

Some Manifestations of National Oppression in the Soviet Union Today

Natasha Iliriani, Lecturer From *Socio-Political Studies* #4, 1987

In a multi-national state like the Soviet Union the national question has occupied, from the very beginning, indeed even prior to the October Revolution, one of the most important places in the policy of the CPSU (b) of Lenin and Stalin. As long as Lenin was alive and after his death under the leadership of Stalin, this Party drafted and pursued a correct Marxist program for the harmonious and all-round development of nations and nationalities, in order to overcome the economic, political and cultural inequalities existing between them by assisting the more backward republics. The essence of the national policy in the Russian Republic, J. V. Stalin emphasized, consists in the abolition of the current backwardness that some nations have inherited from the past with a view to making the backward peoples catch up with Central Russia in the political, cultural and economic aspects. In fact, with the implementation of this correct policy many positive results were achieved in the Soviet Union for the harmonious development of the republics, the small nations and nationalities began to develop in all directions and the unity of the Soviet peoples was further strengthened, etc., etc.

One of the dangers threatening this unity was the old feeling of Great-Russian chauvinism inherited from the past Czarist regime. As long as J. V. Stalin was in the leadership of the Soviet party and state in the Soviet Union, the various manifestations of Great-Russian chauvinism were not permitted, on the contrary they were fought with fierceness and consistency. Stalin emphasized that “We may lose all we won then (reference is to the days of the October Revolution – N. I.) if we fail to arm ourselves against this new chauvinism, I repeat it, Great-Russian chauvinism, which is on the offensive and is spreading, gradually penetrating the minds of our militants and corrupting them slowly It is precisely this danger, comrades, which we must wipe out altogether. Otherwise... we are threatened with the prospect of severing the links between these peoples and the Russian proletariat....”*

* V. I. Lenin – J. V. Stalin, *On the national question*, Tirana 1984 pp. 343-344.

After Stalin died, the Khrushchevite revisionists who usurped who usurped power in the Soviet Union began to undermine everything positive that had been achieved in the implementation of the national policy. The road followed by Khrushchev and by his disciples later meant the destruction of the great work of Lenin and Stalin for the correct Marxist-Leninist settlement of the national question in the conditions of a multinational state. The proportional development between the republics was interrupted and the discrimination of the smaller, peripheral republics and nations, particularly of the non-Russian ones, began gradually to give way bit by bit to the old Great-Russian chauvinism

“The revisionist-capitalist policy, which is applied in the Soviet Union,” said Comrade Enver Hoxha, “has revived the old demons of the Czarist regime, such as national oppression, anti-semitism, Slav racism, Orthodox religious mysticism, the cult of military castes, the aristocratism of the intelligentsia, bureaucracy in the old Russian style, etc.”*

* Enver Hoxha, *Report to the 8th Congress of the PLA*, “8 Nëntori” Publishing House, Tirana 1981, p. 245, Eng. Edn.

As a result of the implementation of this revisionist and capitalist policy of the Kremlin chiefs, the national question in the Soviet Union now has become one of the most acute and disturbing internal questions. In order to cover up the national oppression which is rife in the Soviet Union today the Soviet revisionists have launched a very sophisticated propaganda cloaked in Marxist phrases. The new chief of the Kremlin, Mikhail Gorbachov, is proceeding on the same road, proclaiming loudly from the tribune of the 27th Congress of the revisionist CPSU the notorious thesis that “the national question in the Soviet Union has been settled in a brilliant manner.”*

* *Pravda*, 26 February 1986.

But no amount of boasting can cover up the fact that the truth about this problem, as will emerge from the following analysis, is quite different.

The disproportional development and the savage economic exploitation of the peoples of the non-Russian republics in the USSR

The national problem in the USSR, a multi-national state composed of 15 republics with more than 100 nations and nationalities (20 autonomous republics, 18 autonomous regions, districts, etc.) is becoming ever more acute. At the 27th Congress of the revisionist CPSU, Gorbachov admitted that “our achievements should not create the impression that there are no problems in the question of the national interests. As in any other field of development here, too, contradictions are inherent and inevitable.”*

* *Pravda*, 26 February 1986.

Gorbachov wants to find a theoretical argument to justify the deepening of antagonistic contradictions of the national question in the Soviet Union today. It is not without a purpose that he avoids to make the distinction between national contradictions in socialism and capitalism or to point out what sort of contradictions they are: antagonistic or non antagonistic. The way the Soviet revisionists pose the question implies that the national question remains a problem which cannot be settled even in socialism, and hence the same solutions as those used in capitalism are justifiable in socialism.

However it is natural that, like its predecessor, the new revisionist clique of the Kremlin is unable to make genuine analyses to lay bare the essence of the national contradictions of present-day Soviet society, because the Soviet revisionists, as Comrade Ramiz Alia has pointed out at the 14th Plenum of the CC of the PLA “have consciously departed from the teachings of Marxism-Leninism which they consider incapable of solving the problems of our time.”

The true basis of national contradictions which exist in the Soviet Union today lies in the revisionist course initiated by Khrushchev and deepened later by his followers. This course led to the restoration of capitalism and created many ulcers typical of the capitalist society such as uneven development and national oppression within a multinational state.

In order to reach their strategic goal, the Khrushchevites attacked the fundamental theses of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the commodity production and the operation of the law of value in socialism. On this

basis they reformed the entire economic mechanism which brought about the destruction of centralized, planned and proportional development of the economy. The Khrushchevites, old and new, strive to give the impression that the economy is managed according to plans while in practice they have given free play to the operation of all the economic laws and categories of the capitalist mode of production among which is the law of the unequal development of countries and regions of a capitalist country. The transformation of socialist relations into capitalist relations became the main source of the emergence and deepening of the marked disproportions in the economic development between republics and especially between them and the Russian republic.

As a result of the domination of the Russian nation in the entire political-economic life of the Soviet Union, the RSFR was far more developed than the other republics. To deepen this unequal capitalist development further they played heavily on the “international division of labour”. Hiding their true aims and placing the economic laws of capitalism at the foundations of their economic development, the Soviet revisionists gave the non-Russian republics a lopsided development, transforming them into sources of primary materials for the Russian metropolis, developing a limited number of branches, mainly of the light industry and some agricultural crops for which these republics had “very favourable climatic conditions”.

In the mid 60’s the Khrushchevite revisionists admitted: “The climatic conditions and the specific features of agricultural production in Central Asia and the Caucasus, require workers with the necessary knowledge and skills for agricultural work in these zones... The mass recruitment of the population in industry, transport, construction, etc., may weaken the development of other important sectors of agriculture... In Uzbekistan the main attention should continue to be devoted to the further increase of cotton production.”*

* A.A. Isupov, *National composition of the population in the USSR*, Moscow 1964.

Behind the so-called orientation of agricultural production mainly for industrial crops which is “recommended” to these republics (but, in fact, they are imposed on them) is hidden the capitalist mode of production, which within almost three decades has caused grave consequences and extremely great difficulties in the economies of these republics. The entire Soviet economy, according to admissions made at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, is characterized by several years of stagnation, which is most evident in the non-Russian republics. Gorbachov admits that “in Kazakhstan, for example, the national income per unit of production is one third of the average of the Soviet economy, whereas in Turkmenia the productivity of social labour has not increased at all in the last 15 years.”*

* *Pravda*, 26 February 1986.

He was quick to saddle the responsibility for these growing manifestations to his predecessor, Brezhnev, who in turn laid the blame on Khrushchev. Likewise the former leaders of these republics, who had been disposed of before this congress, were held responsible for this. The true source of these typical capitalist manifestations is the general revisionist line the Soviet revisionists have followed and continue to follow. This is the main cause which explains why the rates of industrial development are marking time or falling, why the main economic-financial indices, especially in the non-Russian republics, are being reduced and leading ultimately to the falling of the standard of living of the workers and peasants of these republics.

For example, of 15 republics of the Soviet Union, Turkmenia now ranks 12th from 4th in 1960. This is true of other republics, too. The standard of living in the other republics of Central Asia is lower. Compared with the average per head consumption in the Soviet Union, consumption in Uzbekistan, Kirgizia, Tadzhikistan and Azerbaijan, for some articles, in 1980 has been as follows: meat 75%, milk 58%, eggs 38%, sugar 59%, potatoes 84%, vegetables 26%, bread and flour by-products 110%.*

* *Problemes economiques*, No. 1852, p. 16, Paris 1983.

These figures lay bare the demagogy of the Soviet revisionists who talk much about the so-called care for the above-mentioned republics. If we take the average consumption of electric power per inhabitant in the Soviet Union as 100%, we shall see that in Uzbekistan it is 46.4%, in Turkmenia 49%, in Tadzhikistan 58.8%, in Kirgizia 46.6% and in the republics of Central Asia 48.6%. These republics have 10% of the population of the SU, and only 4.5% the net consumption.* The per capita income in some of the federated republics is 16-50% lower than that of the Russian Republic.**

* *Le courrier de pays de l'Est*, no. 227, p. 40, Paris 1983.

** *Zëri i populitt*, July 30, 1983.

The economic crisis has made the situation of the non-Russian republics worse. According to admissions of *Pravda* (1982) the fall of production in the non-Russian republics is greater than in the past.

One of the most significant aspects of the one-sided development of the non-Russian republics, especially those of Central Asia, is the mainly agricultural direction which the centre has given them and the marked unevenness that has been created between agricultural production and the degree of industrialization of this product by these republics.

It is a fact that the republics of Central Asia have a favourable climate for growing cotton and other agricultural plants, but where is cotton processed? While cotton grows mainly in the republics of Central Asia, their part in the total cotton textile production is only 3%, at a time when the Russian Republic, which does not grow cotton at all, produces 83.5% of the cotton fabrics. There are some republics like Uzbekistan which produce 70% of the raw material for the production of cotton fabrics, 38% of the primary material for the production of silk fabrics etc., but it produces only 3% of the cotton fabrics, 2.5% of the knitwear, 21% of the socks and stockings, etc. of the country.

The local production of such primary materials creates all the necessary conditions for these republics to have a developed light industry for processing them, which apart from the profitability, creates new jobs. However, the Great-Russians try to turn all these advantages to the benefit of the Russian Republic, hampering the industrial development of the non-Russian republics. This possibility for these republics exists only in theory, because in the present conditions it is not exploited, and regarding the per capita production of the light industry the republics such as Uzbekistan are at the bottom of the list in the Soviet Union.

Besides this they are dependent on the centre for industrial products which they have in large quantities but which lie unexploited. Thus for example, Uzbekistan, Kirgizia and Tajikistan import 3.7 million tons of solid fuels, although they have quite ample reserves of them.

These neo-colonialist forms cloaked in Marxist-Leninist phrases cannot hide the fact that these republics are discriminated against in the economy and even in employment. The bulk of skilled workers, especially engineering and technical staff in the main branches of the economy like industry, is made up of Russians, whereas the local population is engaged in other branches, in jobs requiring qualification and in minor posts and mainly in agriculture.

The Soviet authors admit that in many republics of the Soviet Union, the greatest part of the local population is engaged in agriculture, whereas the overwhelming part of the workers of industry and construction is made up of workers from other republics, mainly Russians.*

* *Filosofskie nauki*, No. 5, 1982, p. 18.

Because of the low rates of increase in social production and productivity of labour, goods circulation in most of the republics is 60% lower as against that of the Russian Republic. The great shortage of prime necessity and general consumption goods, which is typical of the entire economic life of the Soviet Union, is more marked in the non-Russian republics.

The official policy of maintaining a colonial-type economy in these republics is seen also in the reduction in the capital investment funds in them. For many years now almost no industrial combines have been built for the industrialization of riches and agricultural primary materials. In Uzbekistan, for example, in the period 1969-1971, from 36 enterprises envisaged only 5 were designed, from 15 enterprises envisaged only 3 were built, and from 8 existing plants to be reconstructed only 2 were reconstructed.*

* According to W. B. Bland's *The restoration of capitalism in the Soviet Union*, 1980, p. 213.

The present-day Soviet propaganda and sociology is trying to put together some "objective arguments" in order to justify the backwardness of the non-Russian nations and nationalities, claiming that this backwardness is due to the great increase of population in these republics as compared to the increase of production and productivity of labour. Whereas at the 27th Congress, Gorbachov explained the fall in development rates in the Soviet Union, especially in the non-Russian republics, saying: "We were unable to make a poetical assessment of the changed economic situation, we were unable to realize the acute and urgent need for the use of intensive methods of development and the active exploitation of the achievements of scientific and technological progress in the economy."* In fact these are not the cause but the consequence of a more profound cause which has its roots in the restoration of capitalism in the SU, in the unequal economic development and the increase of neo-colonialist exploitation of the non-Russian republics which has led them to great socio-economic difficulties.

* *Pravda*, 26 February 1986.

The Soviet revisionists cannot pass in silence the obvious deepening national contradictions in the economic field. Faced with such serious difficulties, they have been trying to find a solution for the future in order to appease the non-Russian republics a little. According to them the "new" solution in the economic field, the "golden key" is "the course of speeding up the socio-economic development of the country",* which was endorsed by the 27th Congress. The speeding-up program declared by the Kremlin chief, is a new fraud for the peoples of the Soviet Union and, judging by objectives, it reminds one of Khrushchev's boisterous program under which the country would reach the highest level of development in 1960. Khrushchev's disciples are trying to achieve the same thing with the difference that they have put

it off until the year 2000. The great propaganda noise which accompanies the “new” economic strategy of the Soviet revisionists is nothing other but a new smokescreen in order to conceal the neo-colonialist solution of the economic aspect of the national question.

* *Ibidem*.

A chauvinist demographic policy

The discriminating economic policy pursued in the Soviet Union today has led to the further deepening of the gap in the economic development that divides the republics of Central Asia from those of Slav population. Therefore the increase of production and the income of the population in the former is smaller than in the latter.

But while the indices of economic development are lower, the increase of population in these republics is 4-7 times higher than that of the Russian Republic. This fact disturbs the centre, first, because it reduces the ratio between the Russian population and the non-Russian peoples and, second, because it creates serious problems and difficulties for the employment of the new work force within the undeveloped republics. This disproportion between the high rates of population increase and the low rates of economic development in the non-Russian republics creates a shortage of jobs for the new work force. This causes the mechanical spontaneous movement of the population of the republics of Central Asia in the direction of the European part of the SU. The mechanical movement towards the new industrial complexes of the Far East and Siberia, which is encouraged with propaganda and material incentives by the Soviet revisionists, has assumed great proportions.

The phenomenon of the mechanical movement of the population of the non-Russian republics which is mainly the product of a chauvinist economic policy, is used by the Great-Russians for the fulfilment of their hegemonic ambitions to the detriment of other non-Russian peoples. Thus, while part of the population of the republics of Central Asia is leaving for the Russian Republic, Russian cadres and specialists rush to these republics and occupy key positions in the administration and the economy. The Russian population, which in these cases assumes the role of the colonizer, is guaranteed higher income and more privileges than in Russia.

These typically colonial practices are a flagrant negation of the Marxist-Leninist teachings on the national question. “... to violate the principles of equality between nations and to grant various privileges to a nationality means to write the death warrant of your national policy,”* stressed Stalin. But the present national policy in the Soviet Union has been changed and has assumed all the features of the national policy of the old Russian Empire.

* V. I. Lenin – J. V. Stalin, *On the national question*, Tirana 1984, p. 353.

The number of Russian colonists outside the borders of the Russian Federation for the 20-year period 1959-1979 has reached to 7.6 million. “Now 17.4% of the Russian population of the country,” the newspaper *Komunist* writes, “has migrated to other republics: Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, etc.”* The proportion of the Russians in the population of the East during the last decades is between 10-20%.

* *Komunist*, no. 5, 1983, p. 59.

In general the biggest national group next to the autochthonous nation in the non-Russian republics is the Russian group. Thus, in Turkmenia the local population makes up 68.4%, while the Russians 12.6%; in Estonia 64.7%, against 27%; in Letonia 53.7% against 32.8%. In Kazakhstan the ratio is different, with the Russian group making up 40.8% as against 36.0% made up of the Kazakhs.* In the Autonomous Republic of Bashkiria there are 40.5% Russians against 23.4% Bashkirs, in the Buryate Republic the Russians make up 73.5% etc.

* Yearbook, 1984.

After the 70's there is a growing tendency for the autochthonous population to decrease in the republics of the Western part of the SU (Letonia, Lithuania, Estonia etc.), whereas in the other republics of the East (Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, etc.) the autochthonous population is increasing at more rapid rates. For the latter republics this is one of the means of self-preservation against Russification, which is being intensified during these last years. In the period 1970-1979, the Russian population within the RSFR has increased 10.1%, but it has quadrupled in the other republics, reaching 37.4%. "In all the republics," the Soviet philosopher V. Semyonov admits, "there has been a natural increase of the local population, and parallel with it an influx of population of other nationalities, mainly Russians, is observed.*"

* *Internaciolizm, i obshestveniy progres*, Moscow 1978, p. 305-306.

Through their chauvinist demographic policy and the encouragement of migration, the Russian chauvinists want to achieve two aims:

First, the Russification of non-Russian republics where population is increasing considerably.

Second, ensuring cheap work hands for the big industrial complexes.

In order to draw the workers from the republics and their families to these complexes, the new Soviet bourgeoisie throws them some crumbs from the colossal super-profits, making a slight distinction in wages. For the same job in the industrial complexes in the east and in the north of Russia, the non-Russian workers receive something more than in their own country. In a demagogical way the magazine *Nauchniy komunizm* admits that the most urgent problem is the effective drawing of the sources of energy and fuels and the sources of mineral raw materials of the eastern regions, into economic circulation and the setting up of major productive complexes.* The Soviet bourgeoisie tries to realize these economic and political interests through the internal movement of the population.

* From *Nauchniy komunizm*, no. 4, 1983.

This new form of denationalization has met with opposition of the non-Russian nations, which are resisting it in various forms in order to ensure the economic development of their republics. But this resistance has come under the attack of the Soviet central press, which calls for a fight against the conservative concepts which prevent the younger generation to work in the new complexes in order to ensure material well-being, a good living in general.

The capitalist degeneration of the Soviet economy and the neo-colonialist policy have sharpened the national contradictions within the production units. As the Soviet revisionist press reports, 60% of the

urban population and 80% of the rural population of Moldavia, Georgia and Uzbekistan refuse to work in collectives with people of other nationalities, who are mostly Russians.*

* *Voprosi istorii*, no. 11, 1979, p. 9-10.

Discrimination against national language and culture

A component part of the social-imperialist policy of Russification is the concepts and practices of the wiping out of the national language and culture of the non-Russian nations.

In the Soviet Union of the time of V. I. Lenin and J. V. Stalin a just policy for the solution of the national question was mapped out and pursued. In conformity with this policy, the national languages and cultures developed and began to flourish as new cultures with a socialist content and national form. In this vigorous development the different nationalities of the Soviet Union took from one another especially the values of a socialist character. Stalin instructed: "...the press, the theatre, the cinemas and other cultural institutions should develop in the mother tongue", and put the question: "Why in the mother tongue? Because the multi-million masses of the people can advance in the field of cultural, political and economic development only in their mother tongue, their national language."

Misrepresenting the Leninist thesis of the merger of nations (in communism), calling the present stage "developed socialism", the Soviet revisionists advocate that only one language, only one culture, is required in this kind of socialism, that which is "suitable for the unified Soviet people".

From the theoretical aspect here we have to do with a falsification of Lenin's teachings that "As long as national and state distinctions exist between peoples and countries – and these differences will exist for a long long time to come, indeed even after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale – the unity of the internationalist tactics of the worker communist movement of all countries requires not the wiping out of national distinctions (this is an absurd dream at the present moment), but such an implementation of the fundamental principles of communism (the Soviet state and the dictatorship of the proletariat) which will make possible to modify these principles correctly in detail, to adopt them properly and to implement them in conformity with the national and national-state distinctions."*

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 91, Alb. edn.

Contrary to these teachings, the Great-Russian chauvinists try to give a theoretical basis to their policy and practice of denationalization which is aimed at assimilating other languages. According to them, "in the Soviet conditions acceptance of the language of another nation as mother tongue should not be seen as a factor of assimilation. Language is not the only feature of national identity. The people of non-Russian nationalities who accept the Russian language as their mother tongue continue to be representatives of their nations.*

* *Socializm i nacii*, 1975, p. 187.

It is true that Lenin and Stalin have stressed that in the conditions of a multinational state like the USSR it is indispensable to have a common language which will serve as a means of communication between nations. In the USSR this language has been and is Russian. Indeed, even before the triumph of the

October Revolution, Lenin wrote: “The needs of economic exchanges will determine that language of the country the use of which would be of advantage to the majority in the trade relations. And the more the acceptance of that language by the various nations is voluntary, the more this problem is definitive...”*

* V. I. Lenin – J. V. Stalin, *On the national question*, Tirana 1984, p. 65, Alb. edn.

But proceeding from chauvinist aims, both in theory and in practice, the Soviet revisionists distort the acceptance of the Russian language as a common language in the relations between nations of the USSR. With such theories as “language is not the only feature of national identity”, they deliberately negate one of the main elements of the nation. With a “common language”, or “the internationalization of language life” they strive to negate precisely the “individual languages” of the non-Russian nations and nationalities. It is precisely this chauvinist process of the negation of the languages of other nations which the Soviet revisionists try to place on a “theoretical basis”.

According to Soviet theoreticians, the process of “internationalization of national languages” in the Soviet Union goes through three main stages:

The **first stage** coincides in time with the period of the creation of the bases of socialism, with the solution of the main tasks of the cultural revolution when backward nations develop their spiritual values, i.e., with the period when, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, the national languages and cultures experienced an all-round development. Many peoples, almost 54 nationalities, created their written language. The national languages developed greatly in every aspect. The revisionists cannot deny this vigorous development of national languages in this period.

The **second stage** of the “internationalization of language life” of the peoples of the USSR coincides with the period of the construction of “mature socialism”, when a unified Soviet culture with a “socialist” content is formed, when the process of the internationalization of the spiritual life reaches a “higher qualitative level”.

The **third stage** is the present stage of the process of “internationalization of language life” of the peoples of the USSR. At this stage they try to negate the existence of other national languages and proclaim that Russian only, as the language of the “unified Soviet people”, is necessary. Theoretically this is a flagrant falsification of the Leninist teachings on this question. Stalin teaches us: “... Lenin does not link the process of the extinction of national differences and merger of nations with the period of the triumph of socialism in a single country, but he links it only and exclusively with the period after the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat on a world scale, that is, after the triumph of socialism in all the countries, when the foundations of the world socialist economy have been laid.”*

* V. I. Lenin – J. V. Stalin, *On the national question*, p. 409, Alb. edn.

And Stalin goes on: “It would be a mistake to think that the first stage of the period of world dictatorship of the proletariat will be the beginning of the extinction of nations and national languages, the beginning of the formation of a single common language. On the contrary, the first stage, during which national oppression will be abolished once and for all, will be the stage of the development and flourishing of nations and national languages, which have been oppressed, the state of the establishment of equality of nations, the stage of the liquidation of distrust among nations, the stage of the establishment and consolidation of links between nations.”*

* V. I. Lenin – J. V. Stalin, op. cit., p. 411.

In the present revisionist Soviet Union the constitutional right of bilinguality in every republic is formally recognized. In fact all the propaganda and the concrete measures which are taken especially in recent years are intended to facilitate the extension of the Russian language by squeezing local national languages, by making it obligatory in all cycles of the school, from kindergartens to the institutes and other higher schools with the chauvinist objective of assimilating and substituting the mother tongue of the non-Russian peoples.

In the educational reform of 1958 the Khrushchevites introduced a provision on the right of parents to choose the school language for their children. This “right” is in opposition to the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, according to which the nations and nationalities of a multinational state have the right to and should educate their children in their mother tongue.

Replacing the general principle of schooling in the national language with the principle of the right to choose, the non-Russian nations are faced with different kinds of pressure. “The question of respect of equal rights and possibilities includes, for instance, the admission to university of children of all nationalities. It is not surprising that spontaneity in this important question has, in some cases, led to breach of this equality, reflecting a painful aspect of relations among nations in the national consciousness.”*

* M. J. Kulichenko, *The nation and social progress*, Moscow, 1983, p. 180.

The Soviet revisionists are trying with a pronounced chauvinist tendency to disseminate the Russian customs, traditions and mode of living through the school. On the other hand, the Soviet revisionists regard the preservation of the mother tongue, the national culture and traditions of the non-Russian nations as “narrow nationalism”, as “shutting up in narrow national frames”, which allegedly inhibit the development of contemporary culture represented by the Russian culture.

The Soviet revisionists want to inculcate in the minds of the non-Russian peoples the idea that their national languages are incapable of development without the influence of Russian, that those are backward languages which hinder spiritual communication and rapprochement between peoples. According to them, for the different peoples to be advanced, cultured, and capable of keeping in step with the development of contemporary science and art, they must go beyond the limits of the national in language, literature, arts, science, etc.

And to make their ideas look scientific the revisionist politicians refer to “facts”. For instance, *Nauchniy komunizm* writes, “In some national languages, nearly 70-80 per cent of the technical-scientific, political-social and teaching-pedagogical terms are loan-words from Russian or from other languages through Russian. In Bashkir, the language of a region with a developed chemical industry, only 149 of 1948 terms of chemistry are genuinely Bashkir, the rest are linked with Russian”.* Or, they say, “it is the Russian language which has paved the way to knowledge, science and technique and the heights of culture to the Kirgiz”, etc., “the Russian language has allowed the literature of nations to enter the orbit of world culture.”**

* *Nauchniy Komunizm*, No. 1/1, 1982.

** *Ibidem*, p. 52.

Praising to the sky the specific values of Russian and negating and ignoring other languages, shows the Great-Russian national policy in its true chauvinist colours. They are in opposition to the teachings of the classics of Marxism-Leninism that all the peoples and nations, big or small, have their original features, that every language has its specific road of development, its own internal laws.

It is understandable that the Great-Russian chauvinists are not interested in these laws and when they speak about the Russian language they do not imply the mastery of Russian and its use simply as a means of communication in the multi-national Soviet Union. In fact, in this we have to do with a whole policy which aims, through various means, to make Russian replace the languages of other peoples. The Soviet revisionists have rejected the teachings of Lenin who instructed, "No privilege to any nation, to any language! Not the slightest oppression, not the slightest injustice to the national minority! – these are the principles of labour democracy."*

* V. I. Lenin — J. V. Stalin, *On the national question*, p. 43, Alb. edn.

The Soviet propaganda talks, of course, for demagogical purposes, about the alleged equality among languages. However, 130 languages are spoken in the Soviet Union, but textbooks are published only in 52 of them and press organs in less than 1/3 of them. According to the Soviet sources, in 1983 there were sharp differences between the republics in the amount of printed matter per 100 inhabitants. Thus in the RSFR 1,105 books and booklets are published for every 100 inhabitants, in Uzbekistan 243, Kazakhstan 188, Tadzhikistan 182, Turkmenia 179.

Similar differences are observed in the amount of newspapers published per 100 inhabitants. In 1983, the RSFR published 86 newspapers for every 100 inhabitants, Uzbekistan 29, Kazakhstan 35, Tadzhikistan 31, Turkmenia 31.* Although these figures fail to reveal the whole truth, because not all the publications of the non-Russian republics are in the mother tongue, taking them as the Russian revisionists report, the disproportions not only cannot be covered up but have a tendency to increase.

* Figures for 1983 have been taken from "Yezhegodnik" (Statistical yearbook), 1984, p. 91.

Despite the feverishly blind denationalizing efforts of the Great-Russians through denigration and negation of the languages of other nations, there are great difficulties and opposition. The majority of the inhabitants of Moldavia, Georgia and Uzbekistan prefer to send their children to schools where their mother tongue is taught, irrespective of the pressure, agitation and propaganda that goes on.*

* From *Voprosi istorii*, No. 11, 1979, pp. 9-10.

Therefore, no matter how much the Soviet revisionists try to assimilate the languages of non-Russian nations, they are meeting with continuous failure.

The past and present history of the national movements has proved the vitality of the peoples to defend their mother tongues. History has shown that language has a great lasting quality against the policy of violent assimilation. This is explained with the inherent laws of its development, with the stability of the grammar system and the basic fund of the vocabulary and, above all, with the patriotism and dauntless freedom-loving spirit of the peoples who oppose assimilation. The life of a language is much longer than the life of any base and superstructure, Stalin teaches us.

In order to denationalize the various nations of the USSR the Great-Russian chauvinist bourgeoisie has striven to restrict the national literature and culture of the non-Russian peoples. Here, too, “the incontestable superiority of the Russian nation” constitutes the cult of Great-Russian hegemony. Their target is thousands upon thousands of pupils, students and writers whom they want to deprive of their national treasury, that centuries-long spiritual nourishment which has played and continues to play a first-hand role in the strengthening and consolidation of the nations. They want to inculcate the idea that everything including literature, art and culture, begins there where Russia begins. As a cover-up and pretext for this infamous view they have found the formula of the strengthening of unity of peoples and nations: “the unified Soviet people”, “international culture”, etc.

Marxism-Leninism teaches us that it is right that the peoples in a federated state should know better the arts, literature and culture of one another. But with this mutual knowledge the Great-Russian chauvinists understand the unilateral knowledge of their culture by and its imposition on the others. They come to reactionary conclusions like: “Practice shows that a national literature may exist even without a national language, without necessarily writing in the national language”, “the new achievements of science can be followed and mastered only through the use of the Russian language”. *Literaturnaya gazeta*, for example, some time ago demanded that “Russian motifs must be strong” in the works of the Kazakh, Azerbaijani, Tajik writers. Apparently the Great-Russians are expressing themselves quite openly against the national language and culture of the peoples of the non-Russian republics.

Russification policy of the party and state apparatuses

One of the important directions of the Great-Russian chauvinist policy remains the continuous Russification of the party and state apparatuses and the economic organs in the non-Russian republics.

The Soviet revisionists use the proportions of representation of nations in the party and state organs of the republics as a pretext to justify the emergence of national contradictions. According to them, in the past, in the conditions when various nations were backward, it was necessary to pursue the policy of placing local representatives in the apparatus (*korenizacii aparata*). However, in the conditions of “developed socialism”, they theorize, this is not only out-dated, but has become a source of revival for nationalist hangovers. This, the Great-Russians continue, may lead to the offense of some old nations within the republic (read: Russian – N. I.) as well as arousing superiority and arrogance among politically unformed people of the autochthonous nation.*

* *Nauchniy komunizm*, No. 4, 1981, p. 63.

The Great-Russian chauvinists think the time has come to act more vigorously and openly to eliminate one of the elementary rights of nations of the republics that local cadres, who know the national life and peculiarities, who enjoy the support of the nation, should work in the apparatuses of the party, in the state and local administration of the region or the republic. The theories of the revisionists conceal the Russification process which is going on at rapid rates in the central party and state apparatuses in all the republics.

It is evident that the Russians are the predominant majority in the central organs of the party, in the state, in the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet, in the Council of Ministers. The same applies to the majority of state committees, the competences of which extend both to the centre and the republics (*Gosplan*, *State Insurances*).

For the Russian chauvinists the issue of representation of the other nations in these central organs, which make the law on the republics, is a closed chapter. What is more, after Gorbachov's advent to power there is a continuously increasing tendency to strengthening the bureaucratic centralism of the central organs in which the Russians have always dominated. The central power exercises its competences all over the Soviet territory through the federative republican ministries.

The federative republican ministries cover all the important fields, whereas the republican ministries control a very narrow field and concentrate only on issues of a regional interest: road building and repair, consumption, communal services and housing, regional industry, motor-road transport, canned food industry and social insurances.

In order to create illusions that something can be done to soften these difficult situations and contradictions between the central power and the republics, at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, Gorbachov launched the idea of a new solution: "The improvement of the democratic self-management of the people". In the mouth of the Soviet revisionists, this concept has nothing in common with the principle of the active and conscious participation of the working masses in governing the country in the conditions of genuine socialism. It is an effort to find a way out in modifying the relationship between bureaucratic centralism and capitalist liberalism, which will just aggravate the existing situation.

From the anti-Marxist content and the **counter**-revolutionary aims, the so-called "socialist self-management" is exactly like the capitalist practice of Titoite self-administration (despite the "reservations" which the Soviet ideologists have for this variant of capitalism, set up on the bases of the group property).

In the Soviet Union the state and the party have long since lost their class proletarian content and been transformed into truly bourgeois, oppressive and exploiting institutions. Therefore, no matter what "competences" are given to the local organs as regards the creation of inter-sectorial units of production and the social infrastructures of production, and what autonomy is promised to be given to the "soviets" of the base and the working collectives, this will not save the situation. In order to realize democratization effectively, which is a deception on the part of the Soviet revisionists, the necessary socio-economic conditions are lacking. The so-called socialist self-management of the people is a guise to cover up the bourgeois political system which exists in the Soviet Union.

An indication of the Russification policy of the party apparatuses is the monopoly of the nomination of party secretaries in the republics. First secretaries in the republics, as a rule, are natives, however, they have become obedient tools of the Russian chauvinists. And if any of them deviates in the slightest from Moscow's orders he is immediately removed from leadership.

The Great-Russian chauvinists have created their own system of party leadership in various republics, in which the Russians occupy the main place. More than 48 per cent of the first and second secretaries of the federative and autonomous republics for the period 1954-1976 were Russians.* This shows that the Russian element occupies, to a considerable extent, the post of the second secretary, both in the republics and the autonomous regions.

* See Helene Carrère D'Encausse, *L'empire éclaté....* Paris, Flamartion, 1978.

In the early 60s a rule was established which was consolidated later, that the post of the second secretary carries decisive weight and represents centralism. In this way, the Great-Russians have created a system and form of organization in the Party, in which the Russians in fact are the first fiddle. This organization allows them to have a strict control in selecting political, administrative and technical cadres in all the hierarchy of the non-Russian republics.

Resistance and protests by the non-Russian nations

The all-sided colonial-type oppression by the Great-Russian chauvinists has aroused preoccupation and protests among the non-Russian peoples and nations.

In July 1983 a demonstration with nationalist tendencies broke out in Georgia, in the course of which calls were made to boycott the 200th anniversary of the Alliance Treaty of the Republic with Czarist Russia.

On many occasions the Tajik, Kirgiz, Azerbaijani, Uzbek, and other nations and nationalities have carried out acts which express national desires and interest for a more advanced socio-economic and cultural development.

The central Soviet press time and again has been forced to launch calls for a strong socio-political and ideological unity of all the members of the nations and nationalities of the USSR in order to oppose the psychological war of the West. The national interests of every nation in the Soviet Union, Pravda stressed in one of its issues, are defended better when the interests of the USSR are reflected everywhere and all the time.

This newspaper is forced to admit that “some citizens” still preserve prejudices of the nationalist type and that manifestations of selfishness and national pride occur “accidentally”. “Everybody must be aware that Soviet nationality stands in the first place”, and that “belonging to the unified community” constitutes “the main road of fraternal friendship” of the nations and nationalities in the Soviet Union.* These theses are like two drops of water with the theses of the Great- Serb chauvinists on “Yugoslavism”.

* *Pravda*, 17 December 1983.

In 1976 the Georgians have made several protests against the advance of Russification. Likewise, by the middle of April 1978 a group of demonstrators took to the streets of Tbilisi against the efforts to weaken the status of the Georgian language. The draft of the Republican constitution published in March 1978 annulled the provision of the former constitution which specifically stated that the Georgian language was the official language of the Republic. The demonstrators went on protest precisely on the day the authorities of the republic were discussing this issue. In the face of the people’s protest the authorities backed down and reformulated the final text as follows: “The official language of the SSR of Georgia is the Georgian language”. The events in Georgia precipitated the events in the neighbouring republics of the Caucasus.

On 22 December 1980 protest demonstrations broke out in Estonia against the policy of Russification pursued by the new tsars. Prior to that, on 1 and 3 October of the same year, the youth had organized mass demonstrations. About 5,000 people took to the streets shouting slogans like “Freedom to Estonia”, “Russians, get out of Estonia!”

Similar protests against Russification took place on 27 and 30 March 1981 in the capital of the SSR of Georgia, Tbilisi, with students and intellectuals demonstrating for 5 hours in front of the building of the local Supreme Soviet.

In the spring of 1983, Y. Andropov tried to “put right” Armenia, the smallest republic in the USSR. The revisionist chiefs of the Kremlin called on the Armenian communists to promote among the youth “pride of the Soviet homeland”, and readiness “to fulfil their patriotic internationalist duty”.* At that time many local officials were removed during a purge to cope with “laxity”, “sectarianism”, “nationalism”. This purge was deepened in December 1984 when 5 members of the local party leadership were removed.

* *Pravda*, 21 October 1984.

The new purges conducted by M. Gorbachov before the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the removal of many top cadres in Azerbaijan, Kirghizia, Armenia, etc., as “corrupted people, incompetent to lead in the new conditions”, or “for reasons of age and health”, were not accidental.

They were the natural outcome of the capitalist relations which permeate all the cells of life in the Soviet Union today. This fresh tide of removals and nominations is linked with the need to bring to leading posts the people most suitable to the current requirements of capitalist modernization in the Soviet Union. Likewise, it is a clear expression of the struggle for power between the rival groups, a characteristic of the Soviet revisionist bureaucracy.

The various national movements, open or secret, which are occurring in the different republics of the Soviet Union lack the genuine leadership of the Marxist-Leninist party. Time has raised the need for the creation of the Marxist-Leninist parties, which will subject the solution of the problem of national liberation to the struggle for the overthrow of the yoke of Soviet social-fascism. At the 8th Congress of the PLA, Comrade Enver Hoxha has said, “The wounds which the restoration of capitalism has opened can be healed only with the overthrow of revisionism and the re-establishment of socialism”.*

* Enver Hoxha, *Report to the 8th Congress of the PLA*, p. 248, Eng. edn.