is determined by nothing so much as by their fate... A nation is nothing but a community of fate /which in its turn is determined/ by the conditions under which people produce their means of subsistence and distribute the products of their labour." (ibid p24.)

We thus arrive at the 'fullest', as Bauer calls it, definition of a nation:

"A nation is the aggregate of people bound into a community of character by a community of fate." (ibid p135)

We thus have a community of national character based on a community of fate and not necessarily connected with community of territory, language or economic life.

But what in that case remains of the nation? What national community can there be among people who are economically disconnected, inhabit different territories and from generation to generation speak different languages?

Bauer speaks of the Jews as a nation, although they "have no common language" (ibid p2); but what "community of fate" and national cohesion can there be, for instance, between the Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian and American Jews, who are completely disunited, inhabit different territories and speak different languages?

The Jews enumerated undoubtedly lead the same economic and political life as the Georgians, Daghestanians, Russians and Americans respectively, and in the same cultural atmosphere as the latter; this cannot but leave a definite impress on their national character; if there is anything common to them left it is their religion, their common origin and certain relics of national character. All this is beyond question. But how can it be seriously maintained that perished religious rites and fading psychological relics affect the "fate" of these Jews more powerfully than the living social, economic and cultural environment that surrounds them? And it is only on this assumption that it is generally possible to speak of the Jews as a single nation at all.

What, then, distinguishes Bauer's nation from the mystical and self-contained 'national spirit' of the spiritualists?

Bauer, by divorcing the 'distinctive feature' of nations (national character) from the 'conditions' of their life, sets up an impassable barrier between them. But what is national character if not a reflection of the conditions of life, a coagulation of impressions derived from environment? How can one limit the matter

to national character alone, isolating and divorcing it from the soil that gave rise to it?

Indeed, what distinguished the English nation from the American nation at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century is, when the United States was still known as New England?

Not national character, of course; for the Americans had originated from England and had brought with them to America not only the English language, but also the English national character, which, of course, they could not lose so soon; although, under the influence of the new conditions, they would naturally be developing their own specific character. Yet, despite this greater or lesser community of character, they at that time already constituted a nation distinct from England. Obviously, New England as a nation differed from England as a nation not by its specific national character, or not so much by its national character, as by its environment and conditions of life, which were distinct from those of England.

It is therefore clear that there is in fact no single distinguishing characteristic of a nation. There is only a sum total of characteristics, of which, when nations are compared, one characteristic (national character), or another (language), or a third (territory, economic conditions), stands out in sharper relief. A nation constitutes the combination of all these characteristics taken together.

Bauer's point of view, which identifies a nation with its national character, divorces the nation from its soil and converts it into an invisible, self-contained force. The result is not a living and active nation, but something mystical, intangible and supernatural. For, I repeat, what sort of nation, for instance, is a Jewish nation that consists of Georgian, Daghestanian, Russian, American and other Jews, the members of which do not understand each other (since they speak different languages), inhabit different parts of the globe, will never see each other, will never act together, whether in time of peace or in time of war? No, it is not for such paper 'nations' that the Social-Democratic Party draws up its national programme. It can reckon only with real nations, which act and move, and therefore insist on being reckoned with.

Bauer is obviously confusing nation, which is a historical category, with tribe, which is an ethnographical category.

By the way, Bauer apparently himself feels the weakness of his position. While in the beginning of his book he definitely declares the Jews to be a nation, (p2) he corrects himself at the end of the book and states that "in general capitalist society which makes it impossible for them /the Jews/ to continue as a nation," by causing them to assimilate with other nations. The reason, it appears, is that "the Jews have no closed territory of settlement," while the Czechs, for instance, have such a territory and, according to Bauer, will survive as a nation. In short, the reason lies in the absence of territory. (ibid p373)

By arguing thus, Bauer wanted to prove that the Jewish workers cannot demand national autonomy (p379), but he thereby inadvertently refuted his own theory, which denies that community of territory is one of the characteristics of a nation.

But Bauer goes further. In the beginning of his book he definitely declares that "the Jews have no common language, and nevertheless are a nation." (p2) But hardly has he reached p126 when he effects a change of front and just as definitely declares that the unquestionably, "no nation is possible without a common

language." (Our italics. p126)

Bauer wanted to prove that "language is the most important instrument of human intercourse," (p379) but at the same time he inadvertently proved something he did not mean to prove, namely, the groundlessness of his own theory of nations, which denies the significance of community of language.

Thus this theory, stitched together by idealistic threads, refutes itself.

I I . T H E N A T I O N A L M O V E M E N T

A nation is not merely a historical category but a historical category belonging to a definite epoch, the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of elimination of feudalism and development of capitalism was at the same time a process of amalgamation of people into nations. Such, for instance, was the case in Western Europe. The British, French, Germans, Italians and others formed themselves into nations at the time of the victorious advance of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.

But the formation of nations in these instances at the same time signified their conversion into independent national states. The British, French and other nations are at the same time British, French, etc., states. Ireland, which did not participate in this process, does not alter the general picture.

Matters proceeded somewhat differently in Eastern Europe. While in the West the nations developed into states, in the East multi-national states were formed, each consisting of several nationalities. Such are Austria-Hungary and Russia. In Austria, the Germans proved to be politically the most developed, and they took it upon themselves to amalgamate the Austrian nationalities into a state. In Hungary, the most adapted for state organisation were the Magyars - the kernel of the Hungarian nationalities - and it was they who united Hungary. In Russia, the role of welder of nationalities was assumed by the Great-Russians, who were headed by an aristocratic military bureaucracy, which had been historically formed and was powerful and well-organised.

Such was the case in the East.

This peculiar method of formation of states could take place only where feudalism had not yet been eliminated, where capitalism was feebly developed, where the nationalities which had been forced into the background had not yet been able to consolidate themselves economically into integral nations.

But capitalism also began to develop in the Eastern states. Trade and means of communication were developing. Large towns were springing up. The nations were becoming economically consolidated. Capitalism, erupting into the tranquil life of the ousted nationalities, was arousing them and stirring them into action. The development of the press and the theatre, the activity of the Reichsrat (Austria) and of the Duma (Russia) were helping to strengthen "national sentiments." The intelligentsia that had arisen was being imbued with "the national idea" and was acting in the same direction...

But the ousted nations, aroused to independent life, could no longer shape themselves into independent national states; they encountered the powerful resistance of the ruling strata of the dominant nations, which had long ago assumed the control of the state. They were too late!

In this way the Czechs, Poles, etc., formed themselves into nations in Austria;

the Croats, etc., in Hungary; the Letts, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Georgians, Armenians, etc., in Russia. What had been an exception in Western Europe (Ireland) became the rule in the East.

In the West, Ireland responded to its exceptional position by a national movement. In the East, the awakened nations were bound to respond in the same fashion.

Thus arose the circumstances which impelled the young nations of Eastern Europe into the path of struggle.

The struggle began and spread, to be sure, not between nations as a whole but between the ruling classes of the dominant and the ousted nations. The struggle is usually conducted by the urban petty bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the big bourgeoisie of the dominant nation (Czechs and Germans), or by the rural bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation against the landlords of the dominant nation (Ukrainians in Poland), or by the whole 'national' bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations against the ruling nobility of the dominant nation (Poland, Lithuania and the Ukraine in Russia).

The bourgeoisie plays the leading role.

The chief problem for the young bourgeoisie is the problem of the market. Its aim is to sell its goods and to emerge victorious from competition with the bourgeoisie of another nationality. Hence its desire to secure its 'own', its 'home' market. The market is the first school in which the bourgeoisie learns its nationalism.

But matters are usually not confined to the market. The semi-feudal, semi-bourgeois bureaucracy of the dominant nation intervenes in the struggle with its own methods of 'arresting and preventing'.* The bourgeoisie of the dominant nation, whether large or small, is able to deal more 'rapidly' and 'decisively' with its competitor. 'Forces' are united and a series of restrictive measures is put into operation against the 'alien' bourgeoisie, measures passing into acts of repression. The struggle passes from the economic sphere to the political sphere. Limitation of freedom of movement, repression of language, limitation of franchise, restriction of schools, religious limitations, and so on are piled on to the head of the 'competitor'. Of course, such measures are designed not only in the interest of the bourgeois classes of the dominant nation, but also in pursuit of the specifically caste aims, so to speak, of the ruling bureaucracy. But from the point of view of the results achieved this is quite immaterial: the bourgeois classes and the bureaucracy in this matter go hand in hand - whether it be in Austria-Hungary or in Russia.

The bourgeoisie of the oppressed nation, repressed on every hand, is naturally stirred into movement. It appeals to its 'native folk' and begins to cry out about the 'fatherland', claiming that its own cause is the cause of the nation as a whole. It recruits itself an army from among its 'countrymen' in the interests of... the 'fatherland'. Nor do the 'folk' always remain unresponsive to its appeals, they rally around its banner: the repression from above affects them also and provokes their discontent.

Thus the national movement begins.

* A rather free translation of the satirical description of the functions of the police by the Russian writer Gleb Uspensky. - Ed. Eng. Ed.

The strength of the national movement is determined by the degree to which the wide strata of the nation, the proletariat and the peasantry, participate in it.

Whether the proletariat rallies to the banner of bourgeois nationalism depends on the degree of development of class contradictions, on the class-consciousness and degree of organisation of the proletariat. A class-conscious proletariat has its own tried banner, and it does not need to march under the banner of the bourgeoisie.

As far as the peasants are concerned, their participation in the national movement depends primarily on the character of the repression. If the repression affects the 'land', as was the case in Ireland, then the mass of the peasants immediately rally to the banner of the national movement.

On the other hand, if, for example, there is no serious anti-Russian nationalism in Georgia, it is primarily because there are no Russian landlords there or a Russian big bourgeoisie to supply the fuel for such nationalism among the masses. In Georgia there is anti-Armenian nationalism; but this is because there is an Armenian big bourgeoisie there which, beating the small and still unconsolidated Georgian bourgeoisie, drives the latter to anti-Armenian nationalism.

Depending on these factors, the national movement either assumes a mass character and steadily grows (as in Ireland and Galicia), or it is converted into a series of petty collisions, degenerating into squabbles and 'fights' over signboards (as in some of the towns of Bohemia).

The nature of the national movement, of course, will not everywhere be the same: it is wholly determined by the diverse demands made by the movement. In Ireland the movement bears an agrarian character; in Bohemia it is concerned with 'language'; in one place the demand is for civil equality and religious freedom, in another for the nation's 'own' officials or its own Assembly. The diversity of demands not infrequently reveals the diverse features which characterise a nation in general (language, territory, etc.). It is worthy of note that we never meet with a demand connected with Bauer's all-embracing 'national character.' And this is natural: 'national character' in itself is something elusive, and, as was correctly remarked by J. Strasser, "what can be done with it in politics?" (J. Strasser, *Der Arbeiter und die Nation*, 1912 p33)

Such, in general, are the forms and features of the national movement.

From what has been said it will be clear that the national struggle under the conditions of rising capitalism is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves. Sometimes the bourgeoisie succeeds in drawing the proletariat into the national movement, and then the national struggle externally assumes a 'nation-wide' character. But this is so only externally. In its essence it is always a bourgeois struggle, one that is chiefly favourable to and suitable for the bourgeoisie.

But it does not follow from this that the proletariat should not put up a fight against the policy of national oppression.

Limitation of freedom of movement, disfranchisement, suppression of language, restriction of schools, and other forms of repression affect the workers no less, if not more, than the bourgeoisie. Such a state of affairs can only serve to retard the free development of the intellectual forces of the proletariat of the subject nations. There can be no possibility of a full development of the intellectual faculties of the Tatar or Jewish worker if he is not allowed to use his native language at meetings and lectures, and if his schools are closed down.

But the policy of national repression is dangerous to the cause of the proletariat

also on another account. It diverts the attention of large strata of the population from social questions, questions of the class struggle, to national questions, questions 'common' to the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. And this creates a favourable soil for lying propaganda regarding 'harmony of interests', for glossing over the class interests of the proletariat and for the intellectual enslavement of the workers. This creates a serious obstacle to the work of uniting the workers of all nationalities. If a considerable proportion of the Polish workers are still in intellectual bondage to the bourgeois nationalists, if they still stand aloof from the international labour movement, it is chiefly because the age-long anti-Polish policy of the 'powers that be' creates the soil for, and hinders the emancipation of the workers from, this bondage.

But the policy of repression does not stop here. It not infrequently passes from a 'system' of oppression to a 'system' of inciting nations against each other, to a 'system' of massacres and pogroms. Of course, the latter is not everywhere and always possible, but where it is possible - in the absence of elementary civil rights - it frequently assumes horrifying proportions and threatens to drown the cause of unity of the workers in blood and tears. The Caucasus and South Russia furnish numerous examples. 'Divide and rule' - such is the purpose of the policy of inciting nations against each other. And where such a policy succeeds it is a tremendous evil for the proletariat and a serious obstacle to the work of uniting the workers of all the nationalities in the state.

But the workers are interested in the complete amalgamation of all their comrades into a single international army, in their speedy and final emancipation from intellectual subjection to the bourgeoisie, and in the full and free development of the intellectual forces of their brothers, whatever the nation to which they belong.

The workers therefore combat and will continue to combat the policy of national oppression in all its forms, subtle or crude, as also the policy of inciting nations against each other in all its forms.

Social-Democratic parties in all countries therefore proclaim the right of nations to self-determination.

The right of self-determination means that only the nation itself has the right to determine its destiny, that no one has the right forcibly to interfere in the life of the nation, to destroy its schools and other institutions, to violate its habits and customs, to repress its language, or curtail its rights.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democrats will support every custom and institution of a nation. While combating the exercise of violence against any nation, they will only support the right of the nation to determine its own destiny, at the same time agitating against the noxious customs and institutions of that nation in order to enable the toiling strata of the nation to emancipate themselves from them.

The right of self-determination means that a nation can arrange its life according to its own will. It has the right to arrange its life on the basis of autonomy. It has the right to enter into federal relations with other nations. It has the right to complete secession. Nations are sovereign and all nations are equal.

This, of course, does not mean that Social-Democrats will support every demand of a nation. A nation has the right even to return to the old order of things; but this does not mean that Social-Democrats will subscribe to such a decision if taken by any institution of the said nation. The obligations of Social-Democrats,

who defend the interests of the proletariat, and the rights of a nation, which consists of various classes, are two different things.

In fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, the aim of the Social-Democrats is to put an end to the policy of national oppression, to render it impossible, and thereby to remove the grounds of hostility between nations, to take the edge off that hostility and reduce it to a minimum.

This is what essentially distinguishes the policy of the class-conscious proletariat from the policy of the bourgeoisie, which attempts to aggravate and fan the national struggle and to prolong and sharpen the national movement.

And this is why the class-conscious proletariat cannot rally under the 'national' flag of the bourgeoisie.

This is why the so-called 'evolutionary national' policy advocated by Bauer cannot become the policy of the proletariat. Bauer's attempt to identify his 'evolutionary national' policy with the policy of the 'modern working class' (Op. cit., p161) is an attempt to adapt the class struggle of the workers to the struggle of the nations.

The fate of the national movement, which is essentially a bourgeois movement, is naturally connected with the fate of the bourgeoisie. The final collapse of the national movement is possible only with the collapse of the bourgeoisie. Only under the reign of socialism can peace be fully established. But even within the framework of capitalism it is possible to reduce the national struggle to a minimum, to sever its roots, to render it as innocuous as possible for the proletariat. This is borne out by the examples of Switzerland and America. It requires that the country should be democratized and the nations allowed opportunity for free development.

III. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

A nation has the right freely to determine its own destiny. It has the right to arrange its life as it sees fit, without, of course, stamping on the rights of other nations. That is beyond dispute.

But how exactly should it arrange its own life, what forms should its future constitution take, if the interests of the majority of the nation and, above all, of the proletariat, are to be borne in mind?

A nation has the right to arrange its life on autonomous lines. It even has the right to secede. But this does not mean that it should do so under all circumstances, that autonomy, or separation, will everywhere and always be advantageous for a nation, ie, for the majority of its population, ie, for the toiling strata. The Transcaucasian Tatars as a nation may assemble, let us say, in their Diet and, succumbing to the influence of their beys and mullahs, decide to restore the old order of things and to secede from the state. According to the meaning of the clause on self-determination they are fully entitled to do so. But will this be in the interest of the toiling strata of the Tatar nation? Can Social-Democrats remain indifferent when the beys and mullahs take the lead of the masses in the solution of the national problem? Should not Social-Democrats interfere in the matter and influence the will of the nation in a definite way? Should they not come forward with a definite plan for the solution of the problem which would be most advantageous to the Tatar masses?

But what solution would be most compatible with the interests of the toiling masses? Autonomy, federation or separation?

All these are problems the solution to which will depend on the concrete historical conditions in which the given nation finds itself.

Nay, more. Conditions, like everything else, change, and a decision which is correct at one particular time may prove to be entirely unsuitable at another.

In the middle of the nineteenth century Marx was in favour of the separation of Russian Poland; and he was right, for it was then a question of emancipating a higher culture from a lower culture that was destroying it. And the question at that time was not only a theoretical question, an academic question, but a practical question, a question of actual reality...

At the end of the nineteenth century the Polish Marxists were already declaring against the separation of Poland; and they were also right, for during the fifty years that had elapsed profound changes had taken place, bringing Russia and Poland closer economically and culturally. Moreover, during this period the question of separation had been converted from a practical matter into a matter for academic dispute, which excited nobody except perhaps the intellectuals abroad. This, of course, by no means precludes the possibility that certain internal and external conditions may arise in which the question of the separation of Poland may again become actual.

It follows from this that the solution of the national problem can be arrived at only if due consideration is paid to historical conditions in their development.

The economic, political and cultural conditions of a given nation constitute the only key to the question of how a particular nation out to arrange its life and what forms its future constitution ought to take. It is possible that a specific solution of the problem will be required for each nation. If, indeed, a dialectical approach to a question is required anywhere it is required here, in the national question.

In view of this we must declare our decided opposition to a certain very widespread, but very summary manner of 'solving' the national problem, which owes its inception to the Bund. We have in mind the easy method of referring to the Austrian and South-Slavic* Social-Democratic parties, which supposedly have already solved the national problem and whose solution the Russian Social-Democrats should simply borrow. It is assumed that whatever, say, is right for Austria is also right for Russia. The most important and decisive factor is lost sight of here, namely, the concrete historical conditions in Russia as a whole and in the life of each of the nations inhabiting Russia in particular.

Listen to what the well-known Bundist, V. Kossovsky, says:

"When at the Fourth Congress of the Bund the principles of the question (ie, the national question - J.S.) were discussed, the proposal made by one of the members of the congress to settle the question in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party met with general approval."
(V. Kossovsky, Problems of Nationality pp 6-17.)

And the result was that "the congress unanimously adopted" ...national autonomy.

And that was all! No analysis of the actual conditions in Russia, no investigation of the conditions of life of the Jews in Russia. They first borrowed the

*The South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party operates in the Southern part of Austria.

solution of the South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party, then they 'approved' it, and finally they 'unanimously adopted' it! This is the way the Bund presents and 'solves' the national problem in Russia...

As a matter of fact, Austria and Russia represent entirely different conditions. This explains why the Social-Democrats in Austria when they adopted their national programme at Brunn (1899) in the spirit of the resolution of the South-Slavic Social Democratic Party (with certain insignificant amendments, it is true) approached the problem in so to speak an entirely non-Russian way and, of course, solved it in a non-Russian way.

First, as to the presentation of the problem. How is the problem presented by the Austrian theoreticians of national autonomy, the commentators on the Brunn national programme and the resolution of the South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party, Springer and Bauer?

Springer declares:

"Whether a state of nationalities is possible, and wheter, in particular, the Austrian nationalities are obliged to establish a single political entity, is a preliminary question which we shall not answer here but shall assume to be settled. For anyone who will not concede this possibility and necessity, our investigation will, of course, be purposeless.

"Our theme is as follows: inasmuch as these nations are obliged to carry on a joint existence, what legal forms are relatively best for this purpose?" (Springer's italics.) (Op cit. ppl0-11)

Thus the point of departure is the political integrity of Austria. Bauer says the same thing:

"We therefore first assume that the Austrian nations will remain in the same political union in which they exist together at the present time, and inquire how the nations within this union will arrange their relations among themselves and to the state." (Op. cit. p382)

Here again the first thing is the integrity of Austria.

Can the Russian Social-Democratic Party present the question in this way? No, it cannot. And it cannot because from the very outset it holds the view of the right of self-determination of nations, by virtue of which a nation enjoys the right of secession. Even the Bundist Goldblatt admitted at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party that the latter could not abandon the standpoint of self-determination. This is what Goldblatt said on that occasion:

"Nothing can be said against the right of self-determination. If any nation is striving for independence, we must not oppose it. If Poland does not wish to enter into 'lawful wedlock' with Russia, it is not for us to interfere with her."

All that is true. But it follows that the basic starting points of the Austrian and Russian Social-Democrats, far from being identical, are diametrically opposite. After this, can there be any question of borrowing the national programme of the Austrians?

Furthermore, the Austrians hope to achieve the 'freedom of nationalities' by means of petty reforms, by slow steps. While they propose national autonomy as a practical measure, they do not count on a radical change, on a democratic movement for liberation, which they do not even contemplate. The Russian Marx-

ists, on the other hand, associate the 'freedom of nationalities' with a probable radical change and a democratic movement for liberation, having no grounds for counting on reforms. And this essentially alters matters in regard to the probable fate of the nations of Russia.

"Of course," says Bauer, "there is little probability that national autonomy will be the result of a great decision, of a bold action. Austria will develop towards national autonomy step by step... by a slow process of development and in the course of a severe struggle, as a result of which legislation and administration will be in a chronic state of paralysis. The new constitution will not be created by a great legislative act, but by a multitude of individual enactments for individual provinces and individual communities." (Ibid p. 404)

Springer says the same thing. He writes:

"I am very well aware that institutions of this kind (ie, organs of national autonomy - J.S.) are not created in a single year or a single decade. The reorganisation of the Prussian administration alone demanded considerable time... The Prussians required two decades for the final establishment of their basic administrative institutions. Let nobody think that I entertain any illusions as to the time required and the difficulties to be overcome in Austria." (Op. Cit. p29)

All this is very definite. But can the Russian Marxists avoid associating the national question with 'bold actions'? Can they calculate on partial reforms, on 'a multitude of individual enactments' as a means for achieving the "freedom of nationalities"? But if they cannot and must not do so, is it not clear from this that the methods of struggle of the Austrians and the Russians and their prospects must be entirely different? How in such a state of affairs can they confine themselves to the one-sided, milk-and-water national autonomy of the Austrians? One or the other: either those who are in favour of borrowing do not count on 'bold actions', or they do count on such actions but 'know not what they do.'

Finally, the immediate tasks facing Russia and Austria are entirely different and dictate different methods of solving the national problem. Parliamentarism prevails in Austria: under present conditions, no development in Austria is possible without a parliament. But parliamentary life and legislation in Austria are frequently brought to a complete standstill by severe conflicts between the national parties. This also explains the chronic political crisis from which Austria has for a long time been suffering. Hence, in Austria the national problem is the very hub of political life; it is the vital problem. It is therefore not surprising that the Austrian Social-Democratic politicians should first of all try in one way or another to find a solution for these national conflicts - of course on the basis of the existing parliamentary system, by parliamentary methods...

Not so with Russia. In the first place, in Russia 'there is no parliament, thank God.' In the second place - and this is the main thing - the hub of the political life of Russia is not the national but the agrarian problem. Consequently, the fate of the Russian problem, and accordingly the 'liberation' of nations too, is bound up in Russia with the solution of the agrarian problem, ie, with the destruction of the relics of serfdom, ie, with the democratisation of the country. This explains why in Russia the national problem is not an independent and decisive problem, but a part of the general and more important

problem of the unification of the country.

"The barrenness of the Austrian parliament," writes Springer, "is due precisely to the fact that every reform gives rise to contradictions within the national parties which may affect their unity. The leaders of the parties, therefore, avoid everything that smacks of reform. Progress in Austria is generally conceivable only if the nations are granted inalienable ^{legal} rights which will relieve them of the necessity of constantly maintaining national militant groups in parliament and will enable them to turn their attention to the solution of economic and social problems." (Ibid. p29)

Bauer says the same thing:

"National peace is firstly indispensable for the state. The state cannot permit legislation to be brought to a standstill by a stupid question of language or by every quarrel between excited people on the linguistic frontier, or by every new school." (Op. cit. p384)

All this is clear. But it is no less clear that the national question in Russia is in an entirely different plan. It is not the national, but the agrarian question that will decide the fate of progress in Russia; the national question is a subordinate question.

And so we have different presentations of the problem, different prospects and methods of struggle, different immediate tasks. Is it not clear that, such being the state of affairs, only pedants who 'solve' the national problem without reference to space and time can think of taking an example from Austria or of borrowing programmes?

Once again, the concrete historical conditions as the starting point, the dialectical presentation of the problem as the only correct way of presenting it - such is the key to the national problem.

IV. NATIONAL AUTONOMY

We spoke above of the formal aspect of the Austrian ^{national} programme and of the methodological considerations which prevent the Russian Marxists from simply borrowing the example of the Austrian Social-Democrats and from making their programme their own.

Let us now examine the programme itself.

What is the national programme of the Austrian Social-Democrats?

It is expressed in two words: national autonomy.

That means, first, that autonomy is granted, let us say, not to Bohemia or Poland, which are inhabited mainly by Czechs and Poles, but to Czechs and Poles generally, irrespective of territory, no matter what part of Austria they inhabit.

That is why this autonomy is called national and not territorial.

It means, secondly, that the Czechs, Poles, Germans, and so on, scattered over the various parts of Austria, taken personally, as individuals are to be organised into integral nations, and as such to form part of the Austrian state. In this way Austria will represent not a union of autonomous regions, but a union of aut-

onomous nationalities, constituted irrespective of territory.

It means, thirdly, that the national institutions which are to be created for this purpose for the Poles, Czechs, and so forth, are to have jurisdiction only over 'cultural', not 'political' questions. Specifically political questions will be left to the Pan-Austrian parliament (the Reichsrat).

That is why this autonomy is called cultural, national cultural autonomy.

And here is the text of the programme adopted by the Austrian Social-Democratic Party at the Brunn Congress in 1899.*

Having referred to the fact that 'national dissension in Austria is hindering political progress,' that 'the final solution of the national problem...is above all a cultural demand,' and that this final solution 'is possible only in a genuinely democratic society, constructed on the basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage,' the programme goes on to say:

"The preservation and development of the national peculiarities** of the peoples of Austria is possible only on the basis of equal rights and by avoiding all oppression. Hence, all bureaucratic state centralism and the feudal privileges of individual provinces must first of all be rejected.

"Under these conditions, and only under these conditions, will it be possible to establish national order in Austria in place of national dissension, that is, if the following principles are recognised:

- "1. Austria must be transformed into a democratic state federation of nationalities.
- "2. The historical crown territories must be replaced by nationally delimited self-governing bodies, in each of which legislation and administration shall be entrusted to national parliaments elected on a basis of universal, direct and equal suffrage.
- "3. All the self-governing regions of one and the same nation must jointly form a single/^{national}, which shall manage its national affairs on an absolutely autonomous basis.
- "4. The rights of national minorities must be guaranteed by a special law passed by the Imperial Parliament."

The programme ends with an appeal for solidarity on the part of all the nations of Austria.***

It is not difficult to see that this programme retains certain traces of 'territorialism,' but that in general it is a formulation of the idea of national autonomy. It is therefore not without cause that Springer, the first agitator on behalf of national autonomy, greets it with enthusiasm. (Op. cit., p246); Bauer also supports this programme, calling it a 'theoretical victory' (Op. Cit. p527) for national autonomy; only, in the interests of greater clarity, he proposes

*This programme was also supported by the vote of the South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party. Cf. Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der Sozialdemokratischen in Oesterreich abgehalten zu Brunn. (Proceedings of the Brunn Social-Democratic Party Congress), Vienna 1899, ppxiv and 104.

** In M. Panin's Russian translation 'national individualities' is given in place of 'national peculiarities'. Panin translated this passage incorrectly. The word 'individuality' is not contained in the German text, which speaks of nationalen Eigentümlichkeiten, ie, peculiarities, which is far from being the same thing.

***Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages zu Brunn, 1899.

replace Point 4 by a more definite formulation, which would declare the necessity of 'constituting the national minority within each self-governing region into a juridical public corporation' for the management of educational and other cultural affairs. (Ibid p33)

Such is the national programme of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party.

Let us examine its scientific foundations.

Let us see how the Austrian Social-Democratic Party justifies the national autonomy it advocates.

Let us turn to the theoreticians of national autonomy, Springer and Bauer.

National autonomy proceeds from the conception of a nation as a union of individuals without regard to definite territory.

According to Springer:

"Nationality is not essentially connected with territory"; it is "an autonomous union of persons." (Op cit. p15)

Bauer also speaks of a nation as a 'community of persons' which 'does not enjoy exclusive sovereignty in any particular region.' (Op cit p274)

But the persons constituting a nation do not always live in one compact mass; they are frequently divided into groups, and in that form are interspersed among foreign national organisms. It is capitalism which drives them into other regions and cities in search of a livelihood. But when they enter foreign national territories and there form minorities, these groups are made to suffer by the local national majorities in the way of limitations on their language, schools, etc. Hence national collisions. Hence the 'unsuitability' of territorial autonomy. The only solution to such a situation, according to Springer and Bauer, is to organise the minorities of the given nationality dispersed over various parts of the state into a single, general, inter-class national union. Such a union alone, in their opinion, can protect the cultural interests of national minorities, and it alone is capable of putting an end to national discord.

"Hence the necessity", says Springer, "of organising the nationalities, of investing them with rights and responsibilities..." (p61) "Of course, a law is easily drafted, but will it be effective as a law?... If one wants to make a law for nations, one must first create the nations... Unless nationalities are constituted it is impossible to create national rights and eliminate national dissension." (pp72-3)

Bauer expresses himself in the same spirit when he proposes, as 'a demand of the working class,' that 'the minorities should be constituted into juridical public corporations based on the personal principle.' (p530)

But how is a nation to be organised? How is one to determine to what nation any given individual belongs?

"Nationality", says Springer, "will be determined by certificates; every individual domiciled in a given region will be obliged to declare to what nationality of that region he belongs." (p192)

"The personal principle," says Bauer, "presumes that the population will be divided into nationalities... On the basis of the free declaration of the adult citizens national cadasters must be drawn up."

Further Bauer says:

"All the Germans in nationally homogenous districts and all the Germans entered in the national cadasters in the dual districts will constitute the German nation and elect a National Council." (ibid. p360)

The same applies to the Czechs, Poles, and so on.

"The National Council," according to Springer, "is the cultural parliament of the nation, empowered to establish the principles and approve the methods of, that is, to assume guardianship over, national education, national literature, art and science, the formation of academies, museums, galleries, theatres, etc!" (p200)

Such are the organisation of a nation and its central institution.

According to Bauer, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party is striving by the creation of these inter-class institutions 'to make national culture...the possession of the whole people and thereby fuse all the members of the nation into a national cultural community.' (531) (Our italics)

One might think that all this concerns Austria alone. But Bauer does not agree. He emphatically declares that national autonomy is essential for all states which, like Austria, consist of several nationalities.

According to Bauer,

"The working class of all nations in a multi-national state puts forward its demand for national autonomy in opposition to the national government policy of the propertie! classes." (p323)

Then, imperceptibly substituting national autonomy for the self-determination of nations, he continues:

"Thus, national autonomy, the self-determination of nations, will necessarily become the constitutional programme of the proletariat of all nations in a multi-national state." (p319)

But he goes still further. He profoundly believes that the inter-class 'national unions' 'constituted' by him and Springer will serve as a sort of prototype of the future socialist society. For he knows that 'the socialist system of society... will divide humanity into nationally delimited communities' (p533); that under socialism there will take place 'a grouping of humanity into autonomous national communities' (p533); that 'thus, socialist society will undoubtedly present a checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations,' (p. 521), and that accordingly 'the socialist principle of nationality is a supreme synthesis of the national principle and national autonomy' (p522)..

Enough, it would seem.

These are the arguments in favour of national autonomy as given in the works of Bauer and Springer.

The first thing that strikes the eye is the entirely inexplicable and absolutely unjustifiable substitution of national autonomy for self-determination of nations. One or the other; either Bauer failed to understand the meaning of self-determination, or he did understand it but for some reason or other deliberately narrowed its meaning. For there is no doubt a) that national autonomy presupposes the integrity of the multi-national state, whereas self-determination transcends this integrity and b) that self-determination endows a nation with sovereign rights, whereas national autonomy endows it only with 'cultural' rights. That, in the first place.

In the second place, a combination of internal and external conditions is fully possible at some future time by virtue of which one or another of the nationalities may decide to secede from a multi-national state, say from Austria (did not the Ruthenian Social-Democrats at the Brdunn Party Congress announce their readiness to unite the 'two parts' of their people into one whole? (Verhandlungen, p85)) What, in such a case, becomes of national autonomy, which is "inevitable for the proletariat of all nations"?

What sort of 'solution' of the problem is it that mechanically squeezes nations into the Procrustes' bed of an integral state?

Further. National autonomy is contrary to the whole course of development of nations. It calls for the organisation of nations; but can they be artificially welded if in actual reality, by virtue of economic development, whole groups are torn from them and dispersed over various regions? There is no doubt that in the early stages of capitalism nations become welded together. But there is also no doubt that in the higher stages of capitalism a process of dispersion of nations sets in, a process whereby whole groups separate off from nations in search of a livelihood, subsequently settling finally in other regions of the state; in the course of which these settlers lose their old contacts, acquire new contacts in their new domicile, from generation to generation acquire new contacts in their new domicile, from generation to generation acquire new habits and new tastes, and possibly a new language...

One asks: Is it possible to unite into a single national union groups that have grown so distinct? Where are the magic hoops to unite what cannot be united? Is it conceivable that, for instance, the Germans of the Baltic Provinces and the Germans of Transcaucasia can be 'welded into a single nation'? But if it is not conceivable and not possible, wherein does national autonomy differ from the utopia of the old nationalists, who endeavoured to turn back the wheel of history?

But the cohesion and unity of a nation diminish not only as a result of migration. The diminish also from internal causes, owing to the growing acuteness of the class struggle. In the early stages of capitalism one may still speak of a 'cultural community' between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. But as large-scale industry develops and the class struggle becomes more and more acute, this 'community' begins to melt away. One cannot seriously speak of the 'cultural community' of a nation when the masters and the workers of a nation have ceased to understand each other. What 'common fate' can there be when the bourgeoisie thirsts for war, and the proletariat declares 'war on war'? Can a single inter-class national union be formed from such contradictory elements? And, after this, can one speak of the 'fusion of all the members of the nation into a national cultural community' (Bauer, p531)? Is it not obvious that national autonomy is contrary to the whole course of the class struggle?

But let us assume for a moment that the slogan 'Organise the nation' is practicable. One might understand bourgeois nationalist parliamentarians endeavouring to 'organise' a nation for the purpose of securing additional votes. But since when have Social-Democrats begun to occupy themselves with 'organising' nations, 'constituting' nations, 'creating' nations?

What sort of Social-Democrats are they who in a period of extreme aggravation of the class struggle organise inter-class national unions? Hitherto the Social-Democratic Party of Austria, like every other Social-Democratic Party, had one aim

namely, to organise the proletariat. This aim has apparently become 'antiquated'. Springer and Bauer are now setting a 'new' aim, a more thrilling aim, namely, to 'create', to 'organise' a nation.

Besides, logic has its obligations: he who adopts national autonomy must also adopt this 'new' aim; but to adopt the latter means to abandon the class position and to adopt the path of nationalism.

Springer's and Bauer's national autonomy is a subtle form of nationalism.

And it is by no means fortuitous that the national programme of the Austrian Social-Democrats enjoins a concern for the "preservation and development of the national peculiarities of the peoples." Just think: to 'preserve' such 'national peculiarities' of the Transcaucasian Tatars as self-flagellation at the festival of Shakhsei-Vakhsei; or to 'develop' such 'national peculiarities' of the Georgians as the vendetta!

A demand of this character is quite in place in an outright bourgeois nationalist programme; and if it appears in the programme of the Austrian Social-Democrats it is because national autonomy tolerates rather than precludes such demands.

But if national autonomy is unsuitable now, it will be still more unsuitable in the future society, a socialist society.

Bauer's prophesy regarding the division of "humanity into nationally delimited communities" (p533) is refuted by the whole course of development of present-day humanity. National partitions are being demolished and are falling, rather than becoming firmer.

As early as the forties Marx declared that "national differences and antagonisms between peoples are daily more and more vanishing" and that "the supremacy of the proletariat will cause them to vanish still faster." The subsequent development of mankind, accompanied as it was by the colossal growth of capitalist production, the shuffling of nationalities and the amalgamation of people within ever larger territories, emphatically corroborates Marx's thought.

Bauer's desire to represent socialist society as a "checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations" is a timid attempt to replace Marx's conception of socialism by the reformed conception of Bakunin. The history of socialism proves that every such attempt harbours the elements of inevitable failure.

We shall not dwell on the 'socialist principle of nationality' glorified by Bauer, which, in our opinion, replaces the socialist principle of the class struggle by the bourgeois principle of 'nationality'. If national autonomy is based on such a dubious principle, it must be confessed that it can only cause harm to the working-class movement.

True, such nationalism is not so transparent, for it is skilfully masked by socialist phrases, but it is all the more harmful to the proletariat for that reason. We can always cope with open nationalism, for it can easily be discerned. It is much more difficult to combat a nationalism which is masked and unrecognisable beneath its mask. Protected by the armour of socialism, it is less vulnerable and more tenacious. Implanted among the workers, it poisons the atmosphere and spreads noxious ideas of mutual mistrust and aloofness among the workers of the different nationalities.

But this does not exhaust the harm caused by national autonomy. It tends not only to create aloofness, but also to break up a united working-class movement. The

idea of national autonomy creates the psychological conditions that make for the division of a united workers' party into separate parties built on national lines. The break-up of the party is followed by the break-up of the trade unions, and complete isolation is the result. In this way a united class movement is broken up into separate national riulets.

Austria, the home of 'national autonomy,' provides the most deplorable examples of this. Since 1897 (the Wimberg Party Congress) the one-time united Austrian Social-Democratic Party has been breaking up into separate parties. The break-up became still more marked after the Brunn Congress (1899), which adopted national autonomy. Matters have finally come to such a pass that in place of a united inter-national party we now have six national parties, of which the Czech Social-Democratic Party will even have nothing to do with the German Social-Democratic Party.

But with the parties are associated the trade unions. In Austria, both in the parties and in the trade unions, the main brunt of the work is borne by the same Social-Democratic workers. There was therefore reason to fear that separatism in the party would lead to separatism in the trade unions and that the trade unions would also break up. That, in fact, has been the case: the trade unions have also divided according to nationality. Now things frequently go so far that the Czech workers will even break a strike of the German workers, or will unite at the municipal elections with the Czech bourgeois against the German workers.

It will be seen from this that national autonomy is no solution for the national problem. Nay more, it only serves to aggravate and confuse the problem by creating a soil which favours the destruction of the unity of the working class movement, fosters national aloofness among the workers and intensifies friction between them.

Such is the harvest of national autonomy.

V. THE BUND, ITS NATIONALISM AND ITS SEPARATISM

We said above that Bauer, while he is prepared to grant national autonomy to the Czechs, Poles, and so on, is opposed to granting similar autonomy to the Jews. In answer to the question 'Should the working class demand autonomy for the Jewish people?' Bauer says that 'the Jewish workers should not demand national autonomy' (p379). According to Bauer, the reason is that 'capitalist society makes it impossible for them (the Jews - J.S.) to continue as a nation.' (p373)

In brief, the Jewish nation is coming to an end, and therefore there is nobody to demand national autonomy for. The Jews are being assimilated.

This view of the fate of the Jews as a nation is not a new one. It was expressed by Marx as early as the forties ("Zur Judenfrage") in reference chiefly to the German Jews. It was repeated by Kautsky in 1903 ("Das Kischinjewer Blutbad" - "The Kishenev Pogrom", 1906) in reference to the Russian Jews. It is now being repeated by Bauer in reference to the Austrian Jews, with the difference, however, that he denies not the present but the future of the Jewish nation.

Bauer explains the impossibility of preserving the existence of the Jews as a nation by the fact that 'the Jews have no closed territory of settlement' (p373). This explanation, in the main a correct one, does not however express the whole truth. The fact of the matter is primarily that among the Jews there is no large and stable stratum associated with the soil, which would naturally rivet the nation, serving not only as its framework but also as a 'national' market. Of the five or

six million Russian Jews only three to four per cent are connected with agriculture in any way. The remaining 96% are employed in trade, industry, in town institutions, and in general live in towns; moreover, they are spread all over Russia and do not constitute a majority in a single gubernia.

Thus, interspersed as national minorities in areas inhabited by other nationalities, the Jews as a rule serve 'foreign' nations as manufacturers and traders and as members of the free professions, naturally adapting themselves to the 'foreign nations' in respect to language and so forth. All this, taken together with the increasing reshuffling of nationalities characteristic of developed forms of capitalism, leads to the assimilation of the Jews. The abolition of the Pale would only serve to hasten this process.

The question of national autonomy for the Russian Jews consequently assumes a somewhat curious character: autonomy is being proposed for a nation whose future is denied and whose existence has still to be proved!

Nevertheless, this was the curious and shaky position adopted by the Bund when at its Sixth Congress (1905) it adopted a 'national programme' based on national autonomy.

Two circumstances impelled the Bund to take this step.

The first circumstance is the existence of the Bund as an organisation of Jewish, and only Jewish, Social-Democratic workers. Even before 1897 the Social-Democratic groups active among the Jewish workers set themselves the task of creating 'a special Jewish working-class organisation' (Cf. 'Forms of the National Movement, etc., edited by Kastelyansky, p772 (in Russian)). They founded such an organisation in 1897 by uniting to form the Bund. This was at a time when Russian Social-Democracy as a whole virtually did not yet exist. The Bund steadily grew and spread, and stood out more and more vividly against the background of the sunless days of Russian Social-Democracy... Then came the early years of the twentieth century. A mass working-class movement came into being. The Polish Social-Democratic Party grew, drawing the Jewish workers into the mass struggle. The Russian Social-Democratic Party grew and attracted the 'Bund' workers. Lacking a territorial basis, the national framework of the Bund began to be restrictive. The Bund was faced with the problem of either merging with the general inter-national wave, or of defending its independent existence as an extra-territorial organisation. The Bund chose the latter course.

Thus grew up the 'theory' that the Bund is "the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat."

But to justify this strange 'theory' in any 'simple' way became impossible. A background of 'principle', a justification on 'principle', was needed. National autonomy proved to be this basis. The Bund seized upon it, borrowing it from the Austrian Social-Democrats. If the Austrian had not had such a programme the Bund would have invented it in order to provide a justification for its independent existence on 'principle'.

Thus, after a first timid attempt in 1901 (the Fourth Congress), the Bund finally adopted a 'national programme' in 1905 (the Sixth Congress).

The second circumstance is the peculiar position of the Jews, who form isolated national minorities within integral regions of compact majorities of other nationalities.

We have already said that this position is undermining the existence of the Jews as a nation and is driving them towards assimilation. But this is an objective

process. Subjectively, in the minds of the Jews, it provokes a reaction and gives rise to the demand for a guarantee of the rights of a national minority, for a guarantee against assimilation.

Preaching as it does the vitality of the Jewish 'nationality', the Bund could not avoid being in favour of a 'guarantee'. And, having taken up this position, it could not but accept national autonomy. For if the Bund could seize upon any autonomy at all, it could only be national autonomy, i.e., national cultural autonomy: there could be no question of territorial political autonomy for the Jews, since the Jews have no definite and integral territory.

It is noteworthy that the Bund from the outset stressed the character of national autonomy as a guarantee of the rights of national minorities, as a guarantee of the 'free development' of nations. It is not for nothing that the representative of the Bund at the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, Goldblatt, defined national autonomy as consisting of 'institutions which guarantee them (i.e., nations - J.S.) complete freedom of cultural development' (Minutes of the Second Congress, p176). A similar proposal was made by supporters of the ideas of the Bund in the Social-Democratic fraction of the Fourth Duma...

In this way the Bund adopted the curious position of national autonomy for the Jews.

We have examined above national autonomy in general. The examination showed that national autonomy leads to nationalism. We shall see later that the Bund has come to a similar end. But the Bund also regards national autonomy from a specific angle, namely, as a guarantee of the rights of national minorities. Let us examine the question from this specific angle also. This is all the more necessary since the problem of national minorities - and not of the Jewish minorities alone - is one of serious moment for the Social-Democratic Party.

And so, it is a question of 'institutions which guarantee' the nations 'complete freedom of cultural development.' (Our emphasis - J.S.)

But what are these 'institutions which guarantee,' etc.?

They are primarily the 'National Council' of Springer and Bauer, something in the nature of a Diet for cultural matters.

But can these institutions guarantee the nations 'complete freedom of cultural development'? Can a Diet on cultural matters guarantee a nation against nationalist repressions?

The Bund believes it can.

But history proves the contrary.

At one time a Diet existed in Russian Poland. It was a political Diet and, of course, endeavoured to guarantee freedom of 'cultural development' for the Poles. But, far from succeeding in doing so, it itself succumbed in the unequal struggle against the political conditions generally prevailing in Russia.

A Diet has been in existence for a long time in Finland, and it also endeavours to protect the Finnish nation from 'attempts,' but how far it succeeds in doing so everybody knows.

Of course, there are Diets and Diets, and it is not so easy to cope with the democratically organised Finnish Diet as it was with the aristocratic Polish Diet. But the decisive factor, nevertheless, is not the Diet but the general regime in Russia. If such a gross and Asiatic social and political regime existed in Russia now as in the past, at the time the Polish Diet was abolished, the Finnish Diet

would be much worse off. Moreover, the policy of 'attempts' upon Finland is growing, and it cannot be said that it has met with defeat...

If this is the case with old, historically evolved institutions - political Diets - still less will young Diets, young institutions, especially such feeble institutions as 'cultural' Diets, be able to guarantee the free development of nations.

Obviously, the point lies not in 'institutions', but in the general regime prevailing in the country. If there is no democracy in the country there can be no guarantee of 'the complete freedom of cultural development' of nationalities. One may say with certainty that the democratic a country is the fewer are the 'attempts' made on the 'freedom of nationalities', and the greater are the guarantees against such 'attempts'.

Russia is a semi-Asiatic country, and therefore in Russia the policy of 'attempts' not infrequently assumes the grossest form, the form of pogroms. It need hardly be said that in Russia 'guarantees' have been reduced to the very minimum.

Germany is already Europe, and she has a greater or lesser degree of political freedom. It is not surprising that in Germany the policy of 'attempts' never takes the form of pogroms.

In France, of course, the 'guarantees' are still greater, for France is more democratic than Germany.

We will not mention Switzerland, where, thanks to her highly-developed, although bourgeois democracy, nationalities live in freedom, whether they represent minorities or majorities.

Thus the Bund adopts a false position when it asserts that 'institutions' by themselves are able to guarantee the complete cultural development of nationalities.

It may be said that the Bund itself regards the establishment of democracy in Russia as a preliminary condition for the 'creation of institutions' and guarantee of freedom. But this is not the case. From the Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund it will be seen that the Bund thinks it can secure 'institutions' under the present system in Russia by 'reforming the Jewish community.'

"The community," one of the leaders of the Bund said at this conference, "may become the nucleus of future national cultural autonomy. National cultural autonomy is a form of self-service on the part of nations, a form of satisfying national needs. The community form contains a similar content. They are links in the same chain, stages in the same evolution." (Report of 8th Conference of the Bund, 1911, p62)

On this basis, the conference decided that it was necessary to strive "for the reform of the Jewish community and its conversion by legislative means into a lay institution," democratically organised. (Our ~~document~~ - 33.)

It is evident that the Bund considers that the condition and guarantee lie not in the democratisation of Russia, but in some future 'lay institution' of the Jews, obtained by 'reforming the Jewish community,' so to speak, by 'legislative' means, through the Duma.

But we have already seen that 'institutions' in themselves cannot serve as 'guarantees' if the regime in the state generally is not a democratic one.

But what, it may be asked, will be the position under a future democratic system? Will not specific 'cultural institutions which guarantee, etc.' be required even

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under democracy? What is the position in this respect in democratic Switzerland, for example? Are there specific cultural institutions in Switzerland on the pattern of Springer's 'National Council'? No, there are not. But do not the cultural interests of, for instance, the Italians, who constitute a minority, suffer for that reason? One does not seem to hear that they do. And that is quite natural: in Switzerland all specifically cultural 'institutions', which supposedly 'guarantee,' etc., are rendered superfluous by democracy.

And so, impotent in the present and superfluous in the future - such are the institutions of national cultural autonomy, and such is national autonomy.

But it becomes still more pernicious when it is foisted upon a 'nation' whose present and future are open to doubt. In such cases the advocates of national autonomy are obliged to retain and preserve all the attributes of a 'nation', not only the useful attributes but also the harmful ones, just for the sake of 'saving the nation' from assimilation, just for the sake of 'preserving it.'

That the Bund should adopt this dangerous path was inevitable.

And it did adopt it. We are referring to the resolutions of recent conferences of the Bund on the question of the 'Sabbath', 'Yiddish', etc.

Social-Democrats strive to secure the right of all nations to the use of their own language. But that does not satisfy the Bund: it demands that 'the right of the Jewish language' (Our emphasis - J.S.) be fought for with 'particular insistence.' And the Bund itself, in the elections to the Fourth Duma, declared that it would give 'preference to those of them (i.e. candidates to the electoral college*) who undertake to defend the rights of the Jewish language.' (Report of the 9th Conference of the Bund, 1912, p42).

Not the general right of all nations to use their own language, but the particular right of the Jewish language, Yiddish! Let the workers of the various nationalities fight primarily for their own language: the Jews for Jewish, the Georgians for Georgian, and so forth. The struggle for the general right of all nations is a secondary matter. You need not, if you do not wish, recognise the right of all oppressed nationalities to use their native languages; but if you have recognised the right of Yiddish, know that the Bund will vote for you, the Bund will 'prefer' you.

But in what way then does the Bund differ from the bourgeois nationalist?

Social-Democrats are striving to secure the establishment of one compulsory weekly rest day. But that does not satisfy the Bund: it demands that 'by legislative means...the Jewish proletariat should be granted the right of observing the Sabbath and be relieved of the obligation of observing another day.' (Report of the 8th Conference of the Bund, p83).

It is to be expected that the Bund will take another 'forward step' and demand the right to observe all the ancient Hebrew holidays. And if, to the misfortune of the Bund, the Jewish workers have discarded religious prejudices and do not wish to observe them, the Bund with its agitation in favour of 'the right of the Sabbath' will remind them of the Sabbath and will inculcate in them, so to speak, 'the Sabbath-day spirit.'

Quite comprehensible, therefore, are the 'fiery speeches' of the speakers at the Eighth Conference of the Bund who demanded 'Jewish hospitals', a demand which was based on the argument that 'a patient feels more at home among his own people,' +Report of 8th Conf. of Bund, p85

Curia - electoral college to the Duma - Ed. Eng. Ed.

that 'the Jewish worker will not feel at ease among Polish workers and will feel at ease among Jewish shopkeepers.' (Ibid., p. 68.)

The maintenance of everything Jewish, the preservation of all the national peculiarities of the Jews even those that are patently noxious to the proletariat, the isolation of the Jews from everything non-Jewish, even the establishment of special hospitals - that is the level to which the Bund has sunk!

Comrade Plekhanov was right a thousand times over when he said that the Bund 'is adapting socialism to nationalism.' Of course, V. Kossovsky and Bundists like him may accuse Plekhanov of being a 'demagogue' - paper will put up with anything that is written on it - but those who know the activities of the Bund will easily realise that these doughty fellows are simply afraid to tell the truth of themselves and are hiding behind scurrilous accusations of 'demagogy'.....

But since it holds such a position on the national question, the Bund was naturally obliged to demand the isolation of the Jewish workers also in the matter of organisation, to demand national curiae within the Social-Democratic Party. Such is the logic of national autonomy!

And, in fact, the Bund passed from the theory of 'sole representation' to the theory of 'national demarcation' of workers. The Bund demands that the Russian Social-Democratic Party should 'in its organisational structure introduce demarcation according to nationalities.' (An Announcement on the Seventh Congress of the Bund, p. 7.) From 'demarcation' it made a 'step forward' to the theory of 'isolation'. It is not without good cause that speeches were made at the Conference of the Bund declaring that 'national existence lies in isolation'. Report of the Eight Conference of the Bund, p. 72.)

Organisational federalism harbours the elements of disintegration and separatism. The Bund is heading for separatism.

And, indeed, there is nothing else it can head for. Its very existence as an extra-territorial organisation drives it to separatism. The Bund does not possess a definite integral territory; it operates on 'foreign' territories, whereas the neighbouring Polish, Lettish and Russian Social-Democratic parties are international, territorial collective bodies. But the result is that every extension of these collective bodies means a 'loss' for the Bund and a restriction of its field of action. There are two alternatives: either the entire Russian Social-Democratic Party must be reconstructed on the principle of national federalism - which will enable the Bund to 'secure' the Jewish proletariat for itself; or the international territorial principle of these collective bodies remains in force - in which case the Bund must be reconstructed along international lines, as is the case with the Polish and Lettish Social-Democratic parties.

This explains why the Bund has always demanded that 'the Russian Social-Democratic Party be reformed along federal lines,' (National Autonomy and the Reform of the Russian Social-Democratic Party on Federal Lines, 1902, published by the Bund.)

In 1905, bending before the wave of feeling in favour of unity among the rank and file, the Bund chose a middle path and joined the Russian Social-Democratic Party. But how did it join? Whereas the Polish and Lettish Social-Democratic parties joined for the purpose of peaceable joint action, the Bund joined with the purpose of waging war for a federation. That is exactly what the leader of the Bundists, Medem, said at the time:

'We are joining not for the sake of an idyll, but in order to fight. There are no idylls, and only Manilovs (Manilov - a character in Gogol's Dead Souls rep-

resented as a sentimental dreamer - ed. eng. ed.) can hope for them in the near future. The Bund must join the Party armed cap-a-pie (Nashe Slovo, No 3, p24) Vienna, 1906)."

It would be wrong to regard this as an expression of evil intent on Medem's part. It is not a matter of evil intent, but of the peculiar position of the Bund, which compels it to fight the Russian Social-Democratic Party as a party built on international lines. And in fighting it the Bund naturally violated the interests of unity. Finally, matters reached such a pitch that the Bund formally broke with the Russian Social-Democratic Party by violating the statutes, and in the elections to the Fourth Duma joined forces with the Polish nationalists against the Polish Social-Democrats.

The Bund apparently considered that a break would provide the most favourable conditions for its activities.

And so the 'principle' of organisational 'demarcation' led to separatism and to complete rupture.

In the controversy with the old Iskra on the question of federalism, the Bund once wrote:

"The Iskra wants to assure us that federal relations between the Bund and the Russian Social-Democratic Party are bound to weaken the ties between them. We cannot refute this opinion by referring to practice in Russia, for the simple reason that the Russian Social-Democratic Party does not exist as a federal body. But we can refer to the extremely edifying experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria, which assumed a federal character by virtue of the decision of the Party Congress of 1897." (National Autonomy, etc. 1902, p17, published by the Bund.)

This was written in 1902.

But we are now in the year 1913. We now have both Russian 'practice' and the 'experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria.'

What do they tell us?

Let us begin with 'the extremely edifying experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria.' Up to 1896 there was a united Social-Democratic Party in Austria. In that year the Czechs at the International Congress in London first demanded separate representation, and got it. In 1897, at the Vienna (Wimberg) Party Congress, the united party was formally liquidated and in its place a federal league of six national 'Social-Democratic groups' was set up. Subsequently these groups were converted into independent parties. The parties gradually severed contact. The parties were followed by the parliamentary fraction, which also broke up - national 'clubs' were formed. Next came the trade unions, which also split along national lines. Even the co-operatives were affected, the Czech separatists calling upon the workers to split them up. (Cf the words quoted from a brochure by Vaneček in Dokumente Des Separatismus, p29) We will not dwell on the fact that separatist agitation is undermining the sense of solidarity of the workers and frequently drives them to strike-breaking.

Thus 'the extremely edifying experience of the Social-Democratic Party of Austria' speaks against the Bund and for the old Iskra. Federalism in the Austrian party has led to the most monstrous form of separatism and to the destruction of the unity of the working-class movement.

We have seen above that 'practice in Russia' also bears this out. Like the Czech separatists, the Bundist separatists have broken with the general Russian Social-

Democratic Party. As to the trade unions, the Bundist trade unions, they were always organised on national lines, that is to say, they were always cut off from the workers of other nationalities.

Complete isolation and complete rupture - that is what is revealed by the 'Russian experience' of federalism.

It is not surprising that the effect of such a state of affairs upon the workers is to weaken their feeling of solidarity and to demoralise them, and the latter process is also penetrating the Bund. We are referring to the increasing collisions between the Jewish and the Polish workers in connection with unemployment. This is the kind of speech that was uttered on this subject at the Ninth Conference of the Bund:

"...We regard the Polish workers, who^{are} squeezing us out, as pogromists, as scabs; we do not support their strikes, we break them. Secondly, we reply to being squeezed by squeezing in our turn: we reply to Jewish workers not being allowed into the factories by not allowing Polish workers near the benches... If we do not take this matter into our own hands the workers will follow others." (Our emphasis - J.S. Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund p19)

That is the way they talk about solidarity at a Bund conference.

You cannot go further than this in the way of 'demarcation' and 'isolation'. The Bund has achieved its aim: it is carrying its 'demarcation' of the workers of different nationalities to the point of conflicts and strike-breaking. And there is no other course: 'If we do not take this matter into our own hands the workers will follow others...'

The disorganisation of the working-class movement, the demoralisation of the ranks of Social-Democracy - that is whither the federalism of the Bund is leading.

Thus the idea of national autonomy, the atmosphere it creates, has proved to be even more pernicious in Russia than in Austria.

VI. THE CAUCASIANS AND THE CONFERENCE OF LIQUIDATORS

We spoke above of the waverings of one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats who were unable to withstand the nationalist 'epidemic'. These waverings were revealed in the fact that, strange as it may seem, the Social-Democrats mentioned followed in the footsteps of the Bund and declared in favour of national cultural autonomy.

Regional autonomy for the Caucasus as a whole and national cultural autonomy for the nations forming the Caucasus - that is the way these Social-Democrats, who, incidentally, are linked with the Russia Liquidators, formulate their demand.

Listen to their acknowledged leader, the not unknown N.

"Everybody knows that the Caucasus differs profoundly from the central gubernias, both as regards the racial composition of its population and as regards its territory and agricultural development. The exploitation and material development of such a region require local workers acquainted with local peculiarities and accustomed to the local climate and culture. All laws designed to further the exploitation of the local territory should be issued locally and should be put into effect by local forces. Consequently, the competence of the central organ of Caucasian self-government should extend to legislation on local questions... Hence, the functions of the Caucasian centre should consist in the legislation of

laws designed to further the economic exploitation of the local territory and the material prosperity of the region." (See the Georgian newspaper Chveni Tskhovreba (Our Life), 1912, No 12)

In a word, regional autonomy for the Caucasus.

If we abstract ourselves from the rather confused and incoherent arguments of N., it must be admitted that his conclusion is correct. Regional autonomy for the Caucasus, within the framework of a general state constitution, which N. does not deny, is indeed essential because of the peculiarity of its composition and its social conditions. This was also acknowledged by the Russian Social-Democratic Party when, at its Second Congress, it proclaimed 'regional self-government for regions which in respect of their social conditions and the composition of their population differ from the specifically Russian regions.'

When Martov submitted this point for discussion at the Second Congress, he justified it on the grounds that 'the vast extent of Russia and the experience of our centralized administration point to the necessity and expediency of regional self-government for such large units as Finland, Poland, Lithuania and the Caucasus.'

But from this it follows that regional self-government is to be interpreted as regional autonomy.

But N. goes still further. According to him regional autonomy for the Caucasus covers 'only one aspect of the question'.

"So far we have spoken only of the material development of local life. But the economic development of a region is facilitated not only by economic activities but also by spiritual, cultural activities... A culturally strong nation is strong also in the economic sphere... But the cultural development of nations is possible only in the national languages... Consequently, all questions connected with the native language are questions of national culture. Such are the questions of education, legal procedure, the church, literature, art, science, the theatre, etc. If the material development of a region unites nations, national culture disunites them and places each in a separate sphere. Activities of the former kind are associated with a definite territory... This is not the case with matters of national culture. They are associated not with a definite territory but with the existence of a definite nation. The fate of the Georgian language interests a Georgian, no matter where he lives. It would be a sign of profound ignorance to say that Georgian culture concerns only the Georgians who live in Georgia. Take, for instance, the Armenian Church. Armenians of various localities and states take part in the administration of its affairs. Territory plays no part here. Or, for instance, the creation of a Georgian museum interests not only the Georgians of Tiflis, but also the Georgians of Baku, Batumi, St. Petersburg, etc. Hence, the administration and control of all affairs of national culture must be left to the nations concerned. We are in favour of national cultural autonomy for the Caucasian nationalities." (ibid)

In a word, since culture is not territory, and territory not culture, national cultural autonomy is required. That is all N. can say in the latter's favour.

We shall not stop again to discuss national cultural autonomy in general; we have already spoken of its objectionable character. We should only like to point out that, while being unsuitable in general, national cultural autonomy is meaningless and nonsensical in relation to Caucasian conditions.

And for the following reason.

National cultural autonomy 'presumes more or less developed nationalities, with a developed culture and literature. Failing these conditions, autonomy loses all sense and reduces itself to an absurdity. But in the Caucasus there ^{are} a number of peoples each possessing a primitive culture, a specific language, but without its own literature; peoples, moreover, which are in a state of transition, partly becoming assimilated and partly continuing to develop. How is national cultural autonomy to be applied to them? What is to be done with such peoples? How are they to be 'organised' into separate national cultural unions, such as are undoubtedly implied by national cultural autonomy?

What is to be done with the Mingrelians, the Abkhassians, the Adjarians, the Svane-tians, the Lesghians, and so on, who speak different languages but do not possess a literature of their own? To what nations are they to be attached? Can they be 'organised' into national unions? Around what 'cultural affairs' are they to be 'organised'?

What is to be done with the Ossets, of whom the Transcaucasian Ossets are becoming assimilated (but are as yet by no means wholly assimilated) by the Georgians and the Ciscaucasian Ossets are partly being assimilated by the Russians and partly continuing to develop and are creating their own literature? How are they to be 'organised' into a single national union?

To what national union should one attach the Adjarians, who speak the Georgian language but whose culture is Turkish and who profess the religion of Islam? Shall they be 'organised' separately from the Georgians with regard to religious affairs and together with the Georgians with regard to other cultural affairs? And what about the Abuleti, the Ingushes, the Inghilois?

What kind of autonomy is an autonomy that excludes a whole number of peoples from the list?

No, this is not a solution of the national problem, but the fruit of an idle fancy.

But let us grant the impossible and assume that our N.'s national cultural autonomy has been put into effect. Whither would it lead; what would be its results? Take, for instance, the Transcaucasian Tatars, with their minimum of literacy, their schools controlled by the omnipotent mullahs and their culture permeated by the religious spirit... It is not difficult to understand that to organise them into a national cultural union would be to place them under the control of the mullahs, to deliver them to the mercies of the reactionary mullahs, to create a new stronghold of spiritual enslavement of the Tatar masses to their worst enemy.

But since when have Social-Democrats made it a practice to bring grist to the mill of the reactionaries?

Could the Caucasian Liquidators find nothing better to 'proclaim' than the confinement of the Transcaucasian Tatars within a national cultural union which would enslave the masses to vicious reactionaries?

No, this is no solution of the national problem.

The national problem in the Caucasus can be solved only by drawing the backward nations and peoples into the common stream of a higher culture. It is the only progressive solution and the only solution acceptable to Social-Democrats. Regional autonomy in the Caucasus is acceptable because it draws the backward nations into the common cultural development; it helps them to cast off the shell of isolation peculiar to small nationalities; it impels them forward and facilitates access to the benefits of a higher culture; whereas national cultural autonomy acts in a diametrically opposite direction, because it shuts up the nations within

their old shells, chains them to the lower rungs of cultural development and prevents them from rising to the higher rungs of culture.

In this way national autonomy counteracts the beneficial aspects of regional autonomy and nullifies it.

That is why the mixed type of autonomy which combines national cultural autonomy and regional autonomy as proposed by N. is also unsuitable. This unnatural combination does not improve matters but makes them worse, because in addition to retarding the development of the backward nations it transforms regional autonomy into a cause of conflict between the nations organised in the national unions.

Thus national cultural autonomy, which is unsuitable generally, would be a senseless reactionary escapade in the Caucasus.

So much for the national cultural autonomy of N. and his colleagues in the Caucasus.

Whether the Caucasian Liquidators will take 'a step forward' and follow in the footsteps of the Bund on the question of organisation also, the future alone will show. So far, in the history of Social-Democracy federalism in organisation always preceded national autonomy in programme. The Austrian Social-Democrats introduced organisational federalism in 1897, and it was only two years later (in 1899) that they adopted national autonomy. The Bundists spoke coherently of national autonomy for the first time in 1901, whereas organisational federalism had been practised by them since 1897.

The Caucasian Liquidators have begun from the other end, from national autonomy. If they continue to follow in the footsteps of the Bund they will first have to demolish the existing organisational edifice, which was erected at the end of the nineties on the principles of internationalism.

But, easy though it may be to adopt national autonomy, which is as yet not understood by the workers, it will be difficult to demolish an edifice which it has taken many years to build and which has been raised and cherished by the workers of all the nationalities of the Caucasus. This Herostratian undertaking has only to be begun and the eyes of the workers will be opened to the nationalist character of national cultural autonomy.

* * *

While the Caucasians are settling the national question in the usual manner, by means of verbal and written discussion, the All-Russian Conference of the Liquidators has invented a most unusual method. It is a simply and easy method. Listen to this:

"Having heard the statement of the Caucasian delegation...as to the necessity of demanding national cultural autonomy, the conference, without expressing an opinion as to the substance of the demand, declares that such an interpretation of the clause in the programme which recognises the right of every nationality to self-determination is not contrary to the precise meaning of the latter."

Thus, first they 'do not express an opinion as to the substance' of the question, and then they 'declare'. An original method...

And what does this original conference 'declare'?

That the 'demand' for national cultural autonomy 'is not contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme, which recognises the right of nations to self-determination.

Let us examine this proposition.

The clause on self-determination refers to the rights of nations. According to this clause, nations shall have the right not only of autonomy but also of secession. It is a question of political self-determination. Whom did the Liquidators want to fool when they endeavoured to misinterpret this right of nations to political self-determination, which has long been recognised by the whole international Social-Democratic movement?

Or perhaps the Liquidators will try to wriggle out of the situation and to defend themselves by the sophistry that national cultural autonomy 'is not contrary' to the rights of nations? That is to say, if all the nations in a given state agree to arrange their affairs on the basis of national cultural autonomy, they, the given sum of nations, are fully entitled to do so and nobody may forcibly impose a different form of political life on them. This is both new and brilliant. Should it not be added that, speaking generally, a nation has the right to abolish its own constitution, replace it by a system of arbitrary rule and revert to the old order on the grounds that the nation, and the nation alone, has the right to determine its own fate? We repeat: in this sense, neither national cultural autonomy nor any other kind of nationalist reaction 'is contrary' to the rights of nations.

Is this what the esteemed conference wanted to say?

No, not this. It specifically says that national cultural autonomy 'is not contrary,' not to the rights of nations, but 'to the precise meaning' of the programme. The point here is the programme and not the rights of nations.

And that is quite understandable. If it were a nation that addressed itself to the conference of Liquidators, the conference might have directly declared that the nation has a right to national cultural autonomy. But it was not a nation that addressed itself to the conference, but a 'delegation' of Caucasian Social-Democrats - bad Social-Democrats, it is true, but Social-Democrats nevertheless. And they inquired not about the rights of nations, but whether national cultural autonomy contradicts the principles of Social-Democracy, whether it was not 'contrary' to 'the precise meaning' of the programme of the Social-Democratic Party?

The rights of nations and 'the precise meaning' of the programme of the Social-Democratic Party are not one and the same thing.

Evidently, there are demands which, while they are not contrary to the rights of nations, may yet be contrary to 'the precise meaning' of the programme.

For example. The programme of the Social-Democrats contains a clause on freedom of religion. According to this clause any group of persons have the right to profess any religion they please: Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, and so forth. The Social-Democrats will combat all forms of religious oppression, be it persecution of members of the Orthodox Church, Catholics or Protestants. Does this mean that Catholicism, Protestantism, etc. 'are not contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme? No, it does not. Social-Democrats will always protest against persecution of Catholics and Protestants, they will always defend the right of nations to profess any religion they please; but at the same time, on the basis of a correct understanding of the interests of the proletariat, they will carry on agitation against Catholicism, Protestantism and the religion of the Orthodox Church in order to secure the triumph of the socialist world conception.

And they will do so just because there is no doubt that Protestantism, Catholicism, the religion of the Orthodox Church, etc., are 'contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme, i.e., to the correctly understood interests of the proletariat.

The same must be said of self-determination. Nations have the right to arrange their affairs as they please; they have the right to preserve any of their national institutions, whether beneficial or pernicious - nobody can (nobody has the right to!) forcibly interfere in the life of a nation. But that does not mean that Social-Democrats will not combat and agitate against the pernicious institutions of nations and against the inexpedient demands of nations. On the contrary, it is the duty of Social-Democrats to conduct such agitation and to endeavour to influence the will of nations so that the nations may arrange their affairs in the way that will best suit the interests of the proletariat. For this reason Social-Democrats, while fighting for the right of nations to self-determination, will at the same time agitate, for instance, against the secession of the Tatars, or against national cultural autonomy for the Caucasian nations; for both, while not contrary to the rights of these nations, are contrary 'to the precise meaning of the programme, ie, to the interests of the Caucasian proletariat.'

Evidently, 'the rights of nations' and the 'precise meaning' of the programme are in two entirely different planes. Whereas the 'precise meaning' of the programme expresses the interests of the proletariat, as scientifically formulated in the programme of the latter, the rights of nations may express the interests of any class - bourgeoisie, aristocracy, clergy, etc. - depending on the strength and influence of these classes. The former sets forth the duties of Marxists, the latter the rights of nations, which are made up of various classes. The rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy may or may not be 'contrary' to each other, just as, say, the pyramid of Cheops may or may not be contrary to the famous conference of the Liquidators. They are simply incommensurable.

But from this it follows that the esteemed conference unpardonably muddled two entirely different things. The result obtained was not a solution of the national problem but an absurdity, according to which the rights of nations and the principles of Social-Democracy 'are not contrary' to each other, and, consequently, every demand of a nation may be made compatible with the interests of the proletariat; consequently, no demand of a nation which is striving for self-determination will be 'contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme!

Logic is shown no mercy...

It was this absurdity that gave rise to the now famous resolution of the conference of the Liquidators which declares that the demand for national cultural autonomy 'is not contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme.

But not only the laws of logic were violated by the conference of the Liquidators.

By sanctioning national cultural autonomy it also violated its duty to Russian Social-Democracy. It most definitely violated 'the precise meaning' of the programme, for it is well known that the Second Congress, which adopted the programme, definitely repudiated national cultural autonomy. This is what was said at the congress in this connection:

"Goldblatt (Bundist): ...I deem it necessary that special institutions be set up to protect the freedom of cultural development of nationalities, and I therefore propose that the following words be added to Par. 8: 'and the creation of institutions which will guarantee them complete freedom of cultural development.'

[This, as we know, is the Bund's definition of national cultural autonomy. -JS/

Martynov pointed out that general institutions must be so constituted as to protect particular interests also. It is impossible to create a special institutions to guarantee the freedom of cultural development of the nationalities.

Yegorov: On the question of nationality we can adopt only negative proposals, ie,

we are opposed to any limitations being imposed upon nationality. But we, as Social-Democrats, are not concerned with whether any particular nationality will develop as such. That is a spontaneous process.

Koltsov: The delegates from the Bund are always offended when their nationalism is referred to. Yet the amendment proposed by the delegate from the Bund is a purely nationalist one in character. We are asked to take definitely offensive measures in order to support even nationalities that are dying out.

Goldblatt's amendment was rejected by the majority, only three votes being given in support."

Thus it is clear that the conference of the Liquidators went 'contrary to the precise meaning' of the programme. It violated the programme.

The Liquidators are now trying to justify themselves by referring to the Stockholm Congress, which they allege sanctioned national cultural autonomy. Thus, V. Kossovsky writes as follows:

"As we know, according to the agreement adopted by the Stockholm Congress, the Bund was allowed to preserve its national programme (pending a decision on the national question by a general Party congress). This congress recorded that national cultural autonomy at any rate does not contradict the general Party programme." (Nasha Zarya, 1912, No. 9-10, p.120)

But the efforts of the Liquidators are vain. The Stockholm Congress never thought of sanctioning the programme of the Bund - it merely agreed to leave the question open for the time being. The brave Kossovsky did not have enough courage to tell the whole truth. But the facts speak for themselves. Here they are.

"An amendment was moved by Galin: 'That the question of the national programme be left open in view of the fact that it is not being examined by the congress.' (For - 50, against 32.)"

Voice: What does that mean - to be left open?

Chairman: When we say that the national question is left open, it means that the Bund may retain its decision on this question until the next congress." (Nashe Slovo, 1906, No 8, p53. Our italics - JS)

As you see, the congress even did 'not examine' the question of the national programme of the Bund - it simply left it 'open', leaving the Bund itself to decide the fate of its programme until the next general congress met. In other words, the Stockholm Congress avoided the question, expressing no opinion on national cultural autonomy one way or another.

The conference of the Liquidators, however, most definitely undertakes to give an opinion on the matter, declares national cultural autonomy to be acceptable and endorses it in the name of the Party programme. The difference is only too evident.

Thus, in spite of all its artifices, the conference of the Liquidators did not advance the national question a single step.

All it could do was to squirm before the Bund and the Caucasian national-liquidators.

VII. THE NATIONAL PROBLEM IN RUSSIA

It remains for us to give a positive solution of the national problem.

We start from the assumption that the problem can be solved only in intimate connection with the present situation in Russia.

Russia is in a transitional period, when 'normal,' 'constitutional' life has not yet been established and when the political crisis has not yet been settled. Days of storm and 'complications' are ahead. And this gives rise to the movement, the present and the future movement, the aim of which is to achieve complete democracy.

And it is in connection with this movement that the national problem must be examined.

Thus complete democracy in the country is the basis and condition for the solution of the national problem.

When seeking a solution of the problem we must take account not only of the situation at home but also of the situation abroad. Russia is situated between Europe and Asia, between Austria and China. The growth of democracy in Asia is inevitable.

The growth of imperialism in Europe is not fortuitous. In Europe, capital finds itself too restricted, and it is striving towards foreign countries in search of new markets, cheap labour and new fields of investment. But this leads to external complications and to war. Nobody will dare to say that the Balkan War is the end and not the beginning of the complications. It is quite possible that a combination of internal and external factors may arise in which one or another nationality in Russia may find it necessary to raise and settle the question of its independence. And, of course, it is not for Marxists to create obstacles in such cases.

But it follows from this that Russian Marxists cannot do without the right of nations to self-determination.

Thus the right of self-determination is an essential element in the solution of the national problem.

Further. What must be our attitude towards nations which for one reason or another will prefer to remain within the general framework?

We have seen that national cultural autonomy is unsuitable.

Firstly, it is artificial and impracticable, for it proposes artificially to draw into a single nation people whom the very march of events, of real events, is disuniting and dispersing to every corner of the country.

Secondly, it stimulates nationalism, because it tends to the view which advocates the 'demarcation' of people according to national curiae, the 'organisation' of nations, the 'preservation' and cultivation of 'national peculiarities' - a thing that is entirely incompatible with Social-Democracy.

It is not fortuitous that the Moravian separatists in the Reichsrat, having severed themselves from the German Social-Democratic deputies, united with the Moravian bourgeois deputies to form a single, so to speak, Moravian 'ring'. Nor is it fortuitous that the Russian separatists of the Bund have got themselves involved in nationalism by acclaiming the 'Sabbath' and 'Yiddish'. There are no Bundist deputies yet in the Duma, but in the Bund district there is a clerical-reactionary Jewish community, in the 'controlling institutions' of which the Bund is arranging a 'get-together' of the Jewish workers and the bourgeois. (Cf. Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund, the concluding part of the resolution on the community.) Such is the logic of national cultural autonomy.

Thus, national autonomy does not solve the problem.

What is the way out?

The only real solution is regional autonomy, autonomy for such crystallised units as Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine, the Caucasus, etc.

The advantage of regional autonomy consists firstly in the fact that it does not deal with a fiction deprived of territory, but with a definite population inhabiting a definite territory.

Secondly, it does not divide the people according to nation, it does not strengthen national partitions; on the contrary, it only serves to break down these partitions and unites the population in such a manner as to open the way for division of a different kind, division according to class.

Finally, it provides the opportunity of utilising the natural wealth of the region and of developing its productive forces in the best possible way without awaiting the decisions of a common centre - functions which are not proper to national cultural autonomy.

Thus regional autonomy is an essential element in the solution of the national problem.

Of course, not one of the regions constitutes a compact, homogenous nation, for each is interspersed by national minorities. Such are the Jews in Poland, the Latvians in Lithuania, the Russians in the Caucasus, the Poles in the Ukraine, and so on. It may be feared, therefore, that the minorities will be oppressed by the national majorities. But there will be grounds for this fear only if the old order continues to prevail in the country. Give the country complete democracy and all grounds for this fear will vanish.

It is proposed to bind the dispersed minorities into a single national union. But what minorities want is not an artificial union but real rights in the localities they inhabit. What can such a union give them without complete democracy? On the other hand, what need is there for a national union when there is complete democracy?

What is it that particularly agitates a national minority?

A minority is discontented not because there is no national union but because it does not enjoy the right to use its native language. Permit it to use its native language and the discontent will pass of itself.

A minority is discontented not because there is no artificial union but because it does not possess its own schools. Give it its own schools and all grounds for discontent will disappear.

A minority is discontented not because there is no nation union, but because it does not enjoy liberty of conscience, liberty of movement, etc. Give it these liberties and it will cease to be discontented.

Thus national equality in all forms (language, schools, etc.) is an essential element in the solution of the national problem. A state law based on complete democracy in the country is required, prohibiting all national privileges without exception and all kinds of disabilities and restrictions on the rights of national minorities.

That, and that alone, is the real, not a paper guarantee of the rights of a minority.

One may or may not deny the existence of a logical connection between organisational federalism and natural cultural autonomy. But one cannot deny the fact that

the latter creates an atmosphere favouring ^{unlimited} federalism, which tends towards complete rupture, towards separatism. When the Czechs in Austria and the Bundists in Russia began with autonomy, passed to federation and ended in separatism, there can be no doubt that an important part in this was played by the nationalist atmosphere that is naturally generated by national autonomy. It is not fortuitous that national autonomy and organisational federalism go hand in hand. It is quite understandable. Both demand division according to nationality. Both presume organisation on national lines. The similarity is beyond question. The only difference is that in one case the population generally are divided, while in the other it is the Social-Democratic workers who are divided.

We know whither the division of workers along national lines leads. The disintegration of a united working-class party, the division of trade unions along national lines, the aggravation of national friction, national strike-breaking, complete demoralisation within the ranks of the Social-Democratic movement - such are the fruits of organisational federalism. This is eloquently borne out by the history of Social-Democracy in Austria and the activities of the Bund in Russia.

The only cure for this is organisation on internationalist lines.

The aim must be to unite the workers of all nationalities in Russia into united and integral collective bodies in the various localities and to unite these collective bodies into a single party.

It goes without saying that a party structure of this kind does not preclude, but on the contrary presumes, wide autonomy for the regions within the single party whole.

The experience of the Caucasus proves the expediency of an organisation of this type. If the Caucasians have succeeded in overcoming the national friction between the Armenian and Tatar workers, if they have succeeded in guaranteeing the population against massacres and shootings, if in Baku, that kaleidoscope of national groups, national collisions are now no longer possible, and if it has been possible to draw the workers into the single current of a powerful movement - the international structure of Caucasian Social-Democracy was not the least factor in bringing this about.

Type of organisation influences not only practical work. It stamps an indelible impress on the whole mental life of the workers. The worker lives the life of his organisation, which stimulates his intellectual growth and educates him. And thus, moving within his organisation and continually meeting comrades belonging to other nationalities and with them fighting a common struggle under the leadership of a common collective body, he becomes deeply imbued with the idea that workers are primarily members of one class family, members of the one army of socialism. And this cannot but have a tremendous educational value for large sections of the working class.

And the international type of organisation therefore serves as a school of fraternal sentiments and is a tremendous agitational factor on behalf of internationalism.

But this is not the case with an organisation based on national lines. When the workers are organised according to nationality they are isolated within their national shells, fenced off from each other by organisational partitions. The stress is laid not on what is common to the workers but on what distinguishes them from each other. In this type of organisation the worker is primarily a member of his nation: Jew, Pole, and so on. It is not surprising that national federalism in organisation inculcates in the workers a spirit of national aloof-

ness.

And therefore the national type of organisation is a school of national narrow-mindedness and prejudice.

Thus we are confronted by two fundamentally different types of organisation: the type based on international unity and the type based on the organisational 'demarcation' of the workers according to nationality.

Attempts to reconcile these two types have hitherto been vain.

The conciliationist rules of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party drawn up in Wimberg in 1897 were ineffective. The Austrian party fell apart and dragged the trade unions with it. 'Reconciliation' proved to be not only utopian, but pernicious. Strasser is right when he asserts that 'separatism achieved its first triumph at the Wimberg Party Congress'. (Die Arbeiter and die Nation, 1912)

The same is true in Russia. The 'reconciliation' with the federalism of the Bund which took place at the Stockholm Congress ended in a complete fiasco. The Bund violated the Stockholm compromise. Ever since the Stockholm Congress the Bund has been an obstacle to the union of the workers in the various localities into a single organisation which would include the workers of all nationalities. And the Bund has obstinately persisted in its separatist tactics in spite of the fact that during both 1907 and 1908 the Russian Social-Democratic Party repeatedly demanded that unity should be established from below among the workers of all nationalities. The Bund, which began with organisational national autonomy, in reality passed to federalism, only to end in complete rupture and separatism. And by breaking with the Russian Social-Democratic Party it caused disharmony and disorganisation within the ranks of the latter. Let us recall the Jagiello affair, for instance.

The path of 'reconciliation' must therefore be discarded as utopian and pernicious.

One thing or the other: either the federalism of the Bund, in which case the Russian Social-Democratic Party must re-form itself on a basis of 'demarcation' of the workers along national lines; or an international type of organisation, in which case the Bund must re-form itself on a basis of territorial autonomy after the pattern of the Caucasian, Lettish and Polish Social-Democratic parties, and thus make possible the direct union of the Jewish workers with the workers of the other nationalities of Russia.

There is no middle course: principles triumph, they do not become 'reconciled'.

Thus the principle of international solidarity of the workers is an essential element in the solution of the national problem.

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