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MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

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MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

By

JOSEPH STALIN

A Collection of Articles and Speeches

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CONTENTS

Page

MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION 3

I. A Nation 5
II. The National Movement 13
III. The Presentation of the Problem 20
IV. National Autonomy 26
V. The Bund, Its Nationalism and Its Separatism 35
VI. The Caucasians and the Conference of Liquidators . . 46
VII. The National Problem in Russia 56

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION 62

Delivered at the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., April 29, 1917

Reply to the Discussion 66

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION . . 68

I. The February Revolution and the National Question . . 68
II. The October Revolution and the National Question . . 70
III. The International Significance of the October Revolution 74

THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN RUSSIA 78

THESES ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL PROBLEM 88

Presented to the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P., Endorsed by the Central Committee

I. The Capitalist System and National Oppression . . . 88
II. The Soviet System and National Freedom 91
III. Immediate Tasks of the Russian Communist Party . . . 94

Page

REPORT ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL PROBLEM 99
Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P., March 10, 1921

Reply to the Discussion 107

THE NATIONAL QUESTION PRESENTED 111

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS 117

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS 120
Report Delivered at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December 26, 1922

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS 129
Report Delivered at the First Congress of Soviets of the U.S.S.R., December 30, 1922

THESES ON NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE DEVELOPMENT 137
Approved for the Twelfth Party Congress by the Central Committee of the R.C.P.

REPORT ON NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE DEVELOPMENT 147
Delivered at the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P., April 23, 1923

Reply to the Discussion 167

SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.C.P. WITH RESPONSIBLE WORKERS OF THE NATIONAL REPUBLICS AND REGIONS, JUNE 10, 1923 172

I. Rights and "Lefts" in the National Republics and Regions 172
Speech on the first item on the agenda: The Case of Sultan-Galiyev

II. On Training and Consolidating Marxist Cadres in the National Republics and Regions 181
Extract from the report on the second item on the agenda: Practical Measures of Applying the Resolution of the Twelfth Congress of the Party on the National Question

Page

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE STRATA 185

THE NATIONAL QUESTION 190
Extract from a Series of Lectures on the Foundations of Leninism Delivered at the Sverdlov University, April 1924

1. The Presentation of the Problem 190
2. The Liberation Movement of the Oppressed Peoples and the Proletarian Revolution 195

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN YUGOSLAVIA 200
Speech Delivered in the Yugoslav Commission of the E.C.C.I., March 30, 1925

THE POLITICAL TASKS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST 206
Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Students of the University, May 18, 1925

I. Tasks of the U.T.E. in Relation to the Soviet Republics of the East 207

II. Tasks of the U.T.E. in Relation to the Colonies and Dependent Countries of the East 214

THE NATIONAL QUESTION ONCE AGAIN 221
Re Comrade Semich's Article

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO COMRADE KAGANOVICH AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UKRAINE 229

CHINA 232
Extract from a Speech on "The International Situation and the Defence of the U.S.S.R." Delivered at a Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U., August 1, 1927

THE PROLETARIAN METHOD OF SOLVING THE NATIONAL PROBLEM 253
Extract from an Article Entitled "The International Character of the October Revolution"

Page

DEVIATIONS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION 256

Extract from a Report Delivered at the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., June 27, 1930

Extract from the Reply to the Discussion 263

DEVIATIONS TOWARDS NATIONALISM 267

Extract from the Report on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. Delivered at the Seventeenth Party Congress, January 26, 1934

APPENDIX I. PRINCIPAL DECISIONS OF THE C.P.S.U. ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION 269

Resolution on the National Question 269
Adopted by the Seventh (April) Conference of the R.S.D.L.P.

The Immediate Tasks of the Party in Connection with the National Problem 270
Resolution Adopted by the Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.

National Factors in Party and State Development . . . 279
Resolution Adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the R.C.P.

Extract from the Resolution Adopted by the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. on the Report of the Central Committee 287

Extract from the Party Programme 288
Adopted by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.

APPENDIX II. EXPLANATORY NOTES 289

APPENDIX III. INDEX OF NAMES 303

MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL AND COLONIAL QUESTION

MARXISM AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION [1]
(1913)

THE period of counter-revolution in Russia brought not only "thunder and lightning" in its train, but also disillusionment in the movement and lack of faith in common forces. As long as people believed in "a bright future," they fought side by side irrespective of nationality: common questions first and foremost! But when doubt crept into people's hearts, they began to depart, each to his own national tent. Let every man count upon himself! The "national question" first and foremost!

At the same time a profound upheaval was taking place in the economic life of the country. The year 1905 had not been in vain: one more blow had been struck at the survivals of serfdom in the country districts. The series of good harvests which succeeded the starvation years, and the industrial boom that followed, furthered the progress of capitalism. The differentiation of the peasants, the growth of the towns, the development of trade and means of communication all took a big stride forward. This applied particularly to the border regions. And this could not but hasten the process of economic consolidation of the nationalities of Russia. They were bound to be stirred into movement. . . .

The "constitutional regime" which was established at that time also acted in the same direction of stirring up the nationalities. The spread of newspapers and of literature generally, a certain freedom of the press and cultural institutions, an increase in the number of national theatres, and so forth, all unquestionably helped to strengthen "national sentiments." The Duma, with its election campaigns and political groups, gave fresh opportunities for greater activity on the part of the nations and provided a new and wide arena for their mobilisation.

And the rising tide of militant nationalism above, the series of

[1] The figures in brackets refer to the Explanatory Notes.—*Ed.*

repressive measures taken by the "powers that be" in vengeance on the border regions for their "love of freedom," evoked an answering tide of nationalism below, which at times took the form of crude chauvinism. The spread of Zionism [2] among the Jews, the increase of chauvinism in Poland and of Pan-Islamism [3] among the Tatars, the spread of nationalism among the Armenians, Georgians and Ukrainians, the general tendency of the ordinary man to anti-Semitism—all these are generally known facts.

The 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.

These crucial times laid a high mission 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 bringing 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 Bund [4], which had previously laid stress on the common aims, now began to give prominence to its own specific, purely nationalist purposes: it went to the length of declaring the "observance of the Sabbath" and the "recognition of Yiddish" a fighting issue in its election campaign.[1] The Bund was followed by the Caucasus; one section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats, who, like all the Caucasian Social-Democrats, had formerly rejected "national cultural autonomy," are now making it an immediate demand.[2] We shall not dwell on the conference of the Liquidators [6], which in a diplomatic way gave its sanction to nationalist vacillations.[1]

[1] See "Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund [5]."
[2] See "Announcement of the August Conference."

But from all this it follows that the views of the Russian Social-Democratic Party on the national question are not yet clear to all Social-Democrats.

It is evident that a serious and comprehensive discussion of the national question is required. Consistent Social-Democrats must work solidly and indefatigably against the nationalist obfuscation, no matter from what quarter it proceeds.

I. A Nation

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 com-

[1] *Ibid.*

munity 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 necessarily 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.

Thus *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 [1] 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 by 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.

Thus *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 complexion, which manifests itself in peculiarities of national culture. If England, America and Ireland,

[1] *I.e.*, the abolition of serfdom in 1861.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

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 disunited, 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.*" [1] (Our italics.)

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." [2]

What, then, is a nation?

"A nation is a relative community of character." [3]

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." [2]

[1] R. Springer, *Das nationale Problem* (*The National Problem*), Leipzig and Vienna, 1902, p. 35.
[2] O. Bauer, *Die Nationalitätenfrage und die Sozialdemokratie* (*The National Question and Social-Democracy*), Vienna. 1924, p. 2.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

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." [1]

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." [2]

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";[3] 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 petrified 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.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 135.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 2.

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 centuries, 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,[1] he corrects himself at the end of the book and states that "in general capitalist society makes it impossible for them [the Jews] to continue as a nation," [2] by causing them to assimilate with other nations. The reason, it appears, is that "the Jews have no closed territory of settlement," [2] 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.

By arguing thus, Bauer wanted to prove that the Jewish workers cannot demand national autonomy,[3] 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." [1] But hardly has he reached p. 126 when he effects a change of front and just as definitely declares that unquestionably, "*no nation is possible without a common language.*" [4] (Our italics.)

Bauer wanted to prove that "language is the most important instrument of human intercourse," [3] but at the same time he inadvertently proved something he did not mean to prove, namely,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 373.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 379.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 126.

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.

II. The National Movement

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 multinational 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." [1] The bourgeoisie of the dominant nation, whether large or small, is able to deal more "rapidly" and "decisively" with its competitors. "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.

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

[1] A rather free translation of the satirical description of the functions of the police by the Russian writer Gleb Uspensky.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

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?" [1]

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 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

[1] J. Strasser, *Der Arbeiter und die Nation* (*The Worker and the Nation*), Reichenberg, 1912, p. 33.

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" [1] 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 frame-

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 161.

work 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 democratised 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, *i.e.*, for the majority of its population, *i.e.*, 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 ought 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 [1] Social-Democratic parties, which supposedly have already solved the national problem and whose solution the Rus-

[1] The South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party operates in the Southern part of Austria.

sian 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 [7] the principles of the question [*i.e.*, 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." [1]

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 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 Brünn (1899) [8] 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 Brünn 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 whether, 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.

[1] V. Kossovsky, *Problems of Nationality*, 1907, pp. 16-17.

"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?" [1] (Springer's italics.)

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." [2]

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 Marxists, 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 essen-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 382.

tially 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." [1]

Springer says the same thing. He writes:

"I am very well aware that institutions of this kind [*i.e.*, 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." [2]

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

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 404.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 29.

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." [9] 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, *i.e.*, with the destruction of the relics of serfdom, *i.e.*, 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 emancipation 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 indefeasible 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." [1]

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." [2]

All this is clear. But it is no less clear that the national question in Russia is in an entirely different plane. 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

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 29.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 384.

"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 autonomous 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 Brünn Congress in 1899.[1]

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*[2] 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 union, 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.[3]

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

[1] This programme was also supported by the vote of the South-Slavic Social-Democratic Party. *Cf. Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages der Sozialdemokratie in Oesterreich abgehalten zu Brünn. (Proceedings of the Brünn Social-Democratic Party Congress)*, Vienna, 1899, pp. xiv and 104.

[2] 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 Eigenart, i.e.*, peculiarities, which is far from being the same thing.

[3] *Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages zu Brünn*, 1899.

Springer, the first agitator on behalf of national autonomy, greets it with enthusiasm;[1] Bauer also supports this programme, calling it a "theoretical victory" [2] for national autonomy; only, in the interest of greater clarity, he proposes to 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.[3]

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." [4]

Bauer also speaks of a nation as a "community of persons" which "does not enjoy exclusive sovereignty in any particular region." [5]

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,

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 246.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 527.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 533.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 274.

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.[1] . . . 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." [2]

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." [3]

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." [4]

"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." [5]

Further Bauer says:

"All the Germans in nationally homogeneous districts and all the Germans entered in the national cadasters in the dual districts will constitute the German nation and elect a *National Council*." [6]

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." [7]

Such are the organisation of a nation and its central institution. According to Bauer, the Austrian Social-Democratic Party is

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 61.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 530.
[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 192.
[5] *Op. cit.*, p. 354.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 360.
[7] *Op. cit.*, p. 200.

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*." [1] (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 propertied classes." [2]

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." [3]

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";[4] that under socialism there will take place "a grouping of humanity into autonomous national communities";[4] that "thus, socialist society will undoubtedly present a checkered picture of national unions of persons and territorial corporations," [5] and that accordingly "the socialist principle of nationality is a supreme synthesis of the national principle and national autonomy." [6]

Enough, it would seem.

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

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 531.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 323.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 319.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 533.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 521.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 522.

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 Brünn Party Congress announce their readiness to unite the "two parts" of their people into one whole?[1]). 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 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

[1] *Verhandlungen des Gesamtparteitages zu Brünn*, 1899, p. 85.

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. They 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" [1]? 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.

[1] O. Bauer, *op. cit.*, p. 531.

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 prophecy regarding the division of "humanity into nationally delimited communities" [1] 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." [10] 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.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 533.

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 creat 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 rivulets.

Austria, the home of "national autonomy," provides the most deplorable examples of this. Since 1897 (the Wimberg Party Congress [11]) the one-time united Austrian Social-Democratic Party has been breaking up into separate parties. The break-up became still more marked after the Brünn 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." [1] According to Bauer, the reason is that "capitalist society makes it impossible for them [the Jews.—*J.S.*] to continue as a nation." [2]

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 [3] [12] in reference chiefly to the German Jews. It was repeated by Kautsky in 1903 [4] 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." [2] This explanation, in the main a correct

[1] *Op. cit.*, p 379.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 373.
[3] "Zur Judenfrage."
[4] "Das Kischinjewer Blutbad" ("The Kishenev Pogrom"), 1906.

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 per cent 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) [13] 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." [1] 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-

[1] *Cf. Forms of the National Movement, etc.*, edited by Kastelyansky, p. 772 (in Russian.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*).

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 Austrians 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, of 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." [1] 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 italics.—*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

[1] *Minutes of the Second Congress*, p. 176.

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 more 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 guarantees of freedom. But this is not the case. From the Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund [14] 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." [1]

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," [2] democratically organised. (Our italics.—*J.S.*)

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 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

[1] *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, 1911, p. 62.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 83-84.

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 italics.—*J.S.*) be fought for with "particular insistence." [1] 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 *curiae* [2]] who undertake to defend the rights of the Jewish language." [3]

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 nationalists?

[1] *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 85.
[2] *Curia*—electoral college to the Duma.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*
[3] *Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund*, 1912, p. 42.

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." [1]

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 want 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," that "the Jewish worker will not feel at ease among Polish workers and will feel at ease among Jewish shopkeepers." [2]

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." [15] Of course, V. Kossovsky and Bundists like him may accuse Plekhanov of being a "demagogue" [16]—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

[1] *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 83.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 68.

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." [1] From "demarcation" it made a "step forward" to the theory of "isolation." It is not without good cause that speeches were made at the Eighth Conference of the Bund declaring that "national existence lies in isolation." [2]

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 inter-national, 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 inter-national territorial principle of these collective bodies remains in force—in which case the Bund must be reconstructed along inter-national 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." [3]

In 1906, 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

[1] *An Announcement on the Seventh Congress of the Bund* [17], p. 7.
[2] *Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, p. 72.
[3] *National Autonomy and the Reform of the Russian Social-Democratic Party on Federal Lines*, 1902, published by the Bund.

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 [1] can hope for them in the near future. The Bund must join the Party armed cap-à-pie." [2]

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 inter-national 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. [19]

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* [20] 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." [3]

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

[1] *Manilov*—a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls* represented as a sentimental dreamer.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

[2] *Nashe Slovo* [18], No. 3, p. 24, Vienna, 1906.

[3] *National Autonomy, etc.*, 1902, p. 17, published by the Bund.

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.[1] 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:

[1] *Cf.* the words quoted from a brochure by Vanek [21] in *Dokumente des Separatismus*, p. 29.

". . . 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.*" [1] (Our italics.—*J.S.*)

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 Russian Liquidators, formulate their demand.

Listen to their acknowledged leader, the not unknown *N.* [22].

"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." [1]

[1] *Report of the Ninth Conference of the Bund*, p. 19.

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 centralised 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

[1] See the Georgian newspaper *Chveni Tskhovreba* (*Our Life*) [23], 1912, No. 12.

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, Kutais, 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." [1]

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 Abkhasians, the Adjarians, the Svanetians, 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

[1] *Chveni Tskhovreba,* 1912, No. 12.

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 Kobuleti, 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 simple 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 [24]. 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, i.e.,* 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.—*J.S.*]

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

"*Yegorov*: On the question of nationality we can adopt only negative proposals, *i.e.*, 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."[1]

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."[2] (Our italics.—*J.S.*)

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.

[1] *Nasha Zarya*, 1912, No. 9-10, p. 120.
[2] *Nashe Slovo*, 1906, No. 8, p. 53.

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 [25] 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.[1] 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 people according to nation, it does not strengthen national partitions; on the contrary, it only serves

[1] *Cf. Report of the Eighth Conference of the Bund*, the concluding part of the resolution on the community.

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, homogeneous 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 national 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 national 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 aloofness.

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." [1]

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 [26]. 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 [19].

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.

Vienna, January 1913
Prosveshcheniye, Nos. 3-5
March-May 1913

[1] J. Strasser, *Der Arbeiter und die Nation*, 1912.

REPORT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Delivered at the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., April 29,[1] 1917 [27]

AN extensive report on the national question should rightly be given, but time is short and I must make my report brief.

Before the draft resolution is taken up certain premises must first be laid down. What is national oppression? National oppression is that system of exploitation and plunder of subject peoples, those measures of forcible restriction of the political rights of subject peoples, which are resorted to by imperialist circles. These, taken together, present the policy generally known as a policy of national oppression.

The first question is, on what classes does any particular government depend in carrying out its policy of national oppression? In order to obtain an answer to this question it must first be understood why different forms of national oppression exist in different states, why in one state national oppression is more severe and crude than in other states. For instance, in Great Britain and Austria-Hungary national oppression never took the form of pogroms, but existed in the form of restrictions on the national rights of the subject peoples; whereas in Russia it not infrequently assumes the form of pogroms and massacres. In certain states, on the other hand, no specific measures against national minorities are practised at all. For instance, there is no national oppression in Switzerland, where French, Italians and Germans all live freely.

How are we to explain the difference in attitude towards nationalities existing in different states?

The difference depends on the degree of democracy in these states. When in former years the old landed aristocracy controlled the

[1] Old Style.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

state power in Russia, national oppression could assume, and actually did assume, the monstrous form of massacres and pogroms. In Great Britain, where there is a definite degree of democracy and political freedom, national oppression bears a less brutal character. Switzerland, for her part, approximates to a democratic society, and in that country the small nations have more or less complete freedom. In a word, the more democratic a country, the less the national oppression, and *vice versa*. And since by democracy we mean that definite classes are in control of state power, it may be said from this point of view that the closer the old landed aristocracy stands to power, as was the case in old tsarist Russia, the more severe is the oppression and the more monstrous the forms it assumes.

However, national oppression is supported not only by the agrarian aristocracy. There is, in addition, another force—the imperialist groups, who transfer the methods of enslaving peoples acquired by them in the colonies to their own country itself and thus become the natural allies of the landed aristocracy. They are followed by the petty bourgeoisie, a section of the intelligentsia, a section of the upper strata of the workers, who also enjoy the fruits of the plunder. There is thus a whole choir of social forces which support national oppression, headed by the landed and financial aristocracy. In order to create a real democratic system, it is first necessary to clear the soil and remove this choir from the political stage.

[*Reads the resolution.*] [1]

The first question is, how are we to arrange the political life of the oppressed nations? In answer to this question it must be said that the oppressed nations forming part of Russia must be allowed the right to decide for themselves whether they wish to remain part of the Russian state or to separate and form an independent state. We are at present witnessing a definite conflict between the Finnish people and the Provisional Government. The representatives of the Finnish people, the representatives of Social-Democracy, are demanding that the Provisional Government should return to the people the rights they enjoyed before they were annexed to Russia. The Provisional Government refuses because it will not recognise

[1] See Appendix, pp. 269-70.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

the sovereignty of the Finnish people. On whose side must we range ourselves? Obviously, on the side of the Finnish people, for it is intolerable that we should endorse the forcible retention of any people whatsoever within the bounds of one state. When we put forward the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination we are thereby raising the struggle against national oppression to the level of a struggle against imperialism, our common foe. Unless we do so, we may find ourselves in the position of people who bring grist to the mill of the imperialists. If we, the Social-Democrats, were to deny the Finnish people the right to declare its will on the subject of secession and the right to give effect to its will, we would thereby put ourselves in the position of people who continue the policy of tsarism.

The question of the *right* of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the question that a nation must *necessarily* secede at any given moment. This latter question must be settled by the party of the proletariat in each particular case independently, according to circumstances. When we recognise the right of oppressed peoples to secede, the *right* to determine their political destiny, we do not thereby settle the question of whether particular nations *should* secede from the Russian state at the given moment. I may recognise the right of a nation to secede, but that does not mean that I compel it to secede. A people has a right to secede, but it may or may not exercise that right, according to circumstances. Thus we are at liberty to agitate for or against secession, according to the interests of the proletariat, of the proletarian revolution. Hence, the question of secession must be determined in each particular case independently, in accordance with existing circumstances, and for this reason the question of the recognition of the right to secession must not be confused with the expediency of secession in any given circumstances. For instance, I personally would be opposed to the secession of Transcaucasia, bearing in mind the general level of development in Transcaucasia and in Russia, the conditions of the struggle of the proletariat, and so forth. But if, nevertheless, the peoples of Transcaucasia were to demand secession, they would, of course, secede, and would not encounter opposition on our part.

[*Continues to read the resolution.*]

Further, what is to be done with those peoples which may desire to remain within the Russian state? Any mistrust of Russia which existed among the peoples was fostered chiefly by the policy of tsarism. But now that tsarism no longer exists, its policy of oppression no longer exists, this mistrust is bound to diminish and the attraction towards Russia increase. I believe that now, after the overthrow of tsarism, nine tenths of the peoples will not desire secession. The Party therefore proposes to institute regional autonomy for regions which may not desire secession and which are distinguished by peculiarities of social life and language, as, for instance, Transcaucasia, Turkestan and the Ukraine. The geographical boundaries of these autonomous regions shall be determined by the population itself with due regard for the exigencies of economic life, social life, etc.

In contradistinction to regional autonomy there exists another plan, one which has long been recommended by the Bund, and particularly by Springer and Bauer, who advocate the principle of national cultural autonomy. I consider this plan unacceptable for the Social-Democratic Party. Its essence is that Russia should be transformed into a union of nations, and nations into unions of persons drawn into a common society irrespective of where they are domiciled in the state. All Russians, all Armenians, and so on, are to be organised into separate national unions, irrespective of territory, and only then are to enter the union of nations of the whole of Russia. This plan is in the highest degree inconvenient and inexpedient. The fact is that the development of capitalism has dispersed whole groups of people, severed them from their nations and scattered them over the various corners of Russia. In view of the dispersion of nations resulting from economic conditions, to draw together the various individuals of a given nation is to organise and build a nation artificially. And to draw people together into nations artificially is to adopt the standpoint of nationalism. This plan, advanced by the Bund, cannot be endorsed by the Social-Democratic Party. It was rejected at the conference of our Party held in 1912 [28], and generally enjoys no popularity in Social-Democratic circles with the exception of the Bund. This plan is also known as cultural autonomy, because it singles out from among

the numerous and varied questions which interest a nation the purely cultural group of questions and places them under the charge of national unions. The basis for this selection is the proposition that what unites a nation into a single whole is its culture. It is assumed that within a nation there are, on the one hand, interests which tend to disintegrate the nation, for instance economic interests, and, on the other hand, interests which tend to weld it into a single whole, and that the cultural question is a question of the latter kind.

There finally remains the question of the national minorities. Their rights must be specifically protected. The Party therefore demands complete equality of rights in educational, religious and other matters and the removal of all restrictions on national minorities.

There is Par. 9, which proclaims the equality of nations. The conditions required for its realisation can arise only when the whole of society has been fully democratised.

We have still to settle the question of how to organise the proletariat of the various nations into a single, common party. One plan is that the workers should be organised according to nationality—so many nations, so many parties. This plan was rejected by the Social-Democratic Party. Experience has shown that the organisation of the proletariat of a given state according to nationality only leads to the destruction of the idea of class solidarity. All the proletarian members of all the nations in a given state must be organised in a single, indivisible proletarian collective body.

Thus, our views on the national question reduce themselves to the following propositions: a) the recognition of the right of peoples to secession; b) regional autonomy for peoples which remain within the given state; c) specific laws guaranteeing freedom of development for national minorities; d) a single, indivisible proletarian collective body, a single party, for the proletarians of all the nationalities in the given state.

REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION

The two resolutions are on the whole similar. Comrade Pyatakov has copied all the points of our resolution except one—"the recognition of the right of secession." One thing or the other: either we deny the nations the right of secession, in which case it must be stated explicitly, or we do not deny that right. There is at present a movement in Finland for securing national freedom, and there is also the fight waged against it by the Provisional Government. The question arises, whom are we to support? Either we support the policy of the Provisional Government, the forcible retention of Finland and the reduction of her rights to a minimum—in which case we are annexationists, for we are bringing grist to the mill of the Provisional Government—or we favour independence for Finland. We must express ourselves definitely one way or the other; to limit ourselves to a statement of rights is impossible. There is a movement for independence in Ireland. On whose side are we, comrades? We are either for Ireland or for the British Empire. And I ask—and the facts of the situation also ask—are we on the side of the peoples which are resisting oppression, or on the side of the classes which are oppressing them? We say that the Social-Democratic Party, which is steering a course towards the socialist revolution, must support the revolutionary movement of the peoples, which is directed against imperialism. Either we consider that we must create a rear for the vanguard of the socialist revolution in the shape of the peoples which are rising up against national oppression—and in that case we shall build a bridge between the West and the East and shall indeed be steering a course towards the world socialist revolution; or we do not do this—and in that case we shall find ourselves isolated and we shall be abandoning the tactics of utilising every revolutionary movement among the oppressed nationalities for the purpose of destroying imperialism. We must support every movement directed against imperialism. Otherwise, what will the Finnish workers say to us? Comrades Pyatakov and Dzerzhinsky say that every national movement is a reactionary movement. That is not true, comrades. Is not the Irish movement against British imperialism a democratic movement which is striking a blow at imperialism? And are we not to support the movement? . . .

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION [29]
(1918)

THE national question is not something self-contained and fixed for all time. Being only part of the general question of the transformation of the existing order, the national question is wholly determined by the conditions of the social environment, the character of the power in the country and by the whole course of social development generally. This is being strikingly borne out during the period of revolution in Russia, when the national question and the national movement in the border regions of Russia are rapidly and patently changing their character in accordance with the course and issue of the revolution.

I. THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

In the period of bourgeois revolution in Russia (which began in February 1917) the national movement in the border regions bore the character of a bourgeois movement of emancipation. The nationalities of Russia, which had for ages been oppressed and exploited by the "old regime," now for the first time felt their strength and hurled themselves into combat with their oppressors. "Abolish national oppression" was the slogan of the movement. In a trice, "all-national" institutions sprang up all over the border regions of Russia. The movement was headed by the national, bourgeois-democratic intelligentsia. "National Councils" in Latvia, the Esthonian Region, Lithuania, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaidjan, the Caucasus, Kirghizstan and the Middle Volga Region; the "Rada" in the Ukraine [30] and in White Russia [31]; the "Sfatul Tarii" in Bessarabia [32]; the "Kurultai" in the Crimea [33] and in Bashkiria [34]; the "Autonomous Government" in Turkestan [35]—such were the "national" institutions around which the national bour-

geoisie rallied its forces. It was a question of emancipation from tsarism, the "basic cause" of national oppression, and the formation of national bourgeois states. The right of nations to self-determination was interpreted to mean the right of the national bourgeoisie in the border regions to take power into its own hands and to take advantage of the February Revolution in order to form its "own" national state. A further development of the revolution did not and could not come into the calculations of the above-mentioned bourgeois institutions. And the fact was overlooked that tsarism was being replaced by a naked and barefaced imperialism, that this imperialism was a stronger and more dangerous foe of the nationalities, and the basis of new national oppression.

The abolition of tsarism and the accession to power of the bourgeoisie did not, however, lead to the abolition of national oppression. The old and crude form of national oppression was replaced by a new, refined, but all the more dangerous, form of oppression. The government of Lvov-Milyukov-Kerensky, far from abandoning the policy of national oppression, organised a new campaign against Finland (dispersal of the Diet in the summer of 1917) and the Ukraine (the wholesale suppression of the cultural institutions of the Ukraine). Nay more, this government, imperialist by its very nature, called upon the population to continue the war in order to subjugate new lands, new colonies and new nationalities. It was driven to this not only because of the intrinsic nature of imperialism, but also because of the existence of the old imperialist states of Western Europe, which were irresistibly striving to subjugate new lands and nationalities and threatening to narrow its sphere of influence. The picture presented by the course of the imperialist war was a struggle of the imperialist states for the subjugation of small nationalities as a condition for the existence of these states. The abolition of tsarism and the appearance on the scene of the Milyukov-Kerensky government in no way improved this unsightly picture. Since the "all-national" institutions in the border regions displayed a tendency to political independence, it was natural that they should encounter the insuperable hostility of the imperialist government of Russia. Since, on the other hand, while establishing the power of the national bourgeoisie, they remained deaf to the

vital interests of their "own" workers and peasants, they evoked grumbling and discontent among the latter. What were known as "national regiments" only added fuel to the flames: they were impotent against the danger from above, and only intensified and aggravated the danger from below. The "all-national" institutions were left defenceless against blows from without and explosion from within. The incipient bourgeois national states began to fade before they could blossom.

Thus the old bourgeois-democratic interpretation of the principle of self-determination became a fiction and lost its revolutionary significance. It was clear that under such circumstances there could be no question of the abolition of national oppression or of the independence of the small, national states. It became obvious that the emancipation of the toiling masses of the oppressed nationalities and the abolition of national oppression were inconceivable without a break with imperialism, without the overthrow by each of its "own" national bourgeoisie and the assumption of power by the toiling masses themselves.

This was strikingly borne out after the October Revolution.

II. The October Revolution and the National Question

The February Revolution harboured irreconcilable internal contradictions. The revolution was accomplished by the efforts of the workers and peasants (soldiers), whereas, as a result of the revolution, the power passed not to the workers and peasants, but to the bourgeoisie. In making the revolution the workers and peasants wanted to put an end to the war and to secure peace, whereas the bourgeoisie upon coming to power strove to use the revolutionary ardour of the masses in order to continue the war and to oppose peace. The economic disruption of the country and the food crisis demanded the expropriation of capital and of the industrial enterprises for the benefit of the workers and the confiscation of the landed estates for the benefit of the peasants; whereas the bourgeois Milyukov-Kerensky government stood guard over the interests of the landlords and capitalists, resolutely protecting the latter against all attempts on the part of the workers and peasants.

It was a bourgeois revolution, accomplished by the instrumentality of the workers and peasants for the benefit of the exploiters.

Meanwhile, the country continued to groan under the burden of the imperialist war, economic disintegration and the collapse of the food supply. The front was falling to pieces and melting away. Factories and mills were coming to a standstill. Famine was spreading through the country. The February Revolution with its inner contradictions proved to be obviously inadequate for "the salvation of the country." The Milyukov-Kerensky government proved to be obviously incapable of solving the basic problems of the revolution.

A new, *socialist* revolution was necessary to lead the country out of the impasse of imperialist war and economic ruin.

This revolution came as a result of the October seizure of power.

By overthrowing the power of the landlords and the bourgeoisie and replacing it by a government of workers and peasants, the October Revolution at one blow solved the contradictions of the February Revolution. The abolition of the omnipotence of the landlords and kulaks and the transfer of the use of the land to the toiling agricultural masses; the expropriation of the factories and mills and their transfer to the control of the workers; the break with imperialism and the termination of the predatory war; the publication of the secret treaties and the exposure of the policy of foreign territorial annexations; finally, the proclamation of self-determination for the toiling masses of the oppressed nations and the recognition of the independence of Finland—such were the principal measures carried into effect by the Soviet government in the course of the revolution.

This was a truly *socialist* revolution.

The revolution, which started in the centre, could not long be confined to this narrow territory. Once having triumphed in the centre, it was bound to spread to the border regions. And, indeed, from the very first days of the seizure of power, the revolutionary wave spread from the North all over Russia, sweeping over one border region after another. But here it struck a dam in the form of the "National Councils" and regional "governments" (Don, Kuban, Siberia) which had come into being before the October Revolution. The fact is that these "national governments" would

not hear of a socialist revolution. Bourgeois by nature, they had not the slightest intention of destroying the old bourgeois world; on the contrary, they considered it their duty to preserve and consolidate it by every means in their power. Essentially imperialist, they had not the slightest intention of breaking with imperialism; on the contrary, they were never averse to seizing and subjugating bits and morsels of "foreign" nationalities whenever opportunity offered. No wonder that "national governments" in the border regions declared war on the socialist government in the centre. And, once they had declared war, they naturally became centres of reaction attracting all that was counter-revolutionary in Russia. It is no secret that all the counter-revolutionaries ejected from Russia streamed to these centres, and there, around these centres, formed themselves into the Whiteguard "national" regiments.

But, in addition to the "national" governments, there are national workers and peasants in the border regions. Organised even before the October Revolution in their own revolutionary Soviets of Deputies on the model of the Soviets of Deputies in the central parts of Russia, they had never severed their connections with their brothers in the North. They too were striving to defeat the bourgeoisie; they too were fighting for the triumph of socialism. No wonder that their conflict with their "own" national governments grew daily more acute. The October Revolution only served to strengthen the alliance between the workers and peasants of the border regions and the workers and peasants of Russia, and inspired them with faith in the triumph of socialism. And the war of the "national governments" against the Soviet power brought their conflict with these "governments" to the point of a complete rupture, to open rebellion against them.

Thus was formed a socialist alliance of the workers and peasants of all Russia against the counter-revolutionary alliance of the national-bourgeois "governments" of the border regions of Russia.

The fight of the border "governments" is depicted by some as a fight for national emancipation against the "soulless centralism" of Soviet government. This is untrue. No government in the world has permitted such extensive decentralisation, no government in the world has ever granted its peoples such complete national

freedom as does Soviet government in Russia. The fight of the border "governments" was, and is, a fight of bourgeois counter-revolution against socialism. The national flag is tacked to the cause only to deceive the masses, because it is a popular flag which conveniently conceals the counter-revolutionary designs of the national bourgeoisie.

But the fight of the "national" and regional "governments" proved to be an unequal one. Attacked from two quarters—from without by the Soviet government, and from within by their "own" workers and peasants—the "national governments" were obliged to retreat after the first engagements. The revolt of the Finnish workers and agricultural labourers and the flight of the bourgeois "Senate"; the revolt of the Ukrainian workers and peasants and the flight of the bourgeois "Rada"; the revolt of the workers and peasants in the Don, Kuban, and Siberia and the collapse of Kaledin, Kornilov and the Siberian "government"; the revolt of the poor peasants of Turkestan and the flight of the "Autonomous Government"; the agrarian revolution in the Caucasus and the utter impotence of the "National Councils" of Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaidjan—all these are facts of common knowledge which demonstrated the complete isolation of the border "governments" from their "own" masses. Utterly defeated, the "national governments" were "obliged" to appeal for aid against their "own" workers and peasants to the imperialists of Western Europe, the age-long oppressors and exploiters of the small nations of the world.

Thus began the period of foreign interference and the occupation of the border regions—a period which once more revealed the counter-revolutionary nature of the "national" and regional "governments."

Now at last it has become obvious to all that the national bourgeoisie is striving not for the liberation of "its own people" from national oppression, but for the liberty of squeezing profits out of them, for the liberty of preserving its own privileges and capital.

Now at last it has become obvious that the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities is inconceivable without a rupture with imperialism, without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie of the op-

pressed nationalities and without the transfer of power to the toiling masses of these nationalities.

Thus the old bourgeois conception of the principle of self-determination, with its slogan "All power to the national bourgeoisie," was exposed and cast aside by the very course of the revolution. The socialist conception of self-determination, with its slogan "All power to the toiling masses of the oppressed nationalities," entered into its own and obtained the opportunity of being applied in practice.

Thus the October Revolution, having put an end to the old, bourgeois movement for national emancipation, inaugurated the era of a new, socialist movement of the workers and peasants of the oppressed nationalities, directed against all oppression, which also means national oppression, against the rule of the bourgeoisie, their "own" and foreign, and against imperialism in general.

III. The International Significance of the October Revolution

Having triumphed in the centre of Russia and spread to a number of the border regions, the October Revolution could not stop short at the territorial frontiers of Russia. In the atmosphere of the imperialist World War and the general discontent of the lower classes, it could not but spread to neighbouring countries. Russia's break with imperialism and her escape from the predatory war; the publication of the secret treaties and the solemn abrogation of the policy of foreign annexations; the proclamation of national freedom and the recognition of the independence of Finland; the proclamation of Russia a "Federation of Soviet National Republics" and the militant battle-cry for a determined struggle against imperialism issued to the world by the Soviet government—all this could not but greatly affect the enslaved East and the bleeding West.

And, indeed, the October Revolution is the first revolution in the history of the world to break the age-long sleep of the toiling masses of the oppressed peoples of the East and to draw them into the fight against world imperialism. The formation of workers'

and peasants' Soviets in Persia, China and India, modelled on the Soviets in Russia, is sufficient proof of this.

The October Revolution was the first revolution in the history of the world to provide the workers and peasants of the West with a living redeeming example and to impel them into the true path of emancipation from the yoke of war and imperialism. The revolt of the workers and soldiers in Austria-Hungary and in Germany, the formation of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, the revolutionary struggle of the non-sovereign nations of Austria-Hungary against national oppression, are eloquent proof of this.

The important thing is not that the struggle in the East and even in the West has not yet succeeded in shedding its bourgeois-nationalist superstrata; the important thing is that the struggle against imperialism *has begun*, that it is continuing and that it is inevitably bound to arrive at its logical goal.

Foreign interference and the policy of occupation on the part of the "external" imperialists only serve to accentuate the revolutionary crisis, by drawing new nations into the struggle and extending the area of the revolutionary engagements with imperialism.

In this way the October Revolution is establishing a tie between the nations of the backward East and of the advanced West and is drawing them into a common struggle against imperialism.

In this way the national question, from the particular question of combating national oppression, is growing into the general question of emancipating the nations, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism.

The mortal sin of the Second International and its leader, Kautsky, consists incidentally in the fact that they have always wandered into the bourgeois conception of national self-determination, that they have never understood the revolutionary meaning of the latter, that they were unable or unwilling to put the national question on the revolutionary footing of an open fight against imperialism and that they were unable or unwilling to link the national question with the question of the emancipation of the colonies.

The obtuseness of the Austrian Social-Democrats of the type of

Bauer and Renner consists in the fact that they have never understood the indissoluble bond that exists between the national question and the question of power, that they tried to separate the national question from politics and to confine it to cultural and educational questions, forgetting the existence of such "trifles" as imperialism and the enslavement of the colonies by imperialism.

It is asserted that the principles of self-determination and "national defence" have been abrogated by the very course of events under the conditions of a rising socialist revolution. But as a matter of fact it is not self-determination and "national defence" that have been abrogated, but the bourgeois interpretation of these principles. One has only to glance at the occupied regions, which are languishing under the yoke of imperialism and yearning for liberation; one has only to glance at Russia, which is fighting a revolutionary war for the defence of the socialist fatherland from the pirates of imperialism; one has only to reflect on the events now taking place in Austria-Hungary; one has only to glance at the enslaved colonies and semi-colonies which have already organised their own Soviets (India, Persia, China)—one has only to glance at all this to realise the full revolutionary significance of the principle of self-determination in its socialist interpretation.

The great international significance of the October Revolution chiefly consists in the fact that:

1) It has widened the scope of the national question and converted it from the particular question of combating national oppression into the general question of emancipating the oppressed nations, colonies and semi-colonies from imperialism;

2) It has opened up vast possibilities and revealed the proper way of achieving emancipation, and thereby greatly helped the cause of emancipation of the opressed nations of the West and the East, having drawn them into the common channel of the victorious struggle against imperialism;

3) *It has thereby erected a bridge between the socialist West and the enslaved East,* having created a new line of revolutions *against* world imperialism, extending from the proletarians of the West, through the Russian revolution, to the oppressed nations of the East.

This in fact explains the indescribable enthusiasm which is now being displayed for the Russian proletariat by the toiling and exploited masses of the East and West.

And this largely explains the brutal fury with which the imperialist robbers of the world have hurled themselves against Soviet Russia.

Pravda, Nos. 241 and 250
November 6 and 19, 1918

THE POLICY OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN RUSSIA [36]
(1920)

THREE years of revolution and civil war in Russia have shown that unless Central Russia and her border regions mutually support each other the success of the revolution and the liberation of Russia from the clutches of imperialism will be impossible. Central Russia, that hearth of world revolution, cannot hold out long without the assistance of the border regions, which abound in raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs. The border regions of Russia in their turn are inevitably doomed to imperialist bondage without the political, military and organisational support of more developed Central Russia. If the proposition is true that the more developed proletariat of the West cannot finish the world bourgeoisie without the support of the peasant East, which is less developed but which abounds in raw materials and fuel, the proposition is equally true that more developed Central Russia cannot complete the revolution without the support of the border regions of Russia, which are less developed but which abound in essential resources.

This circumstance has undoubtedly been taken into account by the Entente ever since the establishment of the Soviet government, when it (the Entente) pursued the plan of surrounding Central Russia economically by cutting off the more important border regions. And the plan of economically surrounding Russia has continued to be the unchanging basis of all the campaigns of the Entente against Russia, from 1918 to 1920, not excluding its present machinations in the Ukraine, Azerbaidjan and Turkestan.

All the more important is it, therefore, to achieve a firm alliance between the centre and the border regions of Russia.

And this means that definite relations, definite ties must be established between the centre and the border regions of Russia in

order to create an intimate and unshakable alliance between them.

What must these relations be, what forms must they assume?

In other words, what must be the policy of the Soviet government towards the national question in Russia?

The demand for the secession of the border regions from Russia as the form that should be given to the relations between the centre and the border regions must be rejected not only because it is contrary to the very definition of the establishment of an alliance between the centre and the border regions, but primarily because it is fundamentally opposed to the interests of the mass of the peoples both of the centre and of the border regions. Apart from the fact that the separation of the border regions would undermine the revolutionary might of Central Russia, which is stimulating the movement for the emancipation of the West and the East, the seceded border regions themselves would inevitably fall into bondage to international imperialism. One has only to glance at Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., which have seceded from Russia but which have retained only the semblance of independence, while in reality they have been converted into unconditional vassals of the Entente; one has only, finally, to recall the recent case of the Ukraine and Azerbaidjan, the former of which was plundered by German capital and the latter by the Entente, in order to realise the counter-revolutionary nature of the demand for the secession of the border regions under present international conditions. When a life-and-death struggle is being waged, and is spreading, between proletarian Russia and the imperialist Entente, only two alternatives confront the border regions:

Either they join forces with Russia, and then the toiling masses of the border regions will be emancipated from imperialist oppression;

Or they join forces with the Entente, and then the yoke of imperialism is inevitable.

There is no third solution. So-called independence of a so-called independent Georgia, Armenia, Poland, Finland, etc., is only an illusion, and conceals the utter dependence of these apologies for states on one group of imperialists or another.

Of course, the border regions of Russia, the nations and tribes

which inhabit these regions, just as all other nations, possess the inalienable right to secede from Russia, and if any of these nations decided by a majority to secede from Russia, as was the case with Finland in 1917, Russia, presumably, would be obliged to record the fact and sanction the secession. But the question here is not of the indubitable rights of nations, but of the interests of the masses of the people both in the centre and in the border regions; it is a question of the character—determined by these interests—of the agitation which our Party must carry on if it does not wish to repudiate itself and if it wishes to influence the will of the toiling masses of the nationalities in a definite direction. And the interests of the masses of the people render the demand for the secession of the border regions at the present stage of the revolution a profoundly counter-revolutionary one.

Similarly, what is known as national cultural autonomy must also be rejected as a form of alliance between the centre and the border regions of Russia. The experience of Austria-Hungary (the birthplace of national cultural autonomy) during the last ten years has revealed the ephemeral and lifeless character of national cultural autonomy as a form of alliance between the toiling masses of the nationalities of a multi-national state. Springer and Bauer, the authors of national cultural autonomy, who now sit lamenting over the spilt milk pail of their cunningly contrived national programme, are living corroborations of the fact. Finally, the spokesman of national cultural autonomy in Russia, the once famous Bund, was itself recently obliged officially to acknowledge the superfluousness of national cultural autonomy by publicly declaring that:

"The demand for national cultural autonomy, which was put forward under the capitalist system, loses all meaning in the conditions of a socialist revolution." (See *The Twelfth Conference of the Bund*, 1920, p. 21.)

There remains *regional* autonomy for border regions marked by specific social customs and national composition, as the only expedient form of alliance between the centre and the border regions, an autonomy which is designed to connect the border regions of Russia with the centre by federal ties. This is the Soviet form of autonomy proclaimed by the Soviet government from its very inception and now being practised in the border regions in

the form of administrative communities and autonomous Soviet republics.

Soviet autonomy is not a rigid thing fixed once and for all time; it permits of the most varied forms and degrees of development. It passes from narrow administrative autonomy (the Volga Germans, the Chuvashes and the Karelians) to a wider, political autonomy (the Bashkirs, the Volga Tatars and the Kirghiz); from wide political autonomy to a still wider form of autonomy (the Ukraine and Turkestan); and finally from the Ukrainian type of autonomy to the supreme form of autonomy—contractual relations (Azerbaidjan). This elasticity of Soviet autonomy constitutes one of its prime merits, for this elasticity makes it possible to embrace all the various types of border regions in Russia, which vary greatly in their levels of cultural and economic development. Three years of Soviet policy in the sphere of the national question in Russia have shown that in applying Soviet autonomy in its varying forms the Soviet government is on the right path, for this policy alone made it possible to lay a road to the remotest corners of the border regions of Russia, to arouse to political life the most backward and nationally diverse masses and to connect these masses with the centre by the most varied ties—a problem which not a single government in the world was solving, or even attempting to solve (being afraid to do so!). The administrative re-arrangement of Russia on the basis of Soviet autonomy has not yet been completed; the Northern Caucasians, the Kalmucks, the Cheremisses, the Vots, the Buryats, and others, are awaiting a settlement of the question. But no matter what aspect the administrative map of the future Russia may assume, and no matter what shortcomings there may have been in this field—and shortcomings there certainly were—it must be acknowledged that by undertaking its administrative reconstruction on the basis of regional autonomy Russia has made an extremely important stride towards rallying the border regions around the proletarian centre and bringing the government in closer contact with the broad masses of the peoples of the border regions.

But the proclamation of one form of Soviet autonomy or another, the enactment of corresponding decrees and ordinances, and even

the creation of governments in the border regions in the shape of regional Councils of People's Commissars of the autonomous republics, are far from being all that is required to consolidate the alliance between the border regions and the centre. In order to consolidate this alliance it is first of all necessary to put an end to the estrangement and isolation of the border regions, to their patriarchal manner of life and lack of culture and to the mistrustful attitude towards the centre which still persists in the border regions as a heritage of the brutal policy of tsarism. Tsarism deliberately cultivated patriarchal-feudal oppression in the border regions in order to keep the masses in a state of slavery and ignorance. Tsarism deliberately settled the best areas in the border regions with colonisers in order to force the natives into the worst areas and to intensify national enmity. Tsarism restricted, and at times simply suppressed, the native schools, theatres and educational institutions in order to keep the masses in intellectual darkness. Tsarism frustrated the initiative of the best members of the native population. Finally, tsarism suppressed all activity on the part of the populace of the border regions. Tsarism in this way implanted among the natives a profound mistrust, at times passing into direct hostility, for everything Russian. If the alliance between Central Russia and the border regions is to be consolidated, this mistrust must be removed and an atmosphere of mutual understanding and fraternal confidence created. But in order to remove this mistrust we must first help the populace of the border regions to emancipate themselves from the survivals of the feudal-patriarchal yoke; we must abolish—abolish in actual fact and not in word—all the privileges of the colonisers; we must enable the masses to taste of the material benefits of the revolution. In brief, we must prove to the masses that Central, proletarian Russia is defending their interests, and their interests alone; and this must be proved not only by resorting to repressive measures against the colonisers and the bourgeois nationalists, measures that are frequently incomprehensible to the masses, but primarily by a consistent and well-conceived economic policy.

Everybody is acquainted with the liberals' demand for universal

compulsory education. Communists in the border regions cannot be more Right than the liberals; they must put universal education into effect if they want to end the ignorance of the people and if they want to create closer spiritual ties between the centre of Russia and the border regions. But in order to do so we must develop local national schools, national theatres and national educational institutions and must raise the cultural level of the peoples of the border regions. For it need hardly be shown that ignorance and unenlightenment are the most dangerous enemies of Soviet government. We do not know what success is attending our work in this field generally, but we are informed that in one of the most important border regions the local People's Commissariat of Education is expending on the native schools only ten per cent of its available credits. If this is true, it must be confessed that in this field we have unfortunately not progressed much on the "old regime."

The Soviet government is not a government divorced from the people; on the contrary, it is the only government of its kind, a government which originated among the masses of Russian people and which is near and dear to the people. This in fact explains the unparalleled strength and resilience displayed by the Soviet government at critical moments. The Soviet government must become no less near and dear to the populace of the border regions of Russia. But to do so the Soviet government must first be comprehensible to them. It is therefore necessary that all Soviet organs in the border regions—the courts, the administration, the economic bodies, the direct organs of government (as also the organs of the Party)—should as far as possible be recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs, life, habits, and language of the native population; that the best people from among the native masses should be got to participate in these institutions; that the local toiling masses should be drawn into every sphere of administration of the country, including military formations, in order that the masses may see that the Soviet government and its organs are the products of their own efforts, the embodiment of their aspirations. Only in this way can an unbreakable spiritual contact

be established between the masses and the government, and only in this way can the Soviet government become comprehensible and dear to the toiling masses of the border regions.

Certain comrades regard the autonomous republics in Russia and Soviet autonomy generally as a temporary, if necessary, evil which must for certain reasons be tolerated, but which must be resisted so that it may one day be abolished. It need hardly be shown that such a view is essentially false and that at any rate it is entirely foreign to the policy of the Soviet government on the national question. Soviet autonomy is not an abstraction or artificial thing; still less is it an empty and declarative promise. Soviet autonomy is the most real and concrete way of uniting the border regions to Central Russia. Nobody will deny that the Ukraine, Azerbaidjan, Turkestan, the Kirghiz Republic, the Bashkir Republic, the Tatar Republic, and other border regions, since they are striving for the cultural and material prosperity of their masses, must have their native schools, courts, administration and government bodies recruited principally from among the native people. Furthermore, the real Sovietisation of these regions, their conversion into Soviet countries closely bound to Central Russia and forming with it one state whole, is *inconceivable* without the widespread organisation of local schools, without the creation of courts, administrative bodies, organs of government, etc., recruited from among people acquainted with the life and language of the population. But to conduct the schools, courts, the administration and organs of government in the native language means precisely putting Soviet autonomy into practice; for Soviet autonomy is but the sum of these various institutions enveloped in a Ukrainian, Turkestanian or Kirghiz form.

How, after this, can one seriously say that Soviet autonomy is ephemeral, that it must be resisted, and so forth?

One thing or the other:

Either the Ukrainian, Azerbaidjanian, Kirghiz, Uzbek, Bashkir and the other languages are a reality, and it is therefore absolutely essential to develop in these regions native schools, courts, administrative bodies and organs of government recruited from among native people—in which case Soviet autonomy in these regions must be put into effect in its entirety, without any reservations whatsoever;

Or the Ukrainian, Azerbaidjanian, etc., languages are a pure fiction, and therefore schools and other institutions in the native language are unnecessary—in which case Soviet autonomy must be discarded as useless lumber.

The search for a third way is due either to ignorance of the subject or to deplorable superficiality.

One of the most serious obstacles to the realisation of Soviet autonomy is the acute shortage of intellectual forces of local origin in the border regions, the shortage of instructors in every branch of Soviet and Party work without exception. This shortage cannot but hamper both educational and revolutionary constructive work in the border regions. But for this very reason it would be unwise and harmful to alienate the all too few groups of native intellectuals, who perhaps would like to serve the masses of the people but are unable to do so, perhaps because, not being Communists, they believe themselves to be surrounded by an atmosphere of mistrust and are afraid of possible measures of repression. The policy of drawing such groups into Soviet work, the policy of recruiting them for economic, agrarian, food-administrative and similar posts, with the purpose of their gradual Sovietisation, may be successfully applied. For it will hardly be maintained that these intellectual groups are less reliable than, let us say, the counter-revolutionary military experts who their counter-revolution notwithstanding were appointed to work at important posts and were subsequently Sovietised.

But the employment of national groups of intellectuals will still be far from sufficient to satisfy the demand for instructors. We must simultaneously develop in the border regions a wide network of lecture courses and schools on every branch of administration in order to create cadres of instructors from among local people. For it is clear that without such cadres the organisation of native schools, courts, administration and other institutions in the native tongue will be difficult in the extreme.

A no less serious obstacle to the realisation of Soviet autonomy

is the precipitance, at times assuming the form of gross tactlessness, displayed by certain comrades in the matter of Sovietising the border regions. When such comrades, in regions which are a whole historical period behind Central Russia, in regions where the mediaeval order has not yet been wholly abolished, take upon themselves the "heroic task" of applying "pure communism," we may safely say that no good will come of such cavalry raids, of "communism" of this kind. We should like to remind our comrades of the point in our programme which says:

"The Communist Party of Russia adopts the historical class viewpoint, and in this takes into consideration the stage of historical development of the given nation: whether it is evolving from mediaevalism to bourgeois democracy, or from bourgeois democracy to Soviet or proletarian democracy, etc."

And further:

"In any case, the proletariat of the nations which have been oppressing nations must exercise special caution and pay special attention to the survivals of national sentiment among the toiling masses of oppressed or non-sovereign nations." (See *Programme of the Russian Communist Party.*)

That means that if, for instance, the direct method of appropriating superfluous dwelling space in Azerbaidjan tends to alienate from us the Azerbaidjanian masses, who regard the home, the domestic hearth, as holy and inviolable, it is obvious that the direct method of appropriating superfluous dwelling space must be replaced by an indirect method of achieving the same end. Or further if, for instance, the Daghestanian masses, who are profoundly imbued with religious prejudices, follow the Communists "on the basis of the Shariah," [1] it is obvious that the direct method of combating religious prejudices in this country must be replaced by indirect and more cautious methods. And so on, and so forth.

In brief, cavalry raids with the object of "immediately communising" the backward masses of the people must be discarded for a cautious and well-conceived policy of gradually drawing these masses into the general stream of Soviet development.

Such in general are the practical conditions necessary for realising Soviet autonomy, the introduction of which will bring about closer spiritual relations and a firm revolutionary alliance between the centre and the border regions of Russia.

[1] The Mohammedan code.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Soviet Russia is performing an experiment without parallel anywhere in the world in organising the co-existence of a number of nations and tribes within a single proletarian state on a basis of mutual confidence and voluntary and fraternal good-will. Three years of revolution show that this experiment has every chance of success. But this experiment can be certain of complete success only if our practical policy with regard to the national problem in the various localities does not run counter to the demands of Soviet autonomy already proclaimed in its varied forms and degrees of application, and if every practical measure we take in the various localities contributes to bringing the masses of the people in the border regions to partake of a higher, proletarian spiritual and material culture in forms which correspond to the social habits and national features of these masses.

And this will be a guarantee of the consolidation of the revolutionary alliance between Central Russia and the border regions of Russia against which all the machinations of the Entente will suffer shipwreck.

Pravda, No. 226
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THESES ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

Presented to the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, Endorsed by the Central Committee
(1921)

I. The Capitalist System and National Oppression

1. Modern nations are a product of a definite epoch—the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of the abolition of feudalism and the development of capitalism was also the process of formation of people into nations. The British, French, Germans and Italians formed into nations during the victorious march of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.

2. Where the formation of nations on the whole coincided in time with the formation of centralised states, the nations naturally became invested in a state integument and developed into independent bourgeois national states. Such was the case with Great Britain (without Ireland), France and Italy. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the formation of centralised states, accelerated by the exigencies of self-defence (against the invasions of the Turks, Mongols and others), took place prior to the break-up of feudalism and therefore prior to the formation of nations. Here, as a result, the nations did not, and could not, develop into national states, but formed into several mixed, multi-national bourgeois states, consisting usually of one powerful, dominant nation and several weak, subject nations. Such are Austria, Hungary and Russia.

3. National states, such as France and Italy, depending at first mainly on their own national forces, were generally speaking unacquainted with national oppression. In contradistinction, the multi-national states, based as they are on the domination of one

nation—or rather of its ruling class—over the other nations, were the original home and the chief scene of national oppression and national movements. The contradictions between the interests of the ruling nations and the interests of the subject nations are such that unless they are solved the stable existence of multi-national states becomes impossible. The tragedy of the multi-national bourgeois state is that it is unable to overcome these contradictions and that every attempt it makes to "level" the nations and "protect" the national minorities while preserving private property and class inequality usually ends in a new failure and a further intensification of national hostilities.

4. The subsequent growth of capitalism in Europe, the need for new markets, the search for raw materials and fuel, and, finally, the development of imperialism, the export of capital and the necessity of protecting the great sea and rail routes, have led, on the one hand, to the seizure of new territories by the old national states and the conversion of the latter into multi-national (colonial) states with the national oppression and national conflicts natural to multi-national states (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy) and, on the other hand, have intensified the strivings of the dominant nations in the old multi-national states not merely to preserve the old state boundaries but to extend them and to subjugate new (weak) nationalities at the expense of neighbouring states. In this way the national problem was enlarged and finally, in the very course of events, became merged with the general problem of the colonies; while national oppression was transformed from an internal question into an inter-state question, into a question of conflict (and war) between the "Great" imperialist powers for the subjugation of weak and non-sovereign nationalities.

5. The imperialist war, which exposed to their very roots the irreconcilable national contradictions and the internal insolvency of the bourgeois multi-national states, led to an extreme aggravation of national conflicts within the victorious colonial states (Great Britain, France, Italy), to the complete disintegration of the defeated former multi-national states (Austria, Hungary, Russia in 1917) and, finally—as the most "radical" solution of the national problem of which the bourgeoisie is capable—to the formation of

new bourgeois national states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Finland, Georgia, Armenia, etc.). But the formation of new independent national states did not result, and could not result, in the peaceful co-existence of nationalities, and did not eliminate, and could not eliminate, either national inequality or national oppression; for the new national states, based as they are on private property and class inequality, cannot exist a) without oppressing their own national minorities (Poland, which oppresses the White-Russians, Jews, Lithuanians and Ukrainians; Georgia, which oppresses the Ossets, Abkhasians and Armenians; Yugoslavia, which oppresses the Croats and Bosnians, and others); b) without extending their territories at the expense of their neighbours, which leads to conflict and war (Poland against Lithuania, the Ukraine and Russia; Yugoslavia against Bulgaria; Georgia against Armenia and Turkey, and so on); and c) without becoming subject financially, economically and militarily to the "Great" imperialist powers.

6. Thus the post-war period presents a gloomy picture of national enmity, inequality, oppression, conflict, war and imperialist brutality on the part of the nations of civilised countries both towards each other and towards the non-sovereign peoples: on the one hand we have a few "Great" Powers, which oppress and exploit the mass of dependent and "independent" (but in fact wholly dependent) national states, and the struggle of these powers among themselves for the monopoly of exploiting the national states; and on the other hand we have the struggle of the national states, dependent and "independent," against the intolerable oppression of the "Great" Powers; the struggle of the national states among themselves for the extension of their national territory; the struggle of the national states, each in particular, against its own oppressed national minorities; and, finally, the growth of the movement for emancipation on the part of the colonies against the "Great" Powers and the intensification of national conflicts both within these powers and within the national states, which as a rule contain a number of national minorities. Such is the "world picture" inherited from the imperialist war.

Bourgeois society has proved to be utterly bankrupt in the matter of solving the national problem.

II. The Soviet System and National Freedom

1. Whereas private property and capital inevitably disunite people, inflame national enmity and intensify national oppression, collective property and labour just as inevitably bring people closer and undermine national oppression. The existence of capitalism without national oppression is just as inconceivable as the existence of socialism without the emancipation of oppressed nations, without national freedom. Chauvinism and national conflict are inevitable, unavoidable, as long as the peasantry (and the petty bourgeoisie generally) is permeated with nationalist prejudices and follows the bourgeoisie; while, on the contrary, national peace and national freedom may be regarded as assured when the peasantry follows the proletariat, that is to say, when the dictatorship of the proletariat has been secured. Hence the triumph of the Soviets and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a basic condition for the abolition of national oppression, the institution of national equality and the guarantee of the rights of national minorities.

2. The experience of the Soviet revolution entirely bears out this assertion. The establishment of a Soviet system in Russia and the declaration of the right of nations to political secession have brought about a complete change in the relations between the toiling masses of the nationalities of Russia; they have undermined the old national enmity, deprived national oppression of its foundation, won for the Russian workers the confidence of their brothers of other nationalities, not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia, and have raised this confidence to a pitch of enthusiasm and readiness to fight for the common cause. The creation of Soviet republics in Azerbaidjan and Armenia has been productive of similar results and has put an end to national collisions and the "age-old" enmity between the Turkish and Armenian toiling masses and between the Armenian and Azerbaidjanian toiling masses. The same must be said of the temporary success of the Soviets in Hungary, Bavaria, Finland and Latvia. On the other hand, it may safely be said that the Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin and the Azerbaidjan and Armenian Republics could

not have been put on their feet without the elimination of national enmity and national oppression at home, and without the confidence and enthusiasm displayed towards them by the toiling masses of the nationalities of the West and the East. The consolidation of the Soviet republics and the abolition of national oppression are two aspects of one and the same process of emancipation of the toilers from imperialist bondage.

3. But the existence of the Soviet republics, even the smallest in size, represents a fatal menace to imperialism. This menace lies not merely in the fact that the Soviet republics, having broken away from imperialism, have been converted from colonies and semi-colonies into really independent states and have thereby deprived the imperialists of a certain part of their territories and revenues, but also, and primarily, in the fact that the very existence of the Soviet republics, and every step taken by these republics in the direction of suppressing the bourgeoisie and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a great piece of agitation against capitalism and imperialism, agitation for the emancipation of dependent countries from imperialist bondage, and an insuperable factor in the disintegration and disorganisation of capitalism in all its forms. Hence the inevitability of the struggle of the "Great" imperialist powers against the Soviet republics and the endeavours of the "Great" Powers to annihilate these republics. The history of the struggle of the "Great" Powers against Soviet Russia, in which they are raising against her one bourgeois border government after another and one group of counter-revolutionary generals after another, carefully blockading her and generally endeavouring to isolate her economically, furnishes eloquent testimony to the fact that under present international conditions, under the conditions of a capitalist encirclement, not a single Soviet republic taken alone can regard itself as secure against economic exhaustion and military destruction on the part of world imperialism.

4. Hence, in isolation, the existence of the various Soviet republics is uncertain and unstable, because of the menace to their existence offered by the capitalist states. The joint interests of the Soviet republics in the matter of defence, in the first place, the restoration of the productive forces shattered during the war, in the second

place, and the fact that the Soviet republics which are rich in food must come to the aid of the Soviet republics which are poor in food, in the third place, all imperatively dictate the political union of the various Soviet republics as the only means of escaping imperialist bondage and national oppression. Having liberated themselves from their "own" and "foreign" bourgeoisies, the national Soviet republics can defend their existence and defeat the combined forces of imperialism only by amalgamating themselves into a close political union, or not at all.

5. A federation of Soviet republics based on common military and economic affairs is that general form of political union which makes it possible a) to guarantee the integrity and economic development both of the individual republics and of the federation as a whole; b) to embrace the various social, cultural and economic conditions of the various nations and peoples, which are at different levels of development, and accordingly to apply one form of federation or another, and c) to bring about the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of the nations and peoples which have in one form or another thrown in their lot with that of the federation. The experience of Russia in applying various forms of federation, passing from federation based on Soviet autonomy (the Kirghiz Republic, the Bashkir Republic, the Tatar Republic, the Gortsi, Daghestan) to federation based on contractual relations between independent Soviet republics (the Ukraine, Azerbaidjan), with intermediate phases (Turkestan, White Russia), has fully proved the value and flexibility of federation as a general form of political union for the Soviet republics.

6. But federation may be durable, and the results of federation real, only if it is based on mutual confidence and the voluntary consent of the countries constituting the federation. If the R.S.F.S.R. is the only country in the world in which the experiment in the peaceable co-existence and fraternal collaboration of a large number of nations and peoples has succeeded, it is because it contains neither ruling nor subject peoples, neither mother countries nor colonies, neither imperialism nor national oppression. In the R.S.F.S.R. federation rests on mutual confidence and a voluntary desire for union on the part of the toiling masses of the various

nations. This voluntary character of the federation must absolutely be preserved in the future, for only a federation of this kind can serve as a transition stage to that supreme unity of the toilers of all countries in a single world economic system the necessity for which is growing more and more palpable.

III. Immediate Tasks of the Russian Communist Party

1. The R.S.F.S.R. and its allied Soviet republics are representative of a population of about 140,000,000 people. Of these the non-Great-Russian peoples amount to about 65,000,000 (Ukrainians, White-Russians, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Tadjiks, Azerbaidjanians, Volga Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Bokharans, Khivans, Bashkirs, Armenians, Chechens, Kabardians, Ossets, Circassians, Ingushes, Karachais, Balkarians,[1] Kalmucks, Karelians, Avarians, Darghis, Kazikumukhians, Kurins, Kumyks,[2] Maris, Chuvashes, Vots, Volga Germans, Buryats, Yakutians, etc.). The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, towards these peoples was to destroy every germ of statehood among them, to cripple their culture, restrict the use of their native tongue, hold them in a state of ignorance, and, finally, as far as possible, to Russify them. The effects of this policy are reflected in the low level of development and political backwardness of these peoples.

Now that the landlords and bourgeoisie have been overthrown and a Soviet government has been proclaimed by the masses of the people in these countries also, the task of the Party is to help the toiling masses of the non-Great-Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which is ahead of them, and to help them a) to develop and consolidate their own Soviet state system in forms consistent with the national character of these peoples; b) to organise their own courts, administrative bodies, economic organs and government organs functioning in the native language and recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs and psychology of the local population, and c) to develop a press, schools,

[1] The Chechens, Kabardians, Ossets, Circassians, Ingushes, Karachais, and Balkarians form the Gortsi group of peoples.

[2] The Avarians, Darghis, Kazikumukhians, Kurins, and Kumyks form the Daghestanian group of peoples.

theatres, clubs and cultural and educational institutions generally, functioning in the native language.

2. If from the 65,000,000 of the non-Great-Russian population we exclude the Ukraine, White Russia, a small part of Azerbaidjan, and Armenia, which in a more or less degree have passed through the period of industrial capitalism, there remain about 30,000,000, consisting principally of Turkic peoples (Turkestan, the greater part of Azerbaidjan, Daghestan, the Gortsi, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kirghiz, and others), who have not passed through a capitalist development, who do not, or practically do not, possess an industrial proletariat of their own, who in the majority of cases preserve the pastoral and patriarchal tribal form of life (Kirghizia, Bashkiria, the Northern Caucasus), or who have not yet progressed beyond a primitive semi-patriarchal, semi-feudal form of life (Azerbaidjan, the Crimea, etc.), but who have already been drawn into the common current of Soviet development.

The duty of the Party towards the toiling masses of these peoples (in addition to the duties set forth in Par. 1) is to assist them in eliminating the survivals of pariarchal-feudal relations and in joining in the work of building up a Soviet economic system on the basis of Soviets of toiling peasants, by creating among these peoples strong Communist organisations capable of utilising the experience gained by the Russian workers and peasants in Soviet and economic development and at the same time capable of adapting their constructive work to the peculiarities of the concrete economic conditions, class structure, culture and habits of each particular people, instead of mechanically transplanting the economic measures of Central Russia, which are adapted to a different, and higher, stage of economic development.

3. If from these 30,000,000, consisting principally of Turkic peoples, we exclude Azerbaidjan, the greater part of Turkestan, the Volga and the Crimean Tatar Republics, Bokhara, Khiva, Daghestan, a part of the Gortsi (Kabardians, Circassians, Balkarians) and several other peoples which have already become settled and permanently attached to a definite territory, there remain about 10,000,000 Kirghiz, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossets and Ingushes, whose lands until recently had been subject to colonisation by Russian

settlers, the latter having already seized the best of their arable land, systematically forcing them into the sterile desert. The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, was to settle these parts with the greatest possible number of kulaks from among the Russian peasants and the Cossacks, and to make the latter a reliable basis for Great-Power ambitions. This policy led to the gradual extermination of the natives (Kirghiz, Bashkirs) who had been forced into the sterile wilderness.

The duty of the Party in relation to the toiling masses of these peoples (in addition to the duties enumerated in Pars. 1 and 2) is to unite their efforts with the efforts of the toiling masses of the local Russian population in the struggle for emancipation from the kulaks in general and from the predatory Great-Russian kulaks in particular, to help them in every way to throw off the yoke of the kulak colonisers and thus to provide them with land suitable and essential for human subsistence.

4. In addition to the nations and peoples already mentioned, possessing a definite class structure and occupying definite territory, there exist within the R.S.F.S.R. various casual national groups, national minorities, interspersed among compact majorities of other nations, who in most cases neither possess a definite class structure nor occupy a definite territory (Letts, Esthonians, Poles, Jews, and others). The policy of tsarism was to exterminate these minorities by every possible means, including massacre (Jewish pogroms).

Now that national privileges have been abolished and the equality of nationalities established, and the right of national minorities to free national development is guaranteed by the very nature of the Soviet system, the duty of the Party towards the toiling masses of these national groups is to help them to make the fullest possible use of the right to free development which they have secured.

5. The development of Communist organisations in the border regions is taking place under rather peculiar circumstances, which tend to hinder the normal growth of the Party in these parts. On the one hand, the Great-Russian Communists working in these regions, who have grown up under the conditions of a "sovereign" nation, and who have never known national oppression, not in-

frequently minimise the importance of national peculiarities in Party work, or else ignore them altogether, and fail in their work to reckon with the peculiarities of class structure, culture, social life, and historical past of the given people, and so vulgarise and distort the policy of the Party on the national question. This circumstance leads to a deviation from communism towards the dominant-power spirit, the colonising spirit, the spirit of Great-Russian chauvinism. On the other hand, the native Communists, who have lived through the painful period of national oppression and have not entirely ceased to be haunted by the horrors of that period, not infrequently exaggerate the importance of national peculiarities in Party work, leave the class interests of the toilers in the background, or else simply identify the interests of the toilers of the given nation with the "general national" interests of that nation, failing to pick out the former from the latter and to base their Party work on them. This circumstance in its turn leads to a deviation from communism towards bourgeois-democratic nationalism, which at times assumes the form of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism (in the East).

The congress, emphatically condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, deems it necessary to point out the particular danger and the particular harm of the first deviation, the deviation towards the Great-Power spirit, the colonising spirit. The congress calls attention to the fact that unless colonising and nationalist survivals within the ranks of the Party are eliminated it will be impossible in the border regions to create strong, genuinely Communist organisations closely bound up with the masses and uniting within their ranks the proletarian elements of the native and Russian populations on the basis of internationalism. The congress therefore considers that one of the main tasks of the Party in the border regions is to eliminate the nationalist, and particularly the coloniser, vacillations among the Communists.

6. In connection with the successes achieved on the military fronts, and particularly since the liquidation of Wrangel, in some of the backward border regions which do not possess, or practically do not possess, an industrial proletariat, there is an increased urge

on the part of petty-bourgeois nationalist elements to join the Party for careerist purposes. These elements, realising that the Party is the virtual ruling power, usually adopt the colouring of communism and not infrequently strive to join the Party in whole groups, bringing with them a spirit of ill-concealed chauvinism and corruption; and the Party organisations in the border regions, which are generally weak, are not always able to withstand the temptation of "enlarging" the Party by the admission of new members.

The congress calls for a vigorous struggle against all pseudo-Communist elements who have wormed themselves into the party of the proletariat, and warns the Party against the temptation of "enlarging" itself by the admission of intellectual, petty-bourgeois nationalist elements. The congress considers that reinforcements to the ranks of the Party in the border regions must be recruited chiefly from among the proletarians and the poor and toiling peasants of those regions and that at the same time activities must be directed to strengthening the Party organisations in the border regions by improving the quality of the membership.

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REPORT ON THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

Delivered at the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 10, 1921

BEFORE proceeding directly to the concrete immediate tasks of the Party in connection with the national problem, we must first lay down certain premises without which the solution of the national problem is impossible. These premises relate to the appearance of nations, the origin of national oppression, the forms assumed by national oppression in the course of historical development, and, finally, the forms of solution of the national problem in the various periods of development.

There are three such periods.

The first period is the period which saw the break-up of feudalism in the West and the triumph of capitalism. The formation of people into nations occurred during this period. I am referring to such countries as Great Britain (without Ireland), France and Italy. In the West—in Great Britain, France, Italy, and partly in Germany—the period of the break-up of feudalism and the formation of people into nations on the whole coincided in time with the period which saw the appearance of the centralised states, and as a result the nations in their development became invested in state forms. And inasmuch as there were no other national groups of any considerable size within these states, such a thing as national oppression was not known. In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the process of formation of nationalities and the elimination of feudal disunity did not coincide in time with the process of formation of centralised states. I am referring to Hungary, Austria and Russia. In these countries capitalist development had not yet begun; it was perhaps only incipient; but the necessity of taking defensive measures against the invasions of the Turks, Mongols and other Oriental

peoples demanded that centralised states capable of withstanding the onslaught of the invaders should be formed without delay. And since in Eastern Europe the process of formation of centralised states proceeded more rapidly than the process of formation of people into nations, mixed states arose, each made up of several nationalities which had not yet formed themselves into nations but which were already united in a common state.

Thus, the first period is marked by the appearance of nationalities in the dawn of capitalism: in Western Europe we observe the birth of purely national states to which national oppression is unknown, whereas in the East we observe the birth of multi-national states with one more developed nation at the head and the remaining, less developed, nations in a state of political, and later of economic, subjection to the dominant nation. These multi-national states of the East were the birthplace of that national oppression which gave rise to national conflicts, national movements, the national problem and the various methods of solving that problem.

The second period in the development of national oppression and the methods of combating it coincides with the period which saw the appearance of imperialism; when capitalism, in its search for markets, raw materials, fuel and cheap labour power, and in the competition for the export of capital and the possession of the great rail and sea routes, breaks out of the confines of the national state and extends its territory at the expense of near and distant neighbours. In this second period, the old national states in the West—Great Britain, Italy and France—cease to be national states; in other words, by virtue of the seizure of new territories they become converted into multi-national, colony-owning states, and thereby come to be an arena for that national and colonial oppression which already exists in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe this period is marked by the awakening and envigoration of subject nations (Czechs, Poles, Ukrainians), which, as a result of the imperialist war, have led to the dissolution of the old bourgeois multi-national states and the formation of new national states enthralled to what are known as the Great Powers.

The third period is the Soviet period, the period of the destruction of capitalism and the abolition of national oppression; in which the question of ruling and subject nations, of colonies and mother countries, is being consigned to the archives of history; in which, on the territory of the R.S.F.S.R., we see nationalities which possess equality of rights and equal opportunities for development, but which still preserve a certain historical heritage of inequality owing to their economic, political and cultural backwardness. The substance of this inequality of nationalities consists in the fact that, as a result of historical development, we have received a heritage from the past by virtue of which one nationality, the Great-Russian nationality, is more developed politically and industrially than the other nationalities. Hence the existence of actual inequality, which cannot be eradicated in one year, but which must be eradicated, and eradicated by economic, political and cultural assistance being rendered to the backward nationalities.

These are the three periods of development of the national problem known to us historically.

The first two periods have one feature in common. It is that in both these periods the nationalities suffered oppression and enslavement, as a result of which the national struggle continued to be fought and the national problem remained unsolved. But there is also a difference between them. It is that in the first period the national problem did not extend beyond the boundaries of the various multi-national states and embraced only a few, mainly European, nationalities; whereas in the second period the national problem became converted from an internal problem of each particular state into a problem mutually affecting several states—into a problem of war between imperialist states waged with the object of retaining the non-sovereign nationalities under the sway of the latter and of subjugating new nationalities and tribes outside Europe. Thus the national problem, which was formerly of moment only in the more cultured countries, lost its isolated character in this period and merged with the general problem of the colonies.

The development of the national problem into a general problem of the colonies is not a historical accident. It is due firstly to the fact that during the imperialist war the imperialist groups of belligerent powers were themselves obliged to appeal to the colo-

nies, from which they recruited the man-power that went to form armies. Unquestionably, this process, by which the imperialists were inevitably constrained to appeal to the backward peoples of the colonies, could not but awaken in these tribes and peoples the desire for emancipation and for struggle. There is another factor which caused the national problem to extend, to develop into a general problem of the colonies and to spread over the whole surface of the globe, first in isolated sparks and then in the flames of the movement for emancipation. This factor was the attempt of the imperialist groups to dismember Turkey and put an end to her existence as a state. Turkey, the country which among the Mohammedan peoples is politically the most developed, could not reconcile herself to such a prospect. She raised the standard of war and rallied the peoples of the East against imperialism. A third factor was the appearance of Soviet Russia, whose struggle against imperialism has met with several successes and has naturally served to inspire the oppressed peoples of the East, awaken them and rouse them to the struggle, and thus make it possible to create a united front of oppressed nationalities, from Ireland to India.

These are the factors that in the second stage of development of national oppression resulted in the fact that bourgeois society, far from solving the national problem, far from bringing peace to the peoples, has fanned the spark of national struggle into the flames of a struggle of the oppressed peoples, colonies and semi-colonies against world imperialism.

Obviously, the only regime capable of solving the national problem, that is, of creating conditions which make possible the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of various peoples and tribes, is the regime of the Soviet government, the regime of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It need hardly be shown that under the rule of capital, private property in the means of production and the existence of classes, the equality of nations cannot be secured; that as long as the power of capital exists, as long as the struggle proceeds for possession of the means of production, there can be no equality of nationalities, just as there can be no collaboration between the toiling masses of the nations. History shows that the only way to

abolish national inequality, the only way to establish a regime of fraternal collaboration among the toiling masses of the oppressed and unoppressed peoples, is to abolish capitalism and to establish a Soviet system.

Further, history has shown that when individual peoples succeed in emancipating themselves both from their own national bourgeoisie and from the "foreign" bourgeoisie, that is to say, when they establish a Soviet system, they cannot, as long as imperialism prevails, carry on a separate existence and successfully maintain themselves without the economic and military support of neighbouring Soviet republics. The example of Hungary eloquently proves that, failing a political union of Soviet republics and their consolidation into a united military and economic force, it is impossible to withstand the united forces of world imperialism on either the military or the economic front.

A federation of Soviet republics is that desired form of political union, of which the R.S.F.S.R. is a living embodiment.

These, comrades, are the premises of which I desired to speak here first in order then to prove that it is essential for our Party to take definite steps in order to solve the national problem within the framework of the R.S.F.S.R.

Although under the Soviet regime in Russia and in the republics associated with Russia we no longer have ruling nationalities or subject nationalities, mother country or colonies, exploited or exploiters, nevertheless the national problem still exists in Russia. The crux of the national problem in the R.S.F.S.R. lies in the obligation to put an end to that backwardness (economic, political and cultural) of the nationalities which we have inherited from the past and to afford the backward peoples the opportunity of catching up with Central Russia politically, culturally and economically. Under the old regime, the tsarist government did not strive, and could not strive, to develop the political life of the Ukraine, Azerbaidjan, Turkestan, and the other border regions; it resisted the development of political life in the border regions, just as it resisted their cultural development, and endeavoured to assimilate the native populations forcibly. Furthermore, the old government, the landlords and the capitalists, have left us as a heritage such browbeaten peoples

as the Kirghiz, the Chechens and the Ossets, whose lands served as an object of colonisation by the Cossacks and kulak elements of Russia. These peoples were doomed to incredible suffering and to extinction. Moreover, the position of the Great-Russian nation, which was the dominant nation, has left its traces even on the Russian Communists, who are unable, or unwilling, to establish closer contact with the toiling native masses, to comprehend their needs and to help them emerge from their backward and uncivilised state. I am referring to those not very numerous groups of Russian Communists who, ignoring in their work the peculiarities of social life and culture in the border regions, at times tend towards Russian Great-Power chauvinism. Nor has the position of the non-Russian nationalities, which have suffered national oppression, failed to leave its traces on the native Communists, who are at times unable to distinguish the class interests of the toiling masses of their people from the so-called "national" interests. I am referring to the deviation towards local, native nationalism which is at times to be observed in the ranks of the native Communists and which in the East expresses itself in Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Finally, we must save the Kirghiz and Bashkirs and certain of the Gortsi tribes from extinction and provide them with necessary land at the expense of the kulak colonisers.

Having described the immediate tasks of the Party, I should like to pass to the general task, the task of adapting our Communist policy in the border regions to those specific conditions of economic life which are to be found chiefly in the East.

The fact of the matter is that a number of peoples, mainly Turkic peoples—about thirty million in all—have not passed, have not had time to pass, through the period of industrial capitalism, and consequently have no industrial proletariat, or practically no industrial proletariat, and as a result will have to pass from primitive forms of economy to the stage of Soviet economy without passing through the stage of industrial capitalism. In order to effect this difficult but by no means impossible operation, we must take into account all the peculiarities of economic life and even the history, social life and culture of these peoples. To transplant to the territories of these peoples the measures which were effective

and important here, in the centre of Russia, would be absurd and dangerous. It is clear that, when putting the economic policy of the R.S.F.S.R. into practice, we must unfailingly take into account all the peculiarities of economic life, class structure and historical past which mark the border regions. I do not stop to mention the elimination of such incongruities as, for instance, the demand made by the People's Commissariat of Food, in connection with the food quotas, for the delivery of pigs in Kirghizia, where the Mohammedan population have never possessed pigs. This example shows how unwilling people are to reckon with the peculiarities of customs which strike the eye of any traveller.

I have just been handed a note in which a reply to Comrade Chicherin's articles is requested [37]. Comrades, I consider that these articles of Chicherin, which I have read carefully, are nothing but literature. They contain four errors, or misconceptions. Firstly, Comrade Chicherin is inclined to deny the existence of contradictions between the imperialist states, to exaggerate the international unanimity of the imperialists and to overlook and underrate the internal contradictions between the imperialist groups and states (France, America, Great Britain, Japan, etc.), contradictions which do exist and give rise to war. He has exaggerated the factor of unanimity of the imperialist rulers and has minimised the force of the contradictions that exist within this trust. Yet these contradictions do exist, and it is on them that the activities of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs are based. Comrade Chicherin makes a second mistake. He underestimates the contradictions which exist between the dominant Great Powers and the newly formed national states (Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, etc.) which are in a position of financial and military subjection to the Great Powers. Comrade Chicherin has entirely overlooked the fact that, in spite of the subjection of these national states to the Great Powers, or, more truly, because of this subjection, there are contradictions between these Great Powers and these states, such as were revealed, for example, in the negotiations with Poland, Esthonia, etc. The whole purpose of the existence of the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs is to take account of these contradictions, to use them as a basis and to manoeuvre within these

contradictions. Comrade Chicherin underrates this factor in a most astonishing way. Comrade Chicherin's third mistake is that he speaks too much of national self-determination, which has in effect become an empty slogan easily adaptable to the use of the imperialists. Comrade Chicherin has strangely forgotten that we discarded this slogan two years ago. Our programme no longer contains this slogan. Our programme speaks not of national self-determination—an absolutely vague slogan—but of a better minted and more clearly defined slogan—the right of nations to political secession. These are two different things. Strangely enough, Comrade Chicherin in his articles does not take this fact into account, and as a result all his objections to a slogan which has become a vague slogan are sheer misfires. For neither in my theses nor in the programme of the Party is there a single word about "self-determination." What they speak of is the right of peoples to political secession. But for us at the present moment, when the movement for emancipation has flared up in the colonies, this slogan is a revolutionary slogan. Inasmuch as the Soviet states join in federation voluntarily, the right to secession remains unavailed of because the peoples that form the R.S.F.S.R. have themselves so willed. And inasmuch as we are concerned with colonies which are in the clutches of Great Britain, France, America and Japan, inasmuch as we are concerned with such subject countries as Arabia, Mesopotamia, Turkey, Hindustan, *i.e.*, countries which are colonies of the Entente, the slogan of the right of peoples to secession is a revolutionary slogan, and to abandon it would be playing into the hands of the Entente. The fourth basis for misconception is that Comrade Chicherin's articles contain no practical suggestions. It is easy, of course, to write articles; but when you entitle them "Against the Theses of Comrade Stalin," you must put forward something worthy of serious attention, some practical counter-proposals at least. Yet I have not found a single practical proposal in his articles worthy of attention.

I conclude, comrades. We have arrived at the following conclusions. Not only has bourgeois society proved incapable of solving the national problem, but in its attempts to "solve" it has inflated it and turned the national problem into a colonial problem and

has created against itself a new front stretching from Ireland to Hindustan. The only state capable of tackling and solving the national problem is a state based on collective ownership of the means and implements of production—a Soviet state. In the Soviet federal state there are no longer oppressed nationalities or ruling nationalities; national oppression is abolished. But in view of the virtual inequality (cultural, economic and political), inherited from the old bourgeois system, between the more civilised and the less civilised nationalities, the national problem assumes a form which demands the adoption of measures designed to foster the economic, political and cultural progress of the toiling masses of the backward nationalities and to give them the opportunity of catching up with the more advanced Central—proletarian—Russia. From this follow the practical proposals that constitute the third section of the theses on the national problem I have submitted. [*Applause.*]

REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION

Comrades, in the discussion on the national problem, the most significant feature of the present congress is that we have now passed from declarations on the national problem, via the administrative redivision of Russia, to a practical presentation of the problem. At the beginning of the October Revolution we confined ourselves to a declaration of the right of peoples to secede. In 1918 and 1920 our work was conducted along the lines of an administrative redivision of Russia according to nationality, with the object of establishing closer ties between the toiling masses of the backward peoples and the proletariat of Russia. And now, at this congress, we are placing the problem on a purely practical footing and asking what must be the policy of the Party towards the toiling masses and the petty-bourgeois elements within the autonomous regions and independent republics associated with Russia. I was therefore astonished by the statement made by Comrade Zatonsky that the theses submitted to you bear an abstract character. I have here in my hands his own theses, which for some reason or other he did not submit to the attention of the congress, and in which I have been unable to find a single proposal of a practical nature—literally not a single one, with the exception, perhaps, of

the proposal that the name "R.S.F.S.R." be replaced by the term "East-European," and the word "*Rossiskoye*" by the word "Russian" or "Great-Russian." [1] I have found no other practical proposals in these theses.

I now pass to the next question. I must say that I expected much more from the delegates who spoke. There are twenty-two border regions in Russia: some of these regions have undergone considerable industrial development and industrially differ very little from Russia; others have not passed through the phase of capitalism and differ radically from Central Russia; while still others are completely downtrodden. To cover in the theses the heterogeneous nature of these border regions in all its concreteness was impossible. One cannot demand that theses which concern the Party as a whole should bear only a Turkestanian character, or only an Azerbaidjanian or Ukrainian character. It is necessary to pick out and embody in the theses the features common to and characteristic of all the border regions and to abstract oneself from particulars. Man has not discovered any other way of drawing up theses. The non-Great-Russian nationalities must be ranged into several groups; this was done in the theses. The non-Russian nationalities number about 65,000,000 people. The feature common to all the non-Russian nationalities is that they are behind Central Russia in their development as states. Our duty must be to make every effort to help these nationalities—their proletarian and toiling elements—develop their own Soviet state life in their own tongue. This common feature is dealt with in the theses in the section on practical proposals. Further, if we proceed to give a more concrete definition to the peculiar features of the border regions, we must single out of the total of 65,000,000 non-Russian people the 30,000,000 or so members of the Turkic population who have not passed through capitalism. Comrade Mikoyan is wrong when he says that in certain

[1] There are two words in the Russian language which in English are both rendered by the word "Russian." The word *Russky* (*-aya, -oye*) pertains specifically to the Great-Russian people, which constitutes only one of the peoples inhabiting the country known in English as Russia. The word used of this country as a whole, of all its inhabitants as a whole, is *Rossisky* (*-aya, -oye*). For instance, R.S.F.S.R. should rightly be deciphered as the *Rossiskaya* Socialist Federative Soviet Republic.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

respects Azerbaidjan is superior to the Russian provinces. He is apparently identifying Baku with Azerbaidjan. Baku did not spring out of the depths of Azerbaidjan but was built from above, by the efforts of Nobel, Rothschild, Wischau, and others. As to Azerbaidjan itself, it is a country with the most backward, patriarchal-feudal relations. I therefore rank Azerbaidjan as a whole with the group of border regions which have not passed through capitalism and in relation to which specific methods will have to be applied in order to bring these border regions into the channel of Soviet economy. This is dealt with in the theses. There is also a third group, embracing not more than 8,000,000 or 10,000,000 people, principally pastoral tribes, in which tribal forms of life are still tenacious and which have not yet taken to agriculture. These chiefly consist of the Kirghiz, the population of the Northern part of Turkestan, the Bashkirs, the Chechens, the Ossets and the Ingushes. As regards this group of nationalities, it is first essential that we provide them with the necessary land. The Kirghiz did not get the floor here, the discussion was closed. They would have said more of the torments suffered by mountain Bashkiria, Kirghizia and by the Gortsi, who are dying out owing to lack of land. But what Safarov said here in this connection concerns only a group of 8,000,000 to 10,000,000 of the population. It would therefore be inept to extend the practical proposals made by Comrade Safarov to all the border regions, for these amendments have no significance whatever for the remaining non-Russian nationalities—and they amount to about 55,000,000. That is why, while not objecting to the concrete amendments, additions and improvements to individual clauses proposed by Safarov in regard to certain groups of nationalities, I must say that these amendments should not be made universal. Furthermore, I must make a remark regarding one of Comrade Safarov's amendments. He has allowed the phrase "national cultural self-determination" to creep into one of his amendments. This amendment contains the following:

"Before the October Revolution the colonial and semi-colonial peoples of the Eastern border regions of Russia were deprived by imperialist policy of all possibility of partaking in the cultural achievements of capitalist civilisation by means of their own national cultural self-determination, education in their own language," etc.

I must say that I am unable to accept this amendment, because it smacks of Bundism. National cultural self-determination is a Bundist formula. We have long ago abandoned the nebulous slogans of self-determination—there is no need to revive them. Furthermore, this whole phrase is a most unnatural concatenation of words.

I have here a note alleging that we Communists are cultivating the White-Russian nationality artificially. This is not true, because there is a White-Russian nation, which has its own language distinct from Russian, and it is therefore possible to raise the cultural level of the White-Russian people only in its native language. Such talk was heard some five years ago about the Ukraine and the Ukrainian nation. And only quite recently it was asserted that the Ukrainian Republic and the Ukrainian nationality are an invention of the Germans. But it is obvious that the Ukrainian nation exists, and it is the duty of Communists to develop its culture. We must not go counter to history. It is obvious that, although in the towns of the Ukraine Russian elements still predominate, in the course of time these towns will inevitably become Ukrainianised. About forty years ago Riga was a German town; but since towns grow by influx from the countryside, and the countryside is the guardian of nationality, Riga is now a purely Lettish town. About fifty years ago all the towns of Hungary bore a German character; now they are Magyarised. The same will be true of White Russia, in the towns of which non-White-Russians still predominate.

In concluding the reply to the discussion, I propose that the congress elect a committee, representative of the regions, for the purpose of giving more concrete form to those practical proposals in the theses which interest all our border regions. [*Applause.*]

THE NATIONAL QUESTION PRESENTED

(1921)

THE presentation of the national question given by the Communists essentially differs from the presentation favoured by the leaders of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals [38] and by all and every kind of "Socialist," "Social-Democratic," Menshevik, Socialist-Revolutionary and other party.

It is particularly important to stress four principal factors as being the most characteristic and distinguishing features of the new presentation of the national question, features which draw a line between the old and the new conceptions of the national question.

The *first factor* is that the national question, as a part, has become merged with the general question of the emancipation of the colonies, as the whole. In the era of the Second International it was usual to confine the national question to a narrow circle of questions relating exclusively to the "civilised nations." The Irish, the Czechs, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs, the Armenians, the Jews and a few other European nationalities—such was the circle of non-sovereign peoples whose fates interested the Second International. The tens and hundreds of millions of the Asiatic and African peoples suffering from national oppression in its crudest and most brutal form did not as a rule enter the field of vision of the "Socialists." The latter did not venture to place the white peoples and coloured peoples, the "uncultured" Negroes and the "civilised" Irish, the "backward" Indians and the "enlightened" Poles on one and the same footing. It was tacitly assumed that although it might be necessary to strive for the emancipation of the European non-sovereign nationalities, it was entirely unbecoming for "decent Socialists" to speak seriously of the emancipation of the colonies, which were "necessary" for the "preservation" of "civilisation." These apologies for Socialists did not even suspect

that the abolition of national oppression in Europe is inconceivable without the emancipation of the colonial peoples of Asia and Africa from the oppression of imperialism, and that the former is organically bound up with the latter. It was the Communists who first revealed the connection between the national question and the question of the colonies, who proved it theoretically and made it the basis of their practical revolutionary work. This broke down the wall between the white peoples and the coloured peoples, between the "civilised" and "uncivilised" slaves of imperialism. This circumstance considerably facilitated the co-ordination of the struggle of the backward colonies with the struggle of the advanced proletariat against the common enemy, imperialism.

The *second factor* is that the vague slogan of the right of nations to self-determination has been replaced by the clear revolutionary slogan of the right of nations and colonies to political secession and the formation of independent states. When they spoke of the right of self-determination, the moving spirits of the Second International as a rule never even hinted at the right to political secession—the right of self-determination was at best interpreted to mean the right to autonomy in general. The "experts" on the national question, Springer and Bauer, even went so far as to convert the right of self-determination into the right of the oppressed nations of Europe to cultural autonomy, that is, the right to have their own cultural institutions with all the *political* (and economic) power remaining in the hands of the dominant nation. In other words, the right of non-sovereign nations to self-determination was transformed into the privilege of the dominant nations to wield political power, and the question of political secession was excluded. The ideological leader of the Second International, Kautsky, associated himself in the main with this essentially imperialist interpretation of self-determination as given by Springer and Bauer. It is not surprising that the imperialists, realising how convenient for them this peculiarity of the slogan of self-determination is, proclaimed this slogan their own. As we know, the imperialist war, the aim of which was to enslave peoples, was fought under the flag of self-determination. Thus the vague slogan of self-determination was transformed from an instrument of emancipation of nations and

of equality of nations into an instrument for taming nations, an instrument for keeping nations in subjection to imperialism. The course of events in recent years all over the world, the logic of revolution in Europe, and, finally, the growth of the movement for emancipation in the colonies demanded that this slogan, which had become a reactionary slogan, should be cast aside and replaced by another slogan, a revolutionary slogan, which would serve to dissipate the atmosphere of mistrust entertained by the toiling masses of the non-sovereign nations towards the proletarians of the dominant nations and to clear the way for the equality of nations and for the unity of the toilers of all nations. Such a slogan is the slogan issued by the Communists demanding the right of non-sovereign nations and colonies to political secession. The advantages of this slogan are that:

1. It removes all grounds of suspicion that the toilers of one nation entertain annexatory ambitions towards the toilers of another nation, and therefore creates a basis for mutual confidence and voluntary amalgamation; and

2. It tears the mask from the imperialists, who, while mendaciously prating of self-determination, are endeavouring to keep the non-sovereign peoples and colonies in subjection and to retain them within their imperialist state, and thereby intensifies the struggle of these peoples and colonies for emancipation from imperialism.

It need hardly be shown that the Russian workers could not have gained the sympathies of their comrades of other nationalities in the West and the East if, having assumed power, they had not proclaimed the right of peoples to political secession, if they had not demonstrated in practice their readiness to give effect to this inalienable right of peoples, if they had not renounced their "rights," let us say, to Finland (1917), if they had not withdrawn the troops from Northern Persia (1917), if they had not renounced all claims to certain parts of Mongolia and China, and so on, and so forth.

It is equally unquestionable that the fact that the policy of the imperialists, skilfully concealed under the flag of self-determination, has recently been meeting with defeat after defeat in the East is due among other reasons to its having there encountered a grow-

ing movement for emancipation, which has arisen as a result of agitation in the spirit of the demand for the right of peoples to political secession. This is not understood by the heroes of the Second and Two-and-a-Half Internationals, who are zealously abusing the Baku "Council of Action and Propaganda" [39] for certain immaterial lapses committed by it; but it will be understood by anyone who takes the trouble to acquaint himself with the activities of this "Council" during the year it has been in existence and with the movement for emancipation of the Asiatic and African colonies during the last two or three years.

The *third factor* is the disclosure of the connection, the organic connection, between the national and colonial question and the question of the power of capital, the overthrow of capitalism and the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the period of the Second International the national question, narrowed to the extreme in its scope, was usually treated as an isolated question, unrelated to the future proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the national question would be settled "naturally," before the proletarian revolution, by means of a series of reforms within the framework of capitalism; that the proletarian revolution could be accomplished without a radical solution of the national problem, and that, *vice versa*, the national problem could be solved without the overthrow of the power of capital, without and prior to the victory of the proletarian revolution. This essentially imperialist view runs like a crimson thread through the works of Springer and Bauer on the national question. But the last decade has exposed the utter falsity and rottenness of this conception of the national question. The imperialist war has shown, and the revolutionary experience of recent years has again confirmed:

1. That the national and colonial questions are inseparable from the question of emancipation from the power of capital;

2. That imperialism (the highest form of capitalism) cannot exist without the political and economic enslavement of non-sovereign nations and colonies;

3. That the non-sovereign nations and colonies cannot be emancipated without the overthrow of the power of capital; and

4. That the victory of the proletariat cannot be a lasting one unless the non-sovereign nations and colonies are emancipated from the yoke of imperialism.

If Europe and America may be called the front, the scene of the main engagements between socialism and imperialism, the non-sovereign nations and the colonies, with their raw materials, fuel, food and vast store of human material, should be regarded as the rear, the reserve of imperialism. In order to win a war one must not only triumph at the front but also revolutionise the enemy's rear, his reserves. Hence the victory of the world proletarian revolution may be regarded as assured only if the proletariat is able to combine its own revolutionary struggle with the movement for emancipation of the toiling masses of the non-sovereign nations and the colonies against the power of the imperialists and for a dictatorship of the proletariat. This "trifle" was overlooked by the moving spirits of the Second and the Two-and-a-Half Internationals when they divorced the national and colonial question from the question of power in the period of growing proletarian revolution in the West.

The *fourth factor* is that a new element has been introduced into the national question—the element of real (and not merely juridical) equalisation of nations (helping and encouraging the backward nations to raise themselves to the cultural and economic level of the more advanced nations), as one of the conditions necessary for securing fraternal co-operation between the toiling masses of the various nationalities. In the period of the Second International they usually confined themselves to proclaiming "national equality"; at best they did not go beyond demanding the realisation of such equality. But national equality, in itself a very important political acquisition, runs the risk of remaining merely an empty phrase if adequate resources and opportunities for exercising this very important right do not exist. There can be no question that the toiling masses of the backward peoples are not in a position to exercise the right of "national equality" granted them to the degree that it can be exercised by the toiling masses of advanced nationalities. The actual inequality of nations (cultural and economic), which is a heritage of the past and which cannot be abolished in one or two years, makes its influence felt. This circumstance is particularly perceptible in Russia, where a number of nationalities

have never passed through capitalism, and some have not even entered the phase of capitalism, and have no proletariat, or practically no proletariat, of their own; where, in spite of the fact that complete national equality has already been established, the toiling masses of these nationalities are not in a position to make adequate use of the rights they have won in view of their cultural and economic backwardness. This inequality will make itself felt still more "on the morrow" of the victory of the proletariat in the West, when numerous backward colonies and semi-colonies, marked by the most varied levels of development, will inevitably appear on the scene. That is why it is essential that the triumphant proletariat of the advanced countries should render aid, real and prolonged aid, to the toiling masses of the backward nationalities in their cultural and economic development; that it should help them to rise to a higher stage of development and to catch up with the more advanced nationalities. Unless such aid is forthcoming it will be impossible to bring about the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of the toilers of the various nations and peoples within a single world economic system that are so essential for the final triumph of socialism.

But from this it follows that we cannot content ourselves with "national equality" and that "national equality" must be extended by means of measures for securing the real equality of nationalities, and that we must proceed to work out and put into effect practical measures in relation to:

1. The study of the economic conditions, social life and culture of the backward nations and peoples;
2. The development of their culture;
3. Their political education;
4. Their gradual and painless incorporation into the higher forms of economic life; and
5. The organisation of economic co-operation between the toilers of the backward and the advanced nationalities.

Such are the four principal factors which distinguish the new formulation of the national question as given by the Communists.

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THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE NATIONAL POLICY OF THE RUSSIAN COMMUNISTS

(1921)

THE strength of the October Revolution consists incidentally in the fact that, unlike the revolutions in the West, it rallied around the Russian proletariat the millions of the petty bourgeoisie, and above all its most powerful and most numerous stratum—the peasantry. As a result, the Russian bourgeoisie was isolated and left without an army, while the Russian proletariat was transformed into the arbiter of the destinies of the country. But for this the Russian workers could not have retained power.

Peace, the agrarian revolution and freedom for the nationalities—these were the three principal factors which served to rally the peasants of more than twenty nationalities in the vast expanse of Russia around the red flag of the Russian proletariat.

There is no need to speak here of the first two factors. Enough has been written about them in the literature on the subject. And indeed they speak for themselves. As to the third factor—the national policy of the Russian Communists—apparently its importance has not yet been fully realised. It would therefore not be amiss to say a few words on this subject.

To begin with, of the 140,000,000 people constituting the population of the R.S.F.S.R. (Finland, Esthonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland are excluded) the Great-Russians do not comprise more than 75,000,000. The remaining 65,000,000 consist of nationalities other than Great-Russians.

Furthermore, these nationalities mainly inhabit the border regions, which are most vulnerable from the military point of view; and these border regions abound in raw materials, fuel and foodstuffs.

Finally, these border regions are less developed than Central Russia (or not developed at all) from the industrial and military

point of view, owing to which they are not in a position to defend their independent existence without the military and economic assistance of Central Russia; just as Central Russia is not in a position to preserve its military and economic power without the assistance of the border regions in the way of fuel, raw materials and foodstuffs.

These circumstances, coupled with certain provisions in the national programme of the Communists, determined the character of the national policy of the Russian Communists.

The essence of this policy can be expressed in a few words: the renunciation of all "claims" and "rights" to regions inhabited by non-Russian nationalities; the recognition (not in word but in deed) of the right of these nationalities to exist as independent states; the formation of a voluntary military and economic union of these nationalities with Central Russia; the granting of aid to the backward nationalities in their cultural and economic development, without which what is known as "national equality" becomes an empty sound; and the basing of all this on the complete emancipation of the peasants and the concentration of the entire political power in the hands of the toiling elements of the border nationalities—such is the national policy of the Russian Communists.

It need hardly be said that when the Russian workers came to power they would not have been able to win the sympathy and confidence of their comrades of other nationalities, and above all of the oppressed masses of the non-sovereign nationalities, had they not in practice proved their readiness to put such a national policy into effect, had they not renounced their "rights" to Finland, had they not evacuated their troops from Northern Persia, had they not put an end to the claims of the Russian imperialists to certain regions of Mongolia and China and had they not assisted the backward nationalities of the former Russian Empire to develop their culture and political life in their own language.

This confidence alone could form the basis for that indestructible union of the peoples of the R.S.F.S.R. against which all "diplomatic" machinations and carefully executed "blockades" have proved impotent.

More, the Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak,

Denikin and Wrangel had they not enjoyed the sympathy and confidence of the oppressed masses of the border regions of former Russia. It must not be forgotten that the field of action of these mutinous generals was confined to the area of the border regions inhabited mainly by non-Russian nationalities, and the latter could not but hate Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel for their imperialist policy and policy of Russification. The Entente, intervening and supporting these generals, could rely only on the elements in the border regions who were the vehicles of Russification. And thereby it only inflamed the hatred of the population of the border regions for the mutinous generals and increased the sympathy of this population for the Soviet government.

This circumstance accounted for the intrinsic weakness of the Kolchak, Denikin and Wrangel rear, and therefore for the weakness of their fronts, that is, in the long run, for their defeat.

But the beneficial results of the national policy of the Russian Communists are not confined to the territory of the R.S.F.S.R. and the associated Soviet republics. They are also affecting, indirectly, it is true, the attitude of the neighbouring countries towards the R.S.F.S.R. The radical improvement in the attitude of Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, India and other Eastern border countries towards Russia, which was formerly a bogey to these countries, is a *fact* which even so valiant a politician as Lord Curzon does not now venture to dispute. It need hardly be shown that if the national policy above outlined had not been systematically put into effect within the R.S.F.S.R. during the four years the Soviet government has existed, this radical change in the attitude of the neighbouring countries towards Russia would have been inconceivable.

Such, in the main, are the results of the national policy of the Communists. And just now, on the fourth anniversary of Soviet government, when the arduous war is over, when extensive construction work has been started, and when one involuntarily looks back along the path traversed in order to encompass it at a single glance, these results become especially clear.

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THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Report Delivered at the Tenth All-Russian Congress of Soviets
December 26, 1922

COMRADES, several days ago, before this congress began, the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee received a number of decisions taken by Congresses of Soviets of the Transcaucasian Republics, the Ukraine and White Russia, on the desirability and necessity of amalgamating these republics into a single confederate state. The Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee has discussed this question and declares such an amalgamation to be timely. The question of amalgamating the republics therefore figures in the agenda of this congress.

The campaign for the amalgamation of the Soviet socialist republics began some three or four months ago. The initiative was taken by the Azerbaidjanian, Armenian and Georgian Republics, which were later joined by the Ukrainian and White-Russian Republics. The idea of the campaign is that the old contractual relations—the relations established by the convention between the R.S.F.S.R. and the other Soviet republics—have outlived themselves and are no longer adequate. The idea of the campaign is that it has become imperative that the old contractual relations should be replaced by relations based on closer union—relations which imply the creation of a single confederate state with corresponding confederate executive and legislative organs, with a Central Executive Committee and a Council of People's Commissars of the Union. In brief, what has hitherto been decided episodically, within the framework of contractual relations, it is now, in the course of the campaign, proposed to establish as something permanent.

What are the reasons impelling the republics towards amalgamation; what are the circumstances determining the necessity for amalgamation?

There are three groups of circumstances which render the amalgamation of the Soviet republics into a single confederate state inevitable.

The first group of circumstances consists of facts relating to the internal economic situation. Firstly, there is the meagreness of the economic resources remaining at the disposal of the republics after seven years of war, which obliges us to combine these meagre resources so as to employ them more rationally and to develop the main branches of production, those which form the backbone of Soviet power in each republic. Second, there is the historically determined natural division of labour, the economic division of labour, between the various regions and republics of our federation. For instance, the North supplies the South and East with textiles, the South and East supply the North with cotton, fuel, and so forth. The division of labour thus established between the regions cannot be eliminated by a mere stroke of the pen: it has been created historically by the whole course of economic development of the federation. And this division of labour, which renders the full development of individual regions impossible as long as the republics lead separate existences, is obliging our republics to knit themselves into a single economic unit. Thirdly, there is the fact that the principal means of communication in the federation, which are the nerve and backbone of any possible union, constitute a single system. It goes without saying that the means of communication cannot be left in a divided state in the hands of and subordinated to the interests of the individual republics; for that would convert the main nerve of economic life—transport—into a conglomeration of separate parts utilised without regard to plan. This circumstance also induces the republics to favour amalgamation into a single state. Finally, there is the meagreness of our financial resources. Comrades, it must be bluntly stated that our financial position now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet government, has far less opportunities for large-scale development than, for instance, under the old regime, which had vodka, as we will not have, that yielded 500,000,000 rubles per annum, and which was assured of foreign credits to the value of several hundred million rubles, which we also do not have. All this goes

to prove that we shall be unable with such meagre opportunities for financial development to solve the fundamental and urgent problems confronting the financial systems of our republics unless we rally our forces and unless we combine the financial strength of the various republics into a single whole.

Such is the first group of circumstances impelling our republics towards amalgamation.

The second group of circumstances rendering the amalgamation of the republics essential consists of facts relating to our international position. I am referring to our military position. I am referring to our relations with foreign capital through the Commissariat of Foreign Trade. I am referring, finally, to our diplomatic relations with the bourgeois states. It should be remembered, comrades, that in spite of the fact that our republics have happily emerged from the condition of civil war, the danger of attack from without is far from eliminated. This danger demands that our military front should be absolutely united, that our army should be an absolutely united army, particularly now that we have begun to undertake, not moral disarmament, of course, but a real, material reduction of armaments. Now that we have reduced our army to 600,000 men, it is particularly essential to have a single and unbreakable military front capable of guaranteeing the republic against external danger. Furthermore, apart from the military danger, there is a danger of the economic isolation of our federation. You know that after Genoa and the Hague [40], and after Urquhart [41], although the economic boycott of our republic failed, nevertheless we do not observe any large inflow of capital for the needs of our economy. There is a danger that our republics may become economically isolated. This new form of intervention, which is no less dangerous than military intervention, can be eliminated only by the creation of a united economic front of our Soviet republics in face of the capitalist encirclement. Finally, there is our diplomatic situation. You have all been witnesses of how recently, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference [42], the Entente states made every effort to isolate our federation. Diplomatically, they did not succeed. The organised diplomatic boycott of our federation was

broken. The Entente was forced to reckon with our federation and to a certain extent to beat a retreat.

There are no grounds for assuming that such and similar cases of diplomatic isolation of our federation will not be repeated. Hence the necessity for a united front along diplomatic lines also.

Such is the second group of circumstances impelling the Soviet socialist republics towards amalgamation.

Both the first and the second groups of circumstances have operated throughout the period of the existence of the Soviet government and operate to this day. Unquestionably, both our economic needs, of which I have just spoken, and our military and diplomatic needs in the field of foreign policy were felt before. But these circumstances assume insistent force only now, when the Civil War is ended, when the republics have secured the first opportunity of setting about their economic development and when they have for the first time fully realised the meagreness of their economic resources and the necessity of uniting both along internal, economic lines and along external lines. That is why now, in the sixth year of existence of the Soviet government, the question of the amalgamation of the independent Soviet socialist republics has become urgent.

Finally, there is a third group of facts which also call for amalgamation and which are associated with the character of the structure of the Soviet power and with the class nature of the Soviet power. The Soviet power is so constructed that, being international by its intrinsic nature, it systematically fosters the idea of unity among the masses and impels them towards amalgamation.

While capital, private property and exploitation disunite peoples, splitting them into hostile camps, an example of which is furnished by Great Britain, France, and even such small multi-national states as Poland and Yugoslavia, with their irreconcilable internal national contradictions, which eat at the very foundations of these states—while, I say, there, in the West, where capitalist democracy prevails and where the states rest on private property, the very basis of the state fosters national enmity, conflicts and struggle, here, in the realm of the Soviets, where the power is built not on capital, but on

labour, where the power is built not on private property, but on collective property, where the power is built not on the exploitation of man by man, but on hostility to such exploitation, here, on the contrary, the very nature of the government power fosters a natural striving on the part of the toiling masses towards unity in a single socialist family. Is it not a striking fact that whereas there, in the West, in the world of bourgeois democracy, we are witnessing the gradual decline and disintegration of the multi-national states into their component parts (as in the case of Great Britain, which will settle matters I know not how with India, Egypt and Ireland, or as in the case of Poland, which will settle matters I also know not how with her White-Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and Jews), here, in our federation, embracing no less than thirty nationalities, we are, on the contrary, witnessing a process of consolidation of political ties between the independent republics, a process which is leading to an ever closer union of independent nationalities into a single independent state. Here you have two types of political union, of which one type, the capitalist type, leads to the disintegration of the state into its component parts, while the second type, the Soviet type, on the contrary, leads to a gradual but stable amalgamation of formerly independent nationalities into a single independent state.

Such is the third group of circumstances impelling the various republics towards amalgamation.

What form should be given to the amalgamation of the republics? The basis of amalgamation is set forth in the resolutions received by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee from the Soviet republics of the Ukraine, White Russia and Transcaucasia.

The union will be made up of four republics: the R.S.F.S.R. as an integral federal unit, the Transcaucasian Republic, also as an integral federal unit, the Ukraine and White Russia. Two independent Soviet republics, Khorezm and Bokhara, which are not socialist republics, but people's Soviet republics, for the time being remain outside the union for the sole and exclusive reason that these republics are not socialist. I do not doubt, comrades, and I

hope that you also do not doubt, that these republics, as they internally develop towards socialism, will also come to form part of the confederate state which is now being constituted.

It might seem more expedient that not the R.S.F.S.R., as an integral federal unit, but the individual republics which make up the R.S.F.S.R. should join the union of republics, for which purpose the R.S.F.S.R. would presumably first have to be dissolved into its component parts. I think that this would be an irrational and inexpedient method and that it is precluded by the very course the campaign is taking. Firstly, this method would lead to the result that parallel with the process making for the amalgamation of the republics we should be having a process making for the decomposition of the already existing federal units, a process the effect of which would be that the truly revolutionary process of the amalgamation of the republics which has already begun would be turned topsy-turvy.

Secondly, this false method would result in a state of affairs in which, in addition to the eight autonomous republics, we should be obliged to separate out from the R.S.F.S.R. a specifically Russian Central Executive Committee and Russian Council of People's Commissars, which would lead to considerable organisational perturbations, which is entirely unnecessary and harmful at the present time, and which is not in the least demanded by either the internal or the external situation. That is why I consider that the participants in the amalgamation into the union must be the four republics: the R.S.F.S.R., the Transcaucasian Federation, the Ukraine and White Russia.

The treaty of union must be based on the following principles: Commissariats of Foreign Trade, Military and Naval Affairs, Foreign Affairs, Ways of Communication and Post and Telegraph shall be set up only within the Council of People's Commissars of the Union. The People's Commissariats of Finance, National Economy, Food, Labour, and Inspection shall continue within each of the contracting republics, but in such a way as to operate in accordance with the instructions of the corresponding central Commissariats of the Union. This is necessary in order that the forces of the toiling

masses of the republics may come under the joint aegis of the Union centre as regards food supply, the Supreme Council of National Economy, the People's Commissariat of Finance and the People's Commissariat of Labour. Finally, the remaining Commissariats, *i.e.*, the Commissariats of Home Affairs, Justice, Education, Agriculture, and so on—there are six in all—which are directly connected with the life, customs, the specific forms of land regulation, the specific forms of legal procedure and the language and culture of the peoples forming the republics, must remain independent Commissariats under the control of the Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the contracting republics. This is essential in order to provide a real guarantee for the freedom of national development of the peoples forming the Soviet republics.

Such, in my opinion, are the principles that must be made the foundation of the treaty shortly to be signed between our republics. Accordingly, I have to submit the following draft resolution, which has been approved by the Presidium of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee:

1. The amalgamation of the Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic, the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic, the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic and the White-Russian Socialist Soviet Republic into a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics shall be regarded as timely.

2. Amalgamation shall be based on the principles of voluntary consent and equality of status of the republics, and the right freely to leave the Union of Republics shall be reserved to each of them.

3. A delegation consisting of Comrades Kalinin, Trotsky, Stalin, Rykov, Kamenev, Tsurupa, Molotov, Sokolnikov, Sapronov, Pyatakov, Rudzutak, Said-Galiyev, Mukhtarov, Khalikov, Yanson, Mansurov and Rakhimbayev, in collaboration with the delegations from the Ukraine, the Transcaucasian Republic and White Russia, shall be instructed to draw up a draft declaration on the formation of a Union of Republics, setting forth the considerations which dictate an amalgamation of the republics into a single confederate state.

4. The delegation shall be instructed to draw up the conditions of entry of the R.S.F.S.R. into the Union of Republics and shall be charged, when examining the treaty of union, to adhere to the following principles:

a) The formation of appropriate Union legislative and executive organs;

b) The amalgamation of the Commissariats of Military and Naval Affairs, Ways of Communication, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Post and Telegraph;

c) The subordination of the Commissariats of Finance, Food, National Economy, Labour, and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the contracting republics to the instructions of the corresponding Commissariats of the Union of Republics;

d) The complete guarantee of the interests of the national development of the peoples belonging to the contracting republics.

5. Prior to its consideration by the First Congress of the Union of Republics, the draft treaty shall be submitted for the approval of the All-Russian Central Executive Committee as represented by its Presidium.

6. The delegation shall be empowered, in accordance with the conditions of amalgamation approved by the All-Russian Central Executive Committee, to conclude a treaty between the R.S.F.S.R. and the socialist Soviet republics of the Ukraine, Transcaucasia and White Russia for the formation of a Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

7. The treaty shall be submitted for ratification to the First Congress of the Union of Republics.

This is the resolution I submit for your consideration.

Comrades, since the time the Soviet republics were formed the states of the world have split into two camps: the camp of socialism and the camp of capitalism. In the camp of capitalism we have imperialist war, national enmity, oppression, colonial slavery and chauvinism. In the camp of the Soviets, the camp of socialism, on the contrary, we have mutual confidence, national equality and the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples. Capitalist democracy has been endeavouring for decades to solve national contradictions by combining the interests of the free development of nationalities with the system of exploitation. But so far it has not succeeded, and it will not succeed. On the contrary, the skein of national contradictions is becoming more and more entangled, threatening the end of capitalism. Here alone, in the world of the Soviets, in the camp of socialism, has it been possible to tear up the very roots of national oppression and to establish mutual confidence and fraternal collaboration between peoples. And only when the Soviets succeeded in this did it become possible to build up our federation and to defend it against the attack of the enemies, both internal and external. Five years ago the Soviet government succeeded in laying a foundation for the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples. Now, in deciding here on the desirability and necessity of amalgamation, we are about to erect on this foundation a new edifice, by founding a new and mighty confederate power of the toilers. The will of the peoples of our republics, who recently assembled at their congresses and unanimously resolved to form a Union of Republics, is incontestable proof of the fact that the cause of amalgamation is pursuing

the right lines and that it is based on the great principle of voluntary consent and equality of peoples. Let us hope, comrades, that by forming our confederate republic we shall be creating a reliable bulwark against international capitalism and that the new confederate state will be another decisive step towards the amalgamation of the toilers of the whole world into a single World Socialist Soviet Republic. [*Prolonged applause. The "International" is sung.*]

THE AMALGAMATION OF THE SOVIET REPUBLICS

Report Delivered at the First Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
December 30, 1922

COMRADES, this day marks a turning point in the history of the Soviet government. It places a landmark between the old period, now past, when the Soviet republics, although they acted in common, yet each followed its own path and was concerned primarily with its own preservation, and the new period, already begun, when an end is being put to the isolated existence of each of the Soviet republics, when the republics are being amalgamated into a single confederate state in order successfully to cope with economic disruption, and when the Soviet government is concerned not only with its preservation, but with developing into an important international power, capable of influencing the international situation and of modifying it in the interests of the toilers.

What was the Soviet government five years ago? A small, almost unnoticeable entity, which evoked the derision of its enemies and the pity of many of its friends. It was a period of disruption, when the Soviet government depended not so much upon its own strength as upon the impotence of its adversaries; when the foes of the Soviet government, split into two coalitions, the Austro-German coalition and the Anglo-French coalition, were engaged in mutual warfare and were not in a position to turn their weapons against the Soviet government. In the history of the Soviet government this was a period of wartime disruption. But, under the blows of Kolchak and Denikin, the Soviet government created the Red Army and successfully emerged from its state of collapse.

The second period in the history of the Soviet government then began, the period which marked the fight against economic disruption. This period is by no means over yet, but it has already borne

fruit, for we find that during this period the Soviet government successfully coped with the famine which overtook the country last year; during this period we witnessed a considerable advance in agriculture and an important revival of the light industries. Cadres of industrial leaders have already come to the fore and are the object of our hope and trust. But in order finally to overcome economic disruption all this is far from enough. In order to cope with disruption and to eliminate it, the forces of all the Soviet republics must be pooled; all the financial and economic potentialities of the republics must be devoted to the cause of re-establishing the basic branches of our industry. Hence the necessity for amalgamating the Soviet republics into a single confederate state. This day witnesses the amalgamation of our republics into a single state for the purpose of pooling all forces for the restoration of our economy.

The military period of combating the disruption produced by the war gave us the Red Army, one of the foundations of the life of the Soviet government. The next period, the period marking the struggle against economic disruption, is giving us a new framework of state life—the Union of Soviet Republics, which will undoubtedly advance the cause of restoring Soviet economy.

What is the Soviet government now? A great toilers' power, evoking among our enemies not derision but gnashing of teeth.

Such is the restrospect of the development of the Soviet government during the five years of its existence.

But, comrades, today is not only a day of retrospect, it is also a day which marks the triumph of the new Russia over the old Russia, the Russia which was the gendarme of Europe and the hangman of Asia. Today is a day of triumph for the new Russia, which has smashed the chains of national oppression, organised victory over capital, created a dictatorship of the proletariat, awakened the peoples of the East, inspired the workers of the West, transformed the red flag from a Party banner into a state banner, and rallied around that banner the peoples of the Soviet republics in order to unite them into a single state, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the prototype of the future World Soviet Socialist Republic.

We Communists are often abused and accused of being unable

to build. Let the history of the Soviet government during these five years serve as a proof that Communists are also able to build. Let today's Congress of Soviets, whose mission it is to ratify the declaration and treaty of the Union of Republics, adopted yesterday at the conference of plenipotentiary delegations, let this Union Congress demonstrate to all who have not yet lost every whit of understanding that Communists are able to build the new just as well as they are able to destroy the old.

Here, comrades, is the declaration adopted yesterday at the conference of plenipotentiary delegations. I shall read it:

Declaration of the Constitution of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Since the formation of the Soviet republics the states of the world have been split into two camps: the camp of capitalism and the camp of socialism.

There, in the camp of capitalism, we have national animosity and inequality, colonial slavery and chauvinism, national oppression and pogroms, imperialist brutalities and wars.

Here, in the camp of socialism, we have mutual confidence and peace, national freedom and equality, the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples.

The attempts made by the capitalist world during the course of decades to solve the problem of nationalities by combining the free development of peoples with the system of exploitation of man by man have proved fruitless. On the contrary, the skein of national contradictions is becoming more and more entangled and is threatening the very existence of capitalism. The bourgeoisie has proved itself utterly incapable of bringing about the collaboration of peoples.

Only in the camp of the Soviets, only under the dictatorship of the proletariat, which has rallied the majority of the population around itself, has it proved possible to abolish national oppression root and branch, to create an atmosphere of mutual confidence, and to lay the foundations for the fraternal collaboration of peoples.

It was thanks to these circumstances alone that the Soviet republics were able to beat off the attacks of the imperialists of the world, both domestic and foreign; it was thanks to these circumstances alone that they successfully managed to put an end to the Civil War, to preserve their existence and to commence peaceful economic construction.

But the years of war have left their traces. Ruined fields, idle factories, shattered productive forces and exhausted economic resources left as a heritage by the war render inadequate the individual efforts of the individual republics to build up their economy. The restoration of the national economy has proved to be impossible while the republics continue to lead separate existences.

On the other hand, the instability of the international situation and the

danger of new attacks render inevitable the creation of a united front of the Soviet republics in face of the capitalist encirclement.

Finally, the very structure of Soviet government, which is international in its class nature, impels the toiling masses of the Soviet republics to unite into one socialist family.

All these circumstances imperatively demand the amalgamation of the Soviet republics into a single confederate state, capable of creating external security and ensuring internal economic progress and the unhampered national development of the peoples.

The will of the peoples of the Soviet republics, who recently assembled at their Congresses of Soviets and unanimously resolved to form a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, is a sure pledge that this Union is a voluntary association of peoples enjoying equal status, that each republic is guaranteed the right of freely seceding from the Union, that admission to the Union is open to all socialist Soviet republics, whether now existing or hereafter to arise, that the new confederate state will prove itself a worthy crown to the foundation for the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of peoples laid in October 1917, and that it will serve as a reliable bulwark against world capitalism and a new and decisive advance towards the amalgamation of the workers of all countries into a World Socialist Soviet Republic.

Declaring all this to the world, and solemnly proclaiming the firmness of the foundations of the Soviet government as expressed in the constitutions of the socialist Soviet republics by whom we have been empowered, we, the delegates of these republics, acting in accordance with our mandates, have resolved to conclude a treaty for the constitution of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Here is the text of the treaty which was adopted by this same conference:

Treaty
For the Constitution of a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

The Russian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (R.S.F.S.R.), the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic (Ukr. S.S.R.), the White-Russian Socialist Soviet Republic (W.R.S.S.R.) and the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic (T.S.F.S.R.—Georgia, Azerbaidjan and Armenia) have concluded the present treaty of union providing for amalgamation into a single confederate state—the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics—on the following terms:

1. The competence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, as represented by its supreme organs, shall extend to the following:

a) representation of the Union in international relations;
b) modification of the external boundaries of the Union;
c) conclusion of treaties providing for the admission of new republics into the Union;
d) declaration of war and conclusion of peace;
e) floating of state loans abroad;
f) ratification of international treaties;
g) establishment of systems of foreign and domestic trade;
h) determination of the principles and the general plan of the national economy of the Union as a whole and conclusion of concessionary agreements;
i) regulation of transport, post and telegraph;
j) determination of the principles of organisation of the armed forces of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics;
k) ratification of the joint state budget of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, establishment of monetary, currency and credit systems and the systems of taxation for the Union as a whole and for the republics and localities;
l) determination of the general principles of land regulation and land tenure and also of utilisation of mineral wealth, forests and waters throughout the territory of the Union;
m) enactment of legislation on resettlement for the Union generally;
n) determination of the principles of court structure and court procedure and enactment of civil and criminal legislation for the Union;
o) enactment of fundamental legislation on labour;
p) determination of general principles of public education;
q) adoption of general measures for the protection of public health;
r) establishment of systems of weights and measures;
s) organisation of statistics for the Union generally;
t) enactment of all fundamental legislation relating to citizenship of the Union and the rights of foreigners;
u) exercise of the right of general amnesty;
v) annulment of decisions of Congresses of Soviets, Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the confederate republics violating the treaty of union.

2. The supreme governing body in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and, in the intervals between Congresses, the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

3. The Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall consist of representatives from the town Soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 25,000 voters and of representatives from the gubernia Congresses of Soviets on the basis of one deputy for every 125,000 inhabitants.

4. Delegates to the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be elected at the gubernia Congresses of Soviets.

5. Ordinary Congresses of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be summoned by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics once a year; extraordinary Congresses shall be summoned by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics at its own discretion or upon the demand of not less than two of the confederate republics.

6. The Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall elect a Central Executive Committee consisting of representatives of the confederate republics in proportion to the population of each and to a total number of 371 members.

7. The ordinary sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be convened three times a year. Extraordinary sessions shall be convened on a decision of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union or upon the demand of the Council

of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, or of the Central Executive Committee of one of the confederate republics.

8. The Congresses of Soviets and the sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be summoned in the capitals of the confederate republics in accordance with procedure to be established by the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

9. The Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall elect a Presidium which shall be the supreme organ of government in the intervals between the sessions of the Central Executive Committee of the Union.

10. The Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be elected to the number of 19 members, from among whom the Central Executive Committee of the Union shall elect four chairmen of the Central Executive Committee of the Union corresponding to the number of confederate republics.

11. The executive organ of the Central Executive Committee of the Union shall be the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (the C.P.C. of the Union), which shall be elected by the Central Executive Committee of the Union for the period of the mandate of the latter, and shall consist of:

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union;
The Vice-Chairmen;
The People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs;
The People's Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs;
The People's Commissar of Foreign Trade;
The People's Commissar of Ways of Communication;
The People's Commissar of Post and Telegraph;
The People's Commissar of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection;
The Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy;
The People's Commissar of Labour;
The People's Commissar of Food;
The People's Commissar of Finance.

12. In order to establish revolutionary law within the territories of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and to unite the efforts of the confederate republics in combating counter-revolution, a supreme court shall be set up under the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which shall exercise the functions of supreme judicial control, and a joint organ of State Political Administration under the Council of People's Commissars of the Union, the Chairman of which shall be a member of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union but only in a consultative capacity.

13. The decrees and ordinances of the C.P.C. of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be binding on all the confederate republics and shall have direct effect throughout the territory of the Union.

14. The decrees and ordinances of the Central Executive Committee and of the C.P.C. of the Union shall be published in the languages in common use in the confederate republics (Russian, Ukrainian, White-Russian, Georgian, Armenian and Turkic).

15. The Central Executive Committees of the confederate republics may protest the decrees and ordinances of the C.P.C. of the Union to the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, without however suspending their operation.

16. Decisions and orders of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be annulled only by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and its Presidium; orders of the various People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be annulled by the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, its Presidium, or the C.P.C. of the Union.

17. Orders of the People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics may be suspended by the Central Executive Committees or the Presidiums of the Central Executive Committees of the confederate republics only in exceptional cases, if the said orders are in obvious disharmony with the decisions of the Council of People's Commissars or the Central Executive Committee of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Upon suspending an order the Central Executive Committee or the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the confederate republics shall immediately bring the fact to the attention of the Council of People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the People's Commissar of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics concerned.

18. The Councils of People's Commissars of the confederate republics shall consist of:

The Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars;
The Vice-Chairman;
The Chairman of the Supreme Council of National Economy;
The People's Commissar of Agriculture;
The People's Commissar of Food;
The People's Commissar of Finance;
The People's Commissar of Labour;
The People's Commissar of Home Affairs;
The People's Commissar of Justice;
The People's Commissar of Workers' and Peasants' Inspection;
The People's Commissar of Education;
The People's Commissar of Health;
The People's Commissar of Social Insurance;
The People's Commissar of National Affairs;

and also, in a consultative capacity, representatives of the Union People's Commissariats of Foreign Affairs, Military and Naval Affairs, Foreign Trade, Ways of Communication and Post and Telegraph.

19. The Supreme Councils of National Economy and the People's Commissariats of Food, Finance, Labour and Workers' and Peasants' Inspection of the confederate republics, while being directly subordinate to the Central Executive Committees and Councils of People's Commissars of the confederate republics, shall be guided in their activities by the instructions of the corresponding People's Commissars of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

20. Each of the republics forming part of the Union shall have its own budget which shall constitute an integral part of the general budget of the Union and shall be subject to endorsement by the Central Executive Committee of the Union. The budgets of the republics, both revenues and ex-

penditures, shall be fixed by the Central Executive Committee of the Union. The items of revenue and the amounts of deductions to be made from revenues for the purpose of constituting the budgets of the confederate republics shall be determined by the Central Executive Committee of the Union.

21. A common Union citizenship shall be established for all citizens of the confederate republics.

22. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall have its flag, emblem and state seal.

23. The capital of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be the city of Moscow.

24. The confederate republics shall amend their constitutions in conformity with the present treaty.

25. The ratification of and the introduction of all amendments and additions to the treaty of union shall lie within the exclusive competence of the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

26. Each of the confederate republics shall retain the right of unhampered secession from the Union.

Comrades, upon the instructions of the conference of plenipotentiary delegations of the Soviet republics I have to request you to endorse the texts I have just read of the declaration and the treaty for the constitution of a Union of Soviet Republics. Comrades, I propose that you adopt them with the unanimity customary to Communists and in doing so add a new chapter to the history of mankind. [*Applause.*]

THESES ON NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE DEVELOPMENT

Approved for the Twelfth Party Congress by the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party
(1923)

I

1. Even as early as the last century the development of capitalism betrayed a tendency to internationalise the means of production and exchange, to eliminate national aloofness, to bring peoples into closer economic relations, and gradually to merge vast territories into a single connected whole. The further development of capitalism, the development of the world market, the perfection of the great rail and sea routes, the export of capital, and so on, still further accentuated this tendency and bound all kinds of peoples by the ties of international division of labour and universal interdependence. Inasmuch as this process was a reflection of a colossal development of productive forces, inasmuch as it helped to destroy national isolation and the contradiction between the interests of the various peoples, it was and is a progressive process, for it is creating the material conditions for a future world socialist economic system.

2. But this tendency developed in specific forms which were completely at variance with its intrinsic historical significance. The interdependence of peoples and the economic amalgamation of territories arose in the course of the development of capitalism not as a result of the collaboration of peoples enjoying equal status, but by means of the subjection of certain peoples by others, by means of the oppression and exploitation of less developed peoples by more developed peoples. Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist violence and arbitrary rule, colonial slavery and national subjection, and, finally,

the struggle among the "civilised" nations for mastery over the "uncivilised" peoples—such were the forms in which the process of economic amalgamation of peoples took place. For this reason we find that, side by side with the tendency to amalgamation, there grew up a tendency to destroy the violent forms assumed by this amalgamation, a struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. Inasmuch as the latter tendency implied a revolt of the oppressed masses against imperialist forms of amalgamation, inasmuch as it demanded the amalgamation of peoples on the basis of collaboration and voluntary union, it was and is a progressive tendency, for it is creating the psychological conditions for the future world socialist economic system.

3. The conflict between these two principal tendencies, expressed in forms that are natural to capitalism, fills the history of the multi-national bourgeois states during the last half-century. The fact that the contradiction between these tendencies is irreconcilable within the framework of capitalist development was the basic reason for the intrinsic insolvency and the organic instability of the bourgeois colonial states. Inevitable conflicts within such states and inevitable wars between such states; disintegration of the old colonial states and the formation of new ones; a new drive for colonies and again the disintegration of multi-national states, leading to a new re-arrangement of the political map of the world—such are the results of this fundamental contradiction. The disintegration of the old Russia, of Austria-Hungary and of Turkey on the one hand, and the history of such colony-owning states as Great Britain and the old Germany on the other; and, lastly, the "great" imperialist war and the growth of the revolutionary movement among the colonial and non-sovereign peoples—all these and similar facts clearly point to the instability and insolidity of the multi-national bourgeois states.

Thus the irreconcilable contradiction between the process of economic amalgamation of the peoples and the imperialist methods of accomplishing this amalgamation was the cause of the inability, helplessness and impotence of the bourgeoisie in finding a correct approach to the solution of the national problem.

4. Our Party took these circumstances into consideration when it made the basis of its policy in the national question the right of nations to self-determination, the right of peoples to lead an independent political existence. From the first days of its existence, at its very first congress (in 1898), when the contradictions of capitalism in connection with the national question had not yet become fully and clearly defined, the Party recognised this inalienable right of nations. In subsequent years it steadfastly endorsed its national programme in specific decisions and resolutions of its congresses and conferences down to the October Revolution. The imperialist war and the mighty revolutionary movement which arose in connection with it in the colonies only provided new corroboration of the correctness of the decisions adopted by the Party on the national question. These decisions consist of a) the vigorous repudiation of all and every form of compulsion in relation to the nationalities; b) the recognition of the equal and sovereign right of the peoples to determine their own destinies; c) the recognition of the thesis that a durable amalgamation of peoples can be accomplished only on a basis of collaboration and voluntary consent; d) the proclamation of the truth that such an amalgamation is possible only as a result of the overthrow of the power of capital.

Our Party in its work never tired of advancing this programme of national emancipation in opposition to both the frankly coercive policy of tsarism and the half-hearted, semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Whereas the tsarist Russification policy created an abyss between tsarism and the nationalities of old Russia, and whereas the semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries led the best elements among these nationalities to desert Kerenskyism, the policy of emancipation pursued by our Party won for it the sympathy and support of the broad masses of these nationalities in the struggle it waged against tsarism and the imperialist Russian bourgeoisie. There can be little doubt that this sympathy and support was one of the decisive factors that determined the triumph of our Party in the October Revolution.

5. The October Revolution confirmed and gave practical effect to the decisions of our Party on the national question. By overthrow-

ing the power of the landlords and capitalists, to whom national oppression was chiefly due, and by putting the proletariat in power, the October Revolution at one blow smashed the fetters of national oppression, destroyed the old relations between peoples, removed the grounds of the old national enmity, cleared the way for the collaboration of peoples, and won for the Russian proletariat the confidence of its brothers of other nationalities, not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia. It need hardly be shown that had it not enjoyed this confidence the Russian proletariat could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin, Yudenich and Wrangel. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the oppressed nationalities could not have achieved their emancipation if the dictatorship of the proletariat had not been established in the centre of Russia. National enmity and national conflicts are inevitable, unavoidable, as long as capital is in power, as long as the petty bourgeoisie, and in particular the peasantry, of the former "sovereign" nation, permeated as they are by nationalist prejudices, follow the capitalists; and, on the contrary, national peace and national freedom may be considered assured when the peasantry and the other petty-bourgeois strata follow the proletariat, that is, when the dictatorship of the proletariat is assured. Hence, the triumph of the Soviets and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat constitute the basis and foundation on which the fraternal collaboration of peoples within a single confederate state can be built up.

6. But the results of the October Revolution are not confined to the elimination of national oppression and the creation of a basis for the amalgamation of peoples. In the course of its development the October Revolution also evolved the forms of this amalgamation and laid down the main lines for the amalgamation of peoples into a single confederate state. In the first period of the revolution, when the toiling masses of the nationalities first came to feel that they were independent national units, while the threat of foreign intervention had not yet become a real danger, collaboration between the peoples did not yet assume a fully and strictly defined form. In the period of civil war and intervention, when the requirements of military defence in the national republics assumed prime importance, while questions of economic construction had not yet been placed on the order of the day, collaboration took the form of a military alliance. Finally, in the post-war period, when the problems of the restoration of the productive forces destroyed by the war assumed prime importance, the military alliance was supplemented by an economic alliance. The amalgamation of the national republics into the Union of Soviet Republics represents the concluding stage in the development of the forms of collaboration, which have now assumed the character of a military, economic and political amalgamation of peoples into a single multi-national Soviet state.

Thus in the Soviet state structure the proletariat has found the key to the national problem, has found the way to organise a durable multi-national state on the basis of national equality and voluntary consent.

7. But the fact that the key has been found to the national problem does not yet mean that it has been solved fully and finally, that the solution has been exhaustively realised concretely and practically. In order to give proper effect to the national programme advanced by the October Revolution, it is necessary to surmount obstacles which have been left to us as a heritage from the period of national oppression, obstacles that cannot be surmounted at a single blow and at short notice.

This heritage consists, in the first place, in the survivals of Great-Power chauvinism, which is a reflection of the former privileged position of the Great-Russians. These survivals still persist in the minds of our Soviet officials, both central and local; they breed in our state institutions, central and local; they are receiving reinforcements in the shape of the "new" *Smenovekh* [43] Great-Russian chauvinist spirit, which the New Economic Policy tends to accentuate. In practice they find expression in an arrogant, negligent and soullessly bureaucratic attitude on the part of Russian Soviet officials towards the needs and requirements of the national republics. The multi-national Soviet state can be truly durable, and the collaboration of the peoples within it truly fraternal, only if these

survivals are vigorously and irrevocably eradicated from the practice of our state institutions. Thus the first immediate task of our Party is to wage determined warfare on the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism.

This heritage consists, secondly, in the actual, *i.e.*, economic and cultural, inequality of the nationalities of the Union of Republics. The equality of legal status of the nations won by the October Revolution is a great achievement for the peoples, but it does not in itself solve the whole national problem. A number of republics and peoples, which have not passed, or have hardly entered, the stage of capitalism, which have no proletariat, or hardly any proletariat, of their own, and which on this account are backward economically and culturally, are incapable of utilising to the full the rights and opportunities offered them by national equality; they are incapable of achieving a higher level of development, and thus catching up with the more advanced nationalities, unless they receive real and prolonged assistance from outside. The causes of this actual inequality lie not only in the history of these peoples, but also in the policy pursued by tsarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, which aimed at converting the border regions into areas exclusively producing raw materials and exploited by the industrially developed central districts. To remove this inequality in a short space of time, to eliminate this heritage in a year or two, is impossible. The Tenth Congress of our Party has already pointed out that "the elimination of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery." But eliminated it must be at all costs. And it can be eliminated only if real and prolonged assistance is given by the Russian proletariat to the backward peoples of the Union in their economic and cultural advancement. Otherwise there are no grounds for expecting the establishment of a proper and durable collaboration of peoples within the framework of a single confederate state. Hence, the second immediate task of our Party is to strive to eliminate the actual inequality of the nationalities and to raise the cultural and economic level of the backward peoples.

This heritage consists, lastly, in the survivals of nationalism among a number of peoples which have suffered the heavy yoke of

national oppression and have not yet managed to rid themselves of old national grudges. These survivals find practical expression in a certain national aloofness and a lack of complete trust on the part of the formerly oppressed peoples in measures proceeding from the Russians. However, in some of the republics the population of which is made up of several nationalities, this defensive nationalism often turns into aggressive nationalism, into the outright chauvinism of the stronger nationality directed against the weaker nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) against the Armenians, Ossets, Adjarians and Abkhasians; Azerbaidjanian chauvinism (in Azerbaidjan) against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bokhara and Khorezm) against the Turkmens and Kirghiz—all these forms of chauvinism, which moreover are fostered by the conditions of the New Economic Policy and by competition, are a great evil which threatens to make certain of the national republics the scene of squabbling and wrangling. It need hardly be said that all these factors hinder the cause of the actual amalgamation of the peoples into a single confederate state. When the survivals of nationalism are a peculiar form of defence against Great-Russian chauvinism, the surest means of overcoming nationalist survivals is to wage determined war on Great-Russian chauvinism. When, however, these survivals assume the form of local chauvinism directed against the weak national groups in certain of the republics, it is the duty of Party members to wage direct war on these survivals. Thus the third immediate task of our Party is to combat nationalist survivals, and particularly the chauvinist forms of these survials.

8. We must regard as one of the most pronounced expressions of the heritage of the past the fact that a considerable number of Soviet officials in the centre and in the localities regard the Union of Republics not as an alliance of equal political units, whose mission it is to guarantee the free development of the national republics, but as a step towards the abolition of these republics and as the beginning of the formation of what is called the "single and indivisible." [1] The congress condemns this conception as anti-proletarian and reactionary, and calls upon the members of the Party

[1] *I.e.*, a single and indivisible Russia.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

to keep vigilant watch lest the amalgamation of the republics and the fusion of the Commissariats should be utilised by chauvinistically-minded Soviet officials as a screen for their attempts to ignore the economic and cultural needs of the national republics. The fusion of the Commissariats is a test for the Soviet apparatus: if this experiment were in practice to betray a Great-Power tendency, the Party would be obliged to adopt the most resolute measures against such a distortion, even to the extent of raising the question of annulling the fusion of certain Commissariats until such time as the Soviet apparatus has been properly re-educated so that it will give genuinely proletarian and genuinely fraternal attention to the needs and requirements of the small and backward nationalities.

9. Since the Union of Republics is a new form of co-existence of peoples, a new form of collaboration of peoples within a single confederate state, within which the survivals outlined above are to be eliminated in the process of co-operative work of the peoples, the supreme organs of the Union must be so constructed as fully to reflect not only the common needs and requirements of all the nationalities of the Union, but also the specific needs and requirements of each individual nationality. For this reason, there should be created, in addition to the existing central organs of the Union, which represent the toiling masses of the entire Union without distinction of nationality, a special organ representing all the nationalities on an equality basis. Such a structure of the central organs of the Union would make it fully possible to lend an attentive ear to the needs and requirements of the peoples, to render them timely and necessary aid, to create an atmosphere of complete mutual confidence, and thus to nullify the heritage mentioned above in the most painless way.

10. On the basis of what has been said, the congress recommends the members of the Party to secure the accomplishment of the following practical measures:

a) That within the system of supreme organs of the Union a special organ be instituted representing on an equality basis all the national republics and national regions without exception;

b) That the Commissariats of the Union be so constructed as

to assure the satisfaction of the needs and requirements of the peoples of the Union;

c) That the organs of the national republics and regions be recruited chiefly from among the local inhabitants acquainted with the language, life, manners and customs of the peoples concerned.

II

1. The development of the organisations of our Party in the majority of the national republics is taking place under conditions which do not wholly favour their growth and consolidation. The economic backwardness of these republics, the numerical weakness of the national proletariat, the shortage or even total lack of old Party workers belonging to the native population, the lack of suitable Marxist literature in the native languages, the weakness of Party educational work, and, lastly, the persistence of survivals of radical-nationalist traditions, which have not yet died out, have produced among the local Communists a definite deviation in the direction of overrating the specific national features and of underrating the class interests of the proletariat, a deviation towards nationalism. This factor becomes especially dangerous in the case of republics inhabited by several nationalities, where it frequently assumes the form of a deviation among the Communists of the stronger nationality towards chauvinism directed against the Communists of the weak nationalities (Georgia, Azerbaidjan, Bokhara, Khorezm). The deviation towards nationalism is dangerous because, by hindering the emancipation of the national proletariat from the ideological influence of the national bourgeoisie, it impedes the knitting of the proletarians of the various nationalities into a single internationalist organisation.

2. On the other hand, the presence in both the central institutions of the Party and in the organisations of the Communist Parties of the national republics of large numbers of old Party workers of Russian descent, who are unfamiliar with the manners, customs and language of the toiling masses of these republics, and who for this reason are not always attentive to their requirements, has given rise in our Party to a deviation which consists in underrating specific national features and national language in Party work, to an arro-

gant and negligent attitude towards these specific features—a deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism. This deviation is pernicious not only because, by impeding the formation of Communist cadres of local inhabitants acquainted with the local language, it creates the danger that the Party may become isolated from the proletarian masses of the national republics, but also, and primarily, because it feeds and nourishes the deviation towards nationalism outlined above and hinders the struggle against this deviation.

3. Condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, and drawing the attention of the members of the Party to the particular danger of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism, the congress calls upon the Party to eliminate as quickly as possible these survivals of the past in our Party development.

The congress instructs the Central Committee to carry out the following practical measures:

a) To form Marxist study circles of an advanced type among the local Party workers in the national republics;

b) To develop literature dealing with fundamental Marxist principles written in the native languages;

c) To reinforce the University of the Peoples of the East and its branches in the localities;

d) To establish groups of instructors of the Central Committees of the national Communist Parties recruited from among local workers;

e) To develop mass Party literature in the native languages;

f) To intensify Party educational work in the republics;

g) To intensify work among the youth in the republics.

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REPORT ON NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE DEVELOPMENT

Delivered at the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party
April 23, 1923

COMRADES, this is the third time since the October Revolution that we are discussing the national question: the first time was at the Eighth Congress, the second at the Tenth, and the third at the Twelfth. Does this indicate that something has changed fundamentally in our views on the national question? No, our fundamental view of the national question has remained what it was both before and after the October Revolution. But since the Tenth Congress the international situation has changed, inasmuch as greater importance has been acquired by the heavy reserves of the revolution which the countries of the East now constitute. That is the first point. The second point is that since the Tenth Congress our Party has witnessed certain changes in the internal situation in connection with the New Economic Policy. All these new factors must be taken into account and the conclusions drawn. In this sense one may say that the national question is being presented at the Twelfth Congress in a new way.

As to the international significance of the national question. You know, comrades, that we, the Soviet federation, by the will of historical destiny, now represent the vanguard of the world revolution. You know that we were the first to break through the general capitalist front, that it has been our destiny to take precedence of all others. You know that in our advance we went as far as Warsaw, that we then retreated, entrenching ourselves in the positions we considered strongest. From that moment we passed to the New Economic Policy, from that moment we realised that the international revolutionary movement was slowing down, and from that moment our policy changed from a policy

of offensive to a policy of defensive. We could not advance after we had failed at Warsaw (we shall not hide the truth); we could not advance, for we would have risked being cut off from our rear, which in our case is a peasant rear; and, lastly, we would have risked advancing too far ahead of the reserves of the revolution with which destiny has provided us, the reserves of the East and the West. That is why we made a turn within the country towards the New Economic Policy, and outside the country towards a slower rate of advance; for we decided that we needed a respite, that we must heal our wounds, the wounds received by the vanguard, the proletariat, that we must establish contact with the peasant rear, and continue to prosecute our work among the reserves, which had fallen behind us—the reserves of the West and the reserves of the East, the heavy reserves which form the main rear-line reserves of world capitalism. It is of these reserves—the heavy reserves of the East, which at the same time constitute the rear-line of world imperialism—that we must speak when discussing the national question.

Two things are possible: either we succeed in stirring up and revolutionising the far imperialist rear—the colonial and semi-colonial countries of the East—and thereby hasten the fall of capitalism, or we muff it, and thereby strengthen imperialism and weaken the force of our movement. That is how the question stands.

The fact of the matter is that the whole East regards our Union of Republics as an experimental station. Either we shall, within the Union, find a correct solution for the national problem in practical application and establish truly fraternal relations and true collaboration between the peoples—in which case the entire East will see that our federation is the banner of its liberation, an advance guard, in whose footsteps it must follow—and that will be the beginning of the collapse of world imperialism; or we, the federation as a whole, commit an error, undermine the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the proletariat of Russia, and deprive the Union of Republics of that power of attraction which it possesses in the eyes of the East—in which case imperialism will win and we shall lose.

That is the international significance of the national question.

The national question is also of importance for us from the point of view of the internal situation; not only because the former sovereign nation numerically constitutes about 75,000,000 people and the other nations 65,000,000 (no mean figure) and not only because the formerly oppressed nationalities inhabit regions most essential from the point of view of economic development and most important from the point of view of military strategy, but first and foremost because during the last two years we have introduced what is known as the New Economic Policy, as a result of which Russian nationalism has grown and become accentuated, the idea of Smenovekhism has been born, and the desire is rife to accomplish peacefully what Denikin failed to accomplish, *i.e.*, to create the so-called "single and indivisible."

Thus, as a result of the New Economic Policy, a new force is being engendered in the internal life of our country, namely, Great-Russian chauvinism, which breeds in our institutions, which penetrates not only into Soviet institutions, but also into Party institutions, and which stalks in every corner of our federation. And if we do not resolutely repulse this new force, if we do not strike at its roots—and the conditions of the New Economic Policy favour its growth—we shall be faced with the risk of a rupture between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation and the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nations—which will mean the undermining of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

But the New Economic Policy fosters not only Russian chauvinism—it also fosters local varieties of chauvinism, especially in republics composed of several nationalities. I have in mind Georgia, Azerbaidjan, Bokhara and—one might partly add—Turkestan, in all of which there are several nationalities, the foremost elements of which may soon begin to compete among themselves for supremacy. Of course, these local varieties of chauvinism are not as strong and therefore not as dangerous as Great-Russian chauvinism. But they are dangerous nevertheless, for they threaten to turn some of our republics into the scene of national wrangling and thus weaken the bonds of internationalism in these republics.

Such are the international and internal reasons for the great,

the paramount importance of the national question in general, and at the present moment in particular.

What is the class essence of the national question? What is the national question? The essential thing in the national question from the class point of view is to establish definite relations—I am speaking of our Soviet conditions—to establish definite and correct relations between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation and the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities. The question of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry has been more than sufficiently discussed here, but when this question was discussed in connection with the reports of Comrades Kamenev, Kalinin and Sokolnikov, and even of Comrades Rykov and Trotsky, the chief thing in mind was the relations between the Russian proletariat and the Russian peasantry. Here, in the national sphere, we are dealing with a more complex mechanism. Here we are concerned with the question of establishing proper relations between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation, which represents the most cultured section of the proletariat among all the nations of our federation, and the peasantry, mainly the peasantry of the formerly oppressed nationalities. That is the class essence of the national question. If the proletariat succeeds in establishing with regard to the peasantry of other nationalities relations that will be capable of eradicating all remnants of mistrust towards everything Russian, a mistrust implanted and fostered for decades by the policy of tsarism; if, moreover, the Russian proletariat succeeds in bringing about complete mutual understanding and confidence, in effecting a genuine alliance not only between the Russian proletariat and the Russian peasantry, but also between the Russian proletariat and the peasantry of other nationalities, the problem will be solved. To achieve this it is necessary that the government of the proletariat should be as dear to the peasantry of other nationalities as it is to the Russian peasantry. And in order that the Soviet government should become dear also to the peasantry of other nationalities, it must be comprehensible to this peasantry, it must function in their own language, the schools and government bodies must be recruited from among the local people acquainted with the language, manners, customs and traditions.

Only when the institutions and government bodies in the republics of these countries speak and function in the native language, only then, and only to that extent, will the Soviet government, which until very recently was a Russian government, become a government that is not only Russian but inter-national, a government that will be near and dear to the peasants of the formerly oppressed nationalities. That is one of the fundamental factors in the national problem in general, and in the national problem under Soviet conditions in particular.

What is the characteristic feature of the solution of the national problem at the present moment, in 1923? What form has been assumed in 1923 by the problems requiring solution in the national sphere? They have assumed the form of establishing collaboration between the peoples of our federation in the economic, military and political spheres. I am referring to inter-national relations. The national problem, the crux of which is the establishment of proper relations between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation and the peasantry of other nationalities, has at the present moment assumed a specific form involving the establishment of the collaboration and the fraternal co-existence of peoples which in the past were disunited and which are now amalgamated within a single state. That is the crux of the national problem in the form it has assumed in 1923. The concrete form taken by this political amalgamation is the Union of Republics, which we discussed at the Congress of Soviets at the end of last year and which we then established.

The basis of this Union is voluntary consent and equality of legal status of the members of the Union. Voluntary consent and equality—because our national programme is based on the right of nations to independent political existence, formerly called the right of nations to self-determination. On this basis we must definitely say that no union of peoples, no amalgamation of peoples into a single state, can be durable unless it is based on absolutely voluntary consent, unless the peoples involved themselves desire to unite. The second basis of the Union is the equality of legal status of the peoples forming the Union. And that is but natural. I am not referring to actual equality—of that I shall speak later—for the

establishment of actual equality between nationalities which have gone on ahead and nationalities which lag behind is a very complex, very difficult problem, requiring many years for its solution. I am speaking at present of equality of legal status. Equality in this sense is expressed in the fact that all the republics, in this case the four republics forming the Union—Transcaucasia, White Russia, the Ukraine and the R.S.F.S.R.—enjoy the benefits of the Union to an equal degree and at the same time to an equal degree forego certain of their independent rights in favour of the Union. If the R.S.F.S.R., the Ukraine, White Russia and the Transcaucasian Republic are not each to have its own People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, it is clear that the abolition of these Commissariats and the establishment of a joint Commissariat for the Union of Republics will be accompanied by a certain restriction of the independence formerly enjoyed by these republics, and that the extent of this restriction will be the same for all the republics forming the Union. It is clear that if these republics formerly had their own People's Commissariats of Foreign Trade, and these Commissariats are now abolished, both in the R.S.F.S.R. and in the other republics, in order to make way for a joint Commissariat of the Union of Republics, this too will involve a certain restriction of the independence formerly enjoyed in full measure, but now curtailed in favour of the Union; and so on, and so forth. Some people ask a purely scholastic question, namely, whether after amalgamation the republics remain independent. This is a scholastic question. Their independence is restricted, for every amalgamation involves a certain restriction of the rights of the amalgamating parties. But the elements of independence of each of these republics undoubtedly remain, for each republic retains the right to leave the Union at its own discretion. There you have the elements of independence, the maximum of independence, which is potentially retained by each of the republics forming part of the Union and which each of them is always at liberty to exercise.

Thus the concrete form assumed by the national problem under the conditions prevailing in our country at the present moment is to achieve collaboration between the peoples in economic matters,

foreign policy and military affairs. We must unite the republics along these lines into a single union, known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Such are the concrete forms assumed by the national problem at the present time.

But that is easier said than done.

The fact of the matter is that under the conditions in our country there are not only a number of factors favouring amalgamation of the peoples into a single state but also factors hindering amalgamation.

The favourable factors we know. They are, firstly, the economic ties between the peoples, which were set up before the time of the Soviet government but which the Soviet government strengthened—a certain division of labour among the peoples, begun before our time, but accentuated by us, by the Soviet government. That is the chief factor favouring the amalgamation of the republics into the Union. The nature of the Soviet government must be regarded as the second factor favouring amalgamation. This is only natural. The Soviet government is a government of the workers, a dictatorship of the proletariat, which by its very nature encourages the toiling elements of the republics and peoples forming the Union to get into friendly relations with each other. This is only natural. And the third factor favouring amalgamation is the imperialist encirclement, which constitutes the environment in which the Union of Republics is obliged to operate.

But there are also factors hindering and impeding such an amalgamation. The principal force hindering the amalgamation of the republics into a single union is the force which, as I have said, is growing in our country under the influence of the New Economic Policy—Great-Russian chauvinism. It is not fortuitous, comrades, that the Smenovekhists have recruited a large number of supporters from among the Soviet officials. That is by no means fortuitous. Nor is it fortuitous that Messrs. the Smenovekhists are lauding the Bolshevik Communists, saying, as it were: You may talk as much as you like about Bolshevism, you may prate as much as you like about your internationalist tendencies, but we know that what Denikin failed to do you will do, that you Bolsheviks have resurrected, or at least are going to resurrect, the great idea of a

great Russia. All this is not fortuitous. Nor is it fortuitous that this idea has penetrated even into some of our Party institutions. At the February Plenum, where the question of a Second Chamber was first raised, I was myself a witness to utterances on the part of members of the Central Committee which were not in harmony with communism—utterances entirely alien to internationalism. All this is a sign of the times, an epidemic. The chief danger arising from this is that, owing to the New Economic Policy, Great-Power chauvinism is growing in our country daily and hourly—Great-Power chauvinism, the rankest kind of nationalism, which strives to obliterate all that is not Russian, to gather all the threads of administration into the hands of Russians and to crush everything that is not Russian. The chief danger is that such a policy involves the risk that the Russian proletariat may forfeit the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples, which it won in the days of the October Revolution, when the Russian proletarians overthrew the landlords and the Russian capitalists, when they, the Russian proletarians, smashed national oppression, evacuated the troops from Persia and Mongolia, proclaimed the independence of Finland and Armenia, and generally placed the national question on an entirely new basis. We may lose every shred of the confidence we gained at that time unless we arm ourselves against this new, I repeat, Great-Russian chauvinism, which creeps along without face or form, insinuating itself drop by drop into the eyes and ears, drop by drop changing the mind and soul of our political workers, so that one can hardly recognise them. It is this danger, comrades, that we must lay at all costs; otherwise we run the risk of losing the confidence of the workers and peasants of the formerly oppressed peoples, we run the risk that the ties may be snapped between these peoples and the Russian proletariat, which involves the risk of a fissure in the system of our dictatorship. Do not forget, comrades, that we advanced against Kerensky with flying colours and overthrew the Provisional Government partly because we were backed by the confidence of those oppressed peoples which were expecting liberation at the hands of the Russian proletarians. Do not forget such reserves as those constituted by the oppressed peoples, who remain silent, but whose very silence

exerts pressure and decides much. This is often not felt, but these peoples live, they exist, and they must not be forgotten. Yes, comrades, it is dangerous to forget them. Do not forget that if in the rear of Kolchak, Denikin, Wrangel and Yudenich we had not had the so-called "aliens," the oppressed peoples, who disorganised the rear of these generals by their tacit sympathy for the Russian proletarians—comrades, this is a specific factor in our development, this tacit sympathy, which nobody hears or sees, but which decides everything—if it were not for this sympathy, we would not have nailed a single one of these generals. While we were advancing on them, their rear was disintegrating. Why? Because these generals depended on the colonising elements among the Cossacks, they held out to the oppressed peoples the prospect of further oppression, and the oppressed peoples were therefore forced into our arms, while we held aloft the banner of the liberation of these oppressed peoples. That is what decided the fate of these generals; those are the factors which, although they are obscured by the victories of our armies, in the long run decided everything. This must not be forgotten. That is why we must make an abrupt change of front in the sense of combating the new chauvinist tendencies and pillorying those bureaucrats in our institutions and those Party comrades who are forgetting one of our gains in the October Revolution, namely, the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples, a confidence we must cherish.

That is the first, and the most dangerous, factor hindering the amalgamation of the peoples and republics into a single union. It must be understood that if a force like Great-Russian chauvinism begins to flourish and gets its way, farewell to the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples; we shall never secure collaboration within a single union, and we shall never have a Union of Republics.

The second factor hindering a union of the formerly oppressed peoples around the Russian proletariat, comrades, lies in the actual inequality which we have inherited from the period of tsarism.

We have proclaimed equality of legal status and are practising it; but equality of legal status, although in itself a factor of the greatest importance in the history of the development of the Soviet

republics, is still a long way from true equality. Formally, all the backward nationalities and all the tribes enjoy all the rights enjoyed by the other, more advanced, nationalities of our federation. But the trouble is that some nationalities have no proletarians of their own, have never passed through the stage of industrial development, or even entered that stage, are frightfully backward culturally and are entirely unable to take advantage of the rights granted them by the revolution. This, comrades, is a question of greater importance than the question of schools. Some of our comrades here think that the knot can be unravelled by stressing the question of schools and language. That is not so, comrades. Schools will not get you very far. The schools are developing, so are the languages; but actual inequality is the basis of all discord and friction. Talk of schools and language is not enough. What is wanted is real, systematic, sincere and genuine proletarian assistance to the toiling masses of the culturally and economically backward nationalities. Apart from schools and language, the Russian proletariat must take every necessary measure to establish centres of industry in the border regions, in the republics which are culturally backward—backward not through any fault of their own, but because they were formerly looked upon as sources of raw materials. Certain attempts have already been made in this direction. One factory from Moscow has already been transferred to Georgia and will probably soon start operation. Bokhara has taken one factory, and might have taken four. Turkestan is taking one large factory. Thus the conditions now exist enabling these republics, which are backward economically and possess no proletariat, to establish with the aid of the Russian proletariat their own centres of industry, small though they may be, in order to create in these centres groups of local proletarians who will serve as a bridge between the Russian proletarians and peasants and the toilers of these republics. In this sphere serious work is required; and here talk of schools and language alone is not enough.

But there is still a third factor hindering the amalgamation of the republics into a single union: it is the existence of nationalism in the individual republics. The New Economic Policy affects not only the Russian, but also the non-Russian population. The New

Economic Policy is fostering private trade and industry not only in the centre of Russia, but also in the individual republics. And this New Economic Policy, and private capital, which is associated with it, nourish and foster Georgian, Azerbaidjanian, Uzbek and other nationalism. Of course, if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism—which is aggressive because it is strong, because it always has been strong, and which has retained the habit of oppressing and humiliating—if there were no Great-Russian chauvinism, local chauvinism, as a reaction to Great-Russian chauvinism, might perhaps have existed, so to speak, only in the smallest way, in miniature, because anti-Russian nationalism is in the long run a defence, a rather ugly form of defence against Russian nationalism, against Russian chauvinism. If this nationalism were only defensive, it might not be worth making a fuss about. We could concentrate our entire weight of action, the entire weight of struggle, on Great-Russian chauvinism, in the hope that if this powerful enemy were overcome, anti-Russian nationalism would be overcome with it; for, I repeat, this nationalism is in the long run a reaction to Great-Russian nationalism, a reply to it, a definite form of defence. Yes, that would be so if anti-Russian nationalism in the localities were nothing more than a reaction to Russian nationalism. But the trouble is that in some republics this defensive nationalism becomes converted into aggressive nationalism.

Take Georgia. Over 30 per cent of its population are non-Georgians. They include Armenians, Abkhasians, Adjarians, Ossets and Tatars. The Georgians dominate. And among a certain section of the Georgian Communists the idea has been developing that there is no particular need to reckon with these small nationalities; they are less cultured, less developed, and there is therefore no need to reckon with them. This is chauvinism—a harmful and dangerous chauvinism; for it may turn, and has already turned, the small republic of Georgia into an arena of discord.

Take Azerbaidjan. Here the Azerbaidjanians are the principal nationality, but there are also Armenians. Among a certain section of the Azerbaidjanians there is also a tendency, sometimes quite unconcealed, to think that the Azerbaidjanians are the native population of the country and the Armenians are intruders, and that

on these grounds it is perhaps possible to push them somewhat into the background, to disregard their interests. This is also chauvinism. It undermines that equality of nationalities on which the Soviet power is based.

Take Bokhara. In Bokhara there are three nationalities—the Uzbeks, who constitute the principal nationality, the Turkmens, who from the point of view of Bokharan chauvinism are a "less important" nationality, and the Kirghiz, who are few in number and are "less important."

In Khorezm you have the same thing—Turkmens and Uzbeks. The Uzbeks are the principal nationality and the Turkmens are "less important."

All this leads to conflict and weakens the Soviet power. This tendency towards local chauvinism must also be stricken root and branch. Of course, local chauvinism is not as important as Great-Russian chauvinism, which in the general scheme of the national question comprises three quarters of the whole; but from the point of view of local work, of the local people, from the point of view of the peaceful development of the national republics themselves, this chauvinism is a factor of prime moment.

Sometimes this chauvinism begins to undergo a very interesting evolution. I have in mind Transcaucasia. You know that Transcaucasia consists of three republics embracing ten nationalities. From very early times Transcaucasia has been the scene of massacre and strife and, under the Mensheviks and nationalists, the scene of warfare. You know of the Georgian-Armenian War. You also know of the massacres which took place at the beginning of 1904 and the end of 1905. I could name several districts where the Armenian majority massacred the entire remaining part of the population, which consisted of Tatars. Zangezur, for instance: in this region the majority of the population are Armenians, and they massacred all the Tatars. I could name another province—Nakhichevan. There the Tatars predominated, and they massacred all the Armenians. That was just before the liberation of Armenia and Georgia from the yoke of imperialism. [*Voice*: That was their way of solving the national problem.] This also, of course, was a way of solving the national problem. But it is not the Soviet way.

Of course, the Russians have nothing to do with this state of mutual national enmity, for it is the Tatars and Armenians who are fighting, and the Russians are not involved. That is why a special organ is required in Transcaucasia to regulate the relations between the nationalities. It may safely be said that the relations between the proletariat of formerly sovereign Russia and the toilers of all the other nationalities make up three quarters of the national question. But one quarter of this question must be attributed to the relations of the formerly oppressed nationalities among themselves.

And if in this atmosphere of mutual mistrust the Soviet government failed to establish in Transcaucasia an organ of national peace capable of adjusting all friction and conflict, we should return to the epoch of tsarism, or to the epoch of the Dashnaks [44], the Mussavatists [45], the Mensheviks, the epoch when people burnt and massacred each other. That is why the Central Committee has thrice re-affirmed the necessity of preserving the Transcaucasian Federation as an organ of national peace.

There has been and still is a group of Georgian Communists who do not object to Georgia's amalgamation with the Union of Republics, but do object to this amalgamation being effected through the Transcaucasian Federation. You see, they would like to get closer to the Union, they want no intermediary between themselves—the Georgians—and the Union of Republics in the shape of the Transcaucasian Federation; the federation, they say, is unnecessary. This sounds very revolutionary. But the idea behind it is a different one. In the first place, these statements indicate that in the national question in Georgia the attitude towards the Russians is of secondary importance, for these deviator comrades (so they are called) have nothing against the direct amalgamation of Georgia with the Union; that is, they do not fear Great-Russian chauvinism, considering that in one way or another it has been undermined, or at any rate is not of decisive importance. It is evidently the federation of Transcaucasia they fear most. Why? Why, when the three peoples which inhabit Transcaucasia, which fought among themselves so long, which massacred each other, and warred on each other, have at last been united by the Soviet government by bonds of fraternal unity in the form of a federa-

tion—why, when this federation has now produced genuine fruits of mutual amity, are these bonds to be broken? What is the trouble, comrades? The trouble is, comrades, that the bonds of federation deprive Georgia of that somewhat privileged position which she might assume in virtue of her geographical position. Judge for yourselves. Georgia has her own port—Batum—to which goods from the West flow; Georgia has a railway centre like Tiflis, which cannot be avoided by the Armenians, nor by Azerbaidjan, which receives all its goods through Batum. If Georgia were a separate republic, if she were not part of the Transcaucasian Federation, she could present a certain little ultimatum both to Armenia, which cannot get along without Tiflis, and to Azerbaidjan, which cannot get along without Batum. Here would be certain advantages. It is not fortuitous, comrades, that it was in Georgia that the monstrous decree on the cordon was elaborated. The blame for this is now being shifted to the shoulders of Serebryakov [46]. Suppose that is so. But the decree originated in Georgia, and not in Azerbaidjan or Armenia. It is not fortuitous that there was such a decree, which was intended so to regulate the relations between the national groups of the population as to retain certain advantages for Georgia and to enable Georgia to utilise the favourable geographical position which she undoubtedly possesses and which she, in the person of the deviators, does not want to lose. Then there is another cause. Tiflis is the capital of Georgia, but the Georgians there are not more than 25 per cent, the Armenians not less than 35 per cent, and the rest belong to other nationalities. There's a capital of Georgia for you! If Georgia were a separate republic, a certain transplantation of population might be effected—for instance, the Armenian population might be removed from Tiflis. Was there not such a decree, of which Comrade Makharadze said that it was directed against the Armenians? A certain transplantation might be effected so as to diminish the proportion of Armenians to Georgians in Tiflis from year to year, and thus convert Tiflis into a genuinely Georgian capital. I grant that they have abandoned the decree on eviction. But they possess a vast number of possibilities, a vast number of flexible forms—such as "relieving" the town—by which it would be possible, while maintaining the semblance of internationalism, to arrange matters in such a way that there would be fewer Armenians in Tiflis. It is these geographical advantages, which the deviators do not want to lose, and the disadvantages of the Georgians in Tiflis, where the number of Georgians is less than that of the Armenians, that are causing our deviators to be opposed to the federation. The Mensheviks simply evicted Armenians and Tatars from Tiflis. Now, under Soviet rule, eviction is impossible; therefore one must leave the federation, for this will create legal opportunities for performing independently certain operations which would result in the advantageous position enjoyed by the Georgians being fully utilised against Azerbaidjan and Armenia. And the result would be to create a privileged position for the Georgians in Transcaucasia. Therein lies the whole danger. Can we ignore the interests of national peace in Transcaucasia and create conditions under which the Georgians would be in a privileged position in relation to the republics of Armenia and Azerbaidjan? No. We cannot allow that. . . .

There is an old, specific system of ruling, under which a bourgeois government makes certain nationalities its favourites, grants them privileges and humbles the other nations, not wishing to be bothered with them. Thus by placing one nationality in a favoured position it uses it to press on the others. Such, for instance, was the method of rule in Austria. Everyone remembers the statement of the Austrian minister Beist, who summoned the Hungarian minister and said: "You manage your hordes and I'll look after mine"; that is, you crush and press on your nationalities in Hungary and I will press on my own. You and I are privileged nations, and we will press on the rest. The same was the case with the Poles in Austria. The Austrians put the Poles in a favoured position, granted them privileges, in order that the Poles should help the Austrians strengthen their positions in Poland; and in return they allowed the Poles to strangle Galicia. This system of picking out a few nationalities and granting them privileges in order to crush the rest is specifically and purely Austrian. From the point of view of the bureaucracy, this is an economical method of ruling, because it is necessary to bother only with one nationality; but from the political point of view it is fatal, for to violate

the principle of equality of nations and to grant privileges to any one nationality is to doom one's national policy to certain failure.

Great Britain is now ruling India in exactly the same way. In order to make it easier, from the point of view of the bureaucracy, to deal with the nationalities and tribes of India, Great Britain has divided India into British India (240,000,000 population) and native India (72,000,000 population). Why? Because Great Britain wanted to pick out one group of nations and grant it privileges in order to make it easier to rule the remaining nationalities. There are no less than eight hundred nationalities in India, and Great Britain decided that, rather than bother with eight hundred nationalities separately, it is better to pick out a few nations, grant them certain privileges and through them rule the rest; for, firstly, the discontent of the other nations would in that case be directed against these favourites and not against Great Britain, and, secondly, it is cheaper to "bother" with two or three nations than with eight hundred.

That is also a nice little system of governing, the British system. What does it lead to? To a cheaper apparatus—that is true. But, comrades, if we disregard bureaucratic conveniences, this means death to British rule in India; this system, as certain as twice two is four, bears within it the doom of British rule and British domination.

It is into this dangerous road that our comrades the Georgian deviators are impelling us when they resist federation, violate all the laws of the Party and want to separate from the federation in order to retain their advantageous position. They are trying to get us to grant them certain privileges at the expense of the Armenian and Azerbaidjanian republics. But this is a road we cannot take, for it means certain doom for our entire policy and for Soviet government in the Caucasus.

It is not without good reason that this danger was sensed by our comrades in Georgia. This Georgian chauvinism, having assumed the offensive against the Armenians and Azerbaidjanians, roused the Communist Party of Georgia. It is not without good reason that the Communist Party of Georgia, which within the period of its legal existence has held two congresses, on both occasions

unanimously rejected the position of the deviator comrades. For without the Transcaucasian Federation it would be impossible to maintain peace in the Caucasus, it would be impossible to establish equality. One nation must not be permitted more privileges than another. This our comrades have sensed. That is why after two years of contention the Mdivani group represents a small handful, repeatedly expelled by the Party in Georgia herself.

Nor is it without good reason that Comrade Lenin was so pressing and insistent that the federation should be established immediately. Nor is it without good reason that our Central Committee thrice re-affirmed the need for a federation in Transcaucasia, with its own Central Executive Committee and its own executive authority, the decisions of which would be binding on the republics. Nor is it without good reason that both the commissions—that of Comrade Dzerzhinsky and that of Comrades Kamenev and Kuibyshev [47]—stated upon their arrival in Moscow that federation is indispensable.

Nor, finally, is it without good reason that the Mensheviks of the *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik* laud our deviator comrades and sing their praises for resisting federation: birds of a feather flock together.

I now pass, comrades, to an examination of the ways and means of eliminating these three main factors hindering union—Great-Russian chauvinism, actual inequality and local nationalism, particularly when the latter assumes the form of chauvinism. Of the methods that may help us painlessly to outgrow this heritage of the past which is hindering closer relations between the nations, I shall mention only three.

The first method is to adopt every possible measure to make the Soviet government understood and loved in the republics, to make the Soviet government not merely Russian but inter-national. This requires that not only the schools, but all institutions and all bodies, both Party and Soviet, should become steadily naturalised, that they should employ the language understood by the masses and function under conditions answering to the habits of the given people. This condition alone will make it possible to convert the Soviet government from a Russian government into an in-

ternational government, a government understood by and near and dear to the toiling masses of all the republics, particularly to those which are economically and culturally backward.

The second method that may help us painlessly to outgrow the heritage left by tsarism and the bourgeoisie is to construct the Commissariats of the Union of Republics in such a way as to enable at least the chief nationalities to have their representatives on the collegiums and to create conditions in which the needs and requirements of the various republics will be unconditionally met.

The third method is to have among our supreme organs one that will serve to express the needs and requirements of every republic and nationality without exception. I want to draw particular attention to this latter point.

If within the Central Executive Committee of the Union we could create two chambers, one of which would be elected at the Union Congress of Soviets, irrespective of nationality, and the other would be elected by the republics and regions (all the republics being equally represented and all the national regions being equally represented) and endorsed by the Congress of Soviets of the Union of Republics, I think that our supreme institutions would express not only the class interests of all proletarian groups without exception, but also purely national needs. We should have an organ which would reflect the specific interests of the nationalities, peoples and tribes inhabiting the territories of the Union of Republics. Under the conditions prevailing in our Union, which embraces not less than 140,000,000 people, of which about 65,000,000 are non-Russians, one cannot, in such a state, govern without having before us here, in Moscow, in the supreme organ of government, emissaries of these nationalities who can express not only the interests common to the proletariat as a whole, but also the interests which are particularly, specially and specifically national. Without this, comrades, it will be impossible to govern. Unless we have this barometer, comrades, unless we have people capable of formulating these specific needs of the various nationalities, it will be impossible to govern.

There are two ways of governing a country. One way is to have a simplified apparatus, headed by a group of people, or by a single

person, having hands and eyes in the localities in the shape of governors. This is a very simple form of government, under which the ruler, in governing the country, receives the kind of information governors can supply, and consoles himself with the hope that he is governing honestly and well. Friction arises, friction passes into conflicts and conflicts into revolts. The revolts are then crushed. This is not our system of government; besides, although simple, it is too costly. In our Soviet country we must evolve a system of government which will permit us with certainty to anticipate all changes, to perceive everything that is going on among the peasants, the nationals, the non-Russian nations and the Russians; the system of supreme organs must possess a number of barometers which will anticipate every change, register and forestall a Basmach movement, a bandit movement, Kronstadt, and all possible storms and ill-fortune. That is the Soviet system of government. It is called the Soviet government, the people's government, because, being based on the rank and file, it is the first to register changes, to take necessary measures and rectify the line in time if it has become distorted—criticising itself and rectifying its line. This system of government is the Soviet system, and it requires that among the number of our supreme bodies should be such as will give exhaustive expression to national needs and requirements.

The objection is made that this will complicate the whole system of government, that it will pile body on body. That is true. Hitherto we had the Central Executive Committee of the R.S.F.S.R., then we created the Central Executive Committee of the Union, and now it seems we shall have to split the Central Executive Committee of the Union into two. It can't be helped. I said that the simplest form of government is to have one man and to give him governors. But now, after the October Revolution, we cannot try such experiments. The system has become more complex, but it makes government easier and lends the form of government a profoundly Soviet character. That is why I think that the congress must agree to the establishment of a special organ, a second chamber within the Central Executive Committee of the Union, since it is an absolutely indispensable organ.

I will not say that this is a perfect form of organising collaboration between the peoples of the Union; I will not say that it is the last word in science; by no means. We shall have many occasions to discuss the national question, for national and international conditions change, and may change again. I do not swear that some of the Commissariats we are merging in the Union of Republics will not have to be separated out again if experience shows that the merging of some of the Commissariats produces negative results.

But one thing is clear, namely, that under present conditions and in present circumstances there is no better method and no more suitable organ. As yet we have no better means or method of creating an organ capable of reflecting all the oscillations and all the changes that take place within the various parts of the republic than by the institution of a second chamber. It need hardly be said that the second chamber must consist of representatives not only of the four republics that have united, but of all the peoples; for the question concerns not only the republics which have formally united (there are four of them), but all the peoples and nationalities. We therefore require a form that will reflect the needs of all the peoples and republics without exception.

To sum up, comrades. We see that the importance of the national question is determined by the new situation in international affairs, by the fact that we must here, in Russia, in our federation, solve the national problem in a correct, a model way, in order to set an example to the East, which represents the heavy reserves of our revolution, and thus increase the confidence in and urge towards our federation. From the point of view of the internal situation the New Economic Policy, the growing Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism also compel us to emphasise the particular importance of the national question.

I then said that the essence of the national problem is to establish correct relations between the proletariat of the former sovereign nation and the peasantry of the former non-sovereign nations and that from this point of view the concrete form of solution of the national problem at the present moment is to find the way, the means of bringing about the collaboration and co-existence

of the peoples within a Union of Republics, within a single state.

I further spoke of the factors which favour such closer relations between the peoples; I spoke of the factors which impede such amalgamation. I dealt especially with Great-Russian chauvinism, as a force that is gaining in strength. This force constitutes the chief danger tending to undermine the confidence of the formerly oppressed peoples in the Russian proletariat. This is our most dangerous enemy, which we must overcome; for once we overcome it, we shall have overcome nine tenths of the nationalism which has survived and which is developing in certain republics.

Further, we are faced with the danger of being impelled by certain groups of comrades into granting privileges to certain nationalities at the expense of others. I have said that this is a road we cannot take, because it implies the development of local nationalism in its ugliest, most chauvinistic forms, and because it may undermine national peace and kill the confidence of the masses of other nations in Soviet government.

I further said that the chief means that may enable us to eliminate most painlessly the factors hindering amalgamation is a second chamber in the Central Executive Committee, of which I spoke more openly at the February Plenum of the Central Committee, and which is dealt with in the theses in a more veiled form in order to enable the comrades themselves, perhaps, to indicate, to sketch, some other, more flexible form, some other, more suitable organ capable of reflecting the interests of the nationalities. Such are the conclusions.

I think that only in this way shall we be able to achieve a correct solution of the national problem, shall we be able to unfurl the banner of proletarian revolution and rally to it the sympathy and confidence of the countries of the East, which are the heavy reserves of our revolution and which may play a decisive part in the coming battles of the proletariat against imperialism. [*Applause.*]

REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION

Comrades, before proceeding to report on the work of the committee on the national question, permit me to object on two main

points to those who have spoken on my report. It will take about twenty minutes, not more.

The first question is that one group of comrades, headed by Comrades Bukharin and Rakovsky, have attached too much importance to the national question, have exaggerated it, and on account of the national question have overlooked the social question, the question of the power of the working class.

And yet it is clear to us, as Communists, that the basis of all our work must be to strengthen the power of the workers; and only then do we address ourselves to the other question—a very important question, but subordinate to the first—the national question. We are told that we must not injure the nationals. That is perfectly true, I agree that we must not injure them. But to evolve out of this a new theory to the effect that the Great-Russian proletariat must be placed in a position of inequality with regard to the formerly oppressed nations is absurd. Comrade Bukharin has converted into a regular slogan what was merely a figure of speech in Comrade Lenin's article [48]. Yet it is clear that the political basis of the dictatorship of the proletariat consists mainly and primarily of the central, the industrial regions, and not the border regions, which are peasant countries. If we over-emphasise the peasant border regions at the expense of the proletarian districts, a fissure in the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat may result. This is dangerous, comrades. We must not overshoot the mark in politics, just as we must not undershoot it.

It should be borne in mind that besides the right of nations to self-determination there is also the right of the working class to consolidate its power, and to this latter right the right of self-determination is subordinate. There are occasions when the right of self-determination conflicts with the other, the higher right—the right of a working class that has assumed power to consolidate its power. In such cases—this must be said bluntly—the right to self-determination cannot and must not serve as an obstacle to the exercise by the working class of its right to dictatorship. The former must give way to the latter. That, for instance, was the case in 1920, when in order to defend the power of the working class we were obliged to march on Warsaw.

It must therefore not be forgotten when handing out all sorts of promises to the nationals, when bowing and scraping before the representatives of the nationalities, as certain comrades at the present congress did, it must be borne in mind that the sphere of action of the national question, its competence, so to speak, are, in view of our external and internal situation, confined within the sphere of action and competence of the "labour question," as the fundamental question.

A great many speakers here have referred to notes and articles by Vladimir Ilyich. I would rather not have quoted my teacher, Comrade Lenin, since he is not here, and I am afraid of quoting him wrongly and inappropriately. Nevertheless, I feel obliged to refer to one passage, which is axiomatic and can give rise to no misunderstanding, in order that there should be no doubts in the minds of comrades with regard to the relative importance of the national question. Analysing Marx's letter on the national question in an article on self-determination, Comrade Lenin draws the following conclusion:

> "Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the 'labour question.'" [49]

Here are only two lines, but they are decisive. And this is what some of our comrades who are more zealous than wise should drill into their heads.

The second question is that of Great-Russian chauvinism and local chauvinism. Comrade Rakovsky, and especially Comrade Bukharin, have come forward here and proposed that the point dealing with the danger of local chauvinism should be deleted. Their argument is that there is no need to bother with such a pigmy as local chauvinism when we have such a Goliath as Great-Russian chauvinism. Generally, Comrade Bukharin was in a repentant mood. That is natural: he has been sinning for years against the nationalities, denying the right of self-determination. It is high time to repent. But in repenting he went to the other extreme. It is a curious thing that Comrade Bukharin should call upon the Party to follow his example and repent, when it is common knowledge that the Party is in no way implicated: for it has from its very inception (1898) recognised the right of self-determination and

therefore has nothing to repent. The point is that Comrade Bukharin has not understood the real meaning of the national question. When it is said that the most important thing in the national question is to fight Great-Russian chauvinism, this indicates what are the duties of a Russian Communist; it implies that it is the duty of every Russian Communist himself to wage war on Russian chauvinism. If the fight against Russian chauvinism were undertaken not by the Russian but by the Turkestanian or Georgian Communists, it would be interpreted as anti-Russian chauvinism. This would confuse everything and strengthen Great-Russian chauvinism. Only the Russian Communists can undertake the war on Great-Russian chauvinism and fight it to a finish.

And what is implied when a war on local anti-Russian chauvinism is proposed? It implies the duty of local Communists, the duty of non-Russian Communists, to resist their own chauvinists. Can one deny the existence of deviations towards anti-Russian chauvinism? Why, the whole congress has seen for itself that local, Georgian, Bashkir and other kinds of chauvinism exist and that they must be combated.

Russian Communists cannot combat Tatar, Georgian, or Bashkir chauvinism; for if a Russian Communist were to undertake the difficult task of fighting Tatar or Georgian chauvinism it would be regarded as the fight of a Great-Russian chauvinist against the Tatars or the Georgians. This would confuse the whole issue. Only the Tatar, Georgian and other Communists can fight Tatar, Georgian and other chauvinism, only the Georgian Communists can successfully combat Georgian nationalism or chauvinism. That is the duty of the non-Russian Communists. That is why it is necessary to refer in the theses to this dual task, that of the Russian Communists (I refer to the fight against Great-Russian chauvinism) and that of the non-Russian Communists (I refer to the fight against anti-Armenian, anti-Tatar, anti-Russian chauvinism). Otherwise the theses will be one-sided, otherwise we shall not create internationalism either in state or in Party development.

If we fight only against Great-Russian chauvinism, this fight will obscure the fight of the Tatar and other chauvinists which is developing in the localities and which is especially dangerous now, under

the conditions of the New Economic Policy. We cannot refrain from waging a fight on two fronts, for only by fighting on two fronts—on the one hand against Great-Russian chauvinism, which forms the chief danger in our work of construction, and on the other hand against local chauvinism—can we achieve success; for without this dual fight there can be no alliance between the Russian workers and peasants and the workers and peasants of other nationalities. If this fight is not waged, the result may be to foster local chauvinism, it may lead to a policy of encouraging local chauvinism, which we cannot allow.

Permit me here too to quote Comrade Lenin. I would not have done so, but since at our congress there are many comrades who quote Comrade Lenin all awry, and distort him, permit me to read a few words from one well-known article by Comrade Lenin:

"The proletariat must demand the right of political secession for the colonies and for the nations that 'its own' nation oppresses. Unless it does this, proletarian internationalism will remain a meaningless phrase; mutual confidence and class solidarity between the workers of the oppressing and oppressed nations will be impossible."

These are, as it were, the duties of the proletarians of the ruling or formerly ruling nation. Then he goes on to speak of the duties of the proletarians or the Communists of the formerly oppressed nations:

"The Socialists of the oppressed nations, on the other hand, must particularly fight for and maintain complete and absolute unity, including organisational unity, between the workers of the oppressed nation and the workers of the oppressing nation. Without such unity it will be impossible to maintain an independent proletarian policy and class solidarity with the proletariat of other countries in the face of all the subterfuge, treachery and trickery of the bourgeoisie; for the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations are constantly converting the slogans of national liberation into a means for deceiving the workers." [50]

As you see, if one is to follow in the footsteps of Comrade Lenin —and some comrades here have sworn by him—both theses must be retained in the resolution—the thesis on combating Great-Russian chauvinism and the thesis on combating local chauvinism—as being two aspects of one phenomenon, as being theses on combating chauvinism in general.

This concludes my objections to what has been said by the speakers here.

SPEECHES DELIVERED AT THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE R.C.P. WITH RESPONSIBLE WORKERS OF THE NATIONAL REPUBLICS AND REGIONS [51]

(1923)

I

Rights and "Lefts" in the National Republics and Regions

(Speech on the first item on the agenda: The Case of Sultan-Galiyev. June 10, 1923)

I TAKE the floor in order to make a few comments on the speeches made by comrades here. As regards the principles involved in the case of Sultan-Galiyev, I shall endeavour to deal with them in my report on the second item on the agenda.

First of all, with regard to the conference itself. Someone (I forget who) said here that this conference is an unusual event. That is not so. Such conferences are not a novelty for our Party. The present conference is the fourth of its kind since the establishment of the Soviet government. Before 1919 there were three such conferences. Conditions at that time permitted us to call such conferences. But subsequently, after 1919, during the years 1920 and 1921, when we were entirely absorbed in the Civil War, there was no time for conferences of this kind. And only now that we have put an end to the Civil War, now that our work in the sphere of economic construction has assumed a profounder character, now that Party work itself has become more concrete, especially in the national regions and republics, has it once more become possible to call conferences of this kind. I think the Central Committee will frequently resort to this method of establishing closer mutual understanding between those who are carrying out the policy in the localities and those who are making that policy. I think that such conferences should be called representing not only all the republics

and regions, conferences which to a certain extent are all-embracing, for at them it is possible to decide only questions of a more or less general nature, but also conferences on individual regions and republics in order to draw up more concrete decisions. This alone is capable of satisfying both the Central Committee and the responsible workers in the localities.

I have heard certain comrades say that I warned Sultan-Galiyev, that I had the opportunity of acquainting myself with his first secret letter, addressed, I think, to Adigamov, who for some reason is silent and has not uttered a word here, although it is he who should primarily have spoken and who should have spoken rather than anyone else. I have been reproached by these comrades with having defended Sultan-Galiyev excessively. Yes, it is true that I defended him as long as it was possible, and I considered and still consider that it was my duty to do so. But I defended him only up to a certain limit. And when Sultan-Galiyev went beyond that limit I turned my back on him. His first secret letter shows that he was already breaking with the Party, because the tone of his letter is almost Whiteguard; for he writes of members of the Central Committee as one can write only of enemies. I met him by chance in the Political Bureau, where he was defending the demands of the Tatar Republic in connection with the People's Commissariat of Agriculture. I warned him then, handing him a note in which I said that his secret letter was of an anti-Party character and accused him of creating an organisation of the Validov type; and I told him that unless he desisted from illegal, anti-Party work he would come to a bad end and any support on my part would be out of the question. He replied in great embarrassment that I had been misled, that he had indeed written to Adigamov, but had written not that, but something else, that he remained the Party man he had always been and gave his word of honour that he would remain so in future. Nevertheless, a week later he sent a second secret letter instructing Adigamov to establish contacts with the Basmachi and their leader Validov, and to "burn" the letter. The whole thing was vile, it was sheer deception, and compelled me to break off all connections with Sultan-Galiyev. From that moment for me Sultan-Galiyev became a man outside the Party,

outside the Soviets, and I did not consider it possible to speak to him, although he tried several times to come in and "have a talk" with me. Such are the facts. As far back as the beginning of 1919 the "Left" comrades reproached me with supporting Sultan-Galiyev, with trying to save him for the Party, with sparing him in the hope that he would cease to be a nationalist and become a Marxist. And, indeed, I considered it my duty to support him for a certain time. There are so few intellectuals, so few thinking people, even so few literate people generally in the Eastern republics and regions that one can count them on one's fingers. How can one help setting store by them? It would be criminal not to take every measure to save from corruption people of the East whom we need and to preserve them for the Party. But there is a limit to everything. And the limit in this case was reached when Sultan-Galiyev passed from the camp of the Communists to the camp of the Basmachi. From that time on he ceased to exist for the Party. That is why he found the Turkish ambassador more acceptable than the Central Committee of our Party.

I have heard a similar reproach from Comrade Shamigulov, to the effect that, in spite of his insistence that we should finish with Validov at a single blow, I defended Validov and tried to preserve him for the Party. It is true that I defended him in the hope that Validov might reform. Worse people have reformed, as we know from the history of political parties. I decided that Shamigulov's solution of the problem was too simple. I did not follow his advice. It is true that within a year Shamigulov's prediction was borne out. Validov did not reform, he went over to the Basmachi. Nevertheless, the Party gained by the fact that we kept Validov for a year from leaving the Party. If we had settled with Validov in 1918, I am certain that comrades like Murtazin, Adigamov, Khalikov and others would not have remained in our ranks. [*Voice*: "Khalikov would have remained."] Khalikov perhaps would not have left us, but a whole group of comrades working in our ranks would have left together with Validov. That is what we gained by our tolerance and foresight.

I listened to Comrade Ryskulov, and I must say that his speech was not altogether sincere, it was semi-diplomatic [*Voice*: "Hear, hear!"], and generally his speech produced a depressing effect on me. I expected more clarity and sincerity from him. Whatever Comrade Ryskulov may say, it is clear that he has at home two secret letters from Sultan-Galiyev which he has shown to no one; it is clear that he was associated with Sultan-Galiyev ideologically. The fact that Ryskulov dissociates himself from the case of Sultan-Galiyev in the criminal aspect of the matter, maintaining that he is not involved with Sultan-Galiyev in the course that leads to the Basmachi, means nothing. That is not what we are talking about at this conference. What we are talking about is the intellectual and ideological ties with Sultan-Galiyevism. And that such ties did exist between Comrade Ryskulov and Sultan-Galiyev is clear, comrades, and even Comrade Ryskulov himself cannot deny it. And is it not high time for him here, from this tribune, to dissociate himself finally and irrevocably from Sultan-Galiyevism? In this respect Comrade Ryskulov's speech was semi-diplomatic and unsatisfactory.

Comrade Enbayev also made a diplomatic and insincere speech. Is it not a fact that Comrade Enbayev and a group of other Tatar workers, whom I consider splendid practical workers in spite of their lack of ideological stamina, after Sultan-Galiyev's arrest addressed a demand to the Central Committee for his immediate release, vouching unreservedly for him and hinting that the documents found in Sultan-Galiyev's possession were not authentic? Is that not a fact? What, however, was revealed by the investigation? It was revealed that all the documents were authentic. Their authenticity was admitted by Sultan-Galiyev himself, who in fact gave more information regarding his sins than is contained in the documents, and confessed his guilt fully, without concealment, and, having confessed, repented. After all this is it not obvious that Comrade Enbayev should have admitted his error and dissociated himself from Sultan-Galiyev finally and irrevocably? But this Comrade Enbayev did not do. He found occasion to ridicule the "Lefts," but would not dissociate himself definitely, like a Communist, from the ideas of Sultan-Galiyev, from the abyss in which Sultan-Galiyev landed; he evidently expected that diplomacy would save him.

The speech of Comrade Firdevs was diplomacy from beginning

to end. Who led whom ideologically—Sultan-Galiyev Firdevs, or Firdevs Sultan-Galiyev—is a question I leave open. In my opinion, however, Firdevs led Sultan-Galiyev ideologically rather than the other way round. I see nothing particularly reprehensible in Sultan-Galiyev's exercises in theory. If Sultan-Galiyev had confined himself to the ideology of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism, it would not have been so bad. I would have said that this ideology might be tolerated in spite of the veto laid on it by the resolution of the Tenth Congress of the Party on the national question, and that we might confine ourselves to criticising it within the ranks of our Party. But when exercises in ideology end in the establishment of contacts with leaders of the Basmachi, with Validov and others, it becomes absolutely impossible to justify Basmach practice on the grounds of an innocent ideology, as Comrade Firdevs tries to do. You can deceive nobody by such a justification of Sultan-Galiyev's activities. It is possible in this way to justify imperialism and tsarism, for they also have their ideologies, which often look innocent enough. One cannot reason in this way. You are not facing a tribunal, but a conference of responsible workers, who demand of you straightforwardness and sincerity, and not diplomacy.

Comrade Khodzhanov spoke well, in my opinion, and Comrade Ikramov also did not speak badly. But I must mention a point in the speeches of these comrades which gives food for thought. They both said that there is no difference between present-day Turkestan and tsarist Turkestan, that only the signboard has been changed, that Turkestan has remained as it was under the tsar. Comrades, if this is not a slip, if this is a considered speech and was said deliberately, it must be said that the Basmachi are right and we are wrong. If Turkestan is really a colony, as it was under tsarism, then the Basmachi are right, and it is not we who should be trying Sultan-Galiyev, but Sultan-Galiyev who should be trying us for tolerating the existence of a colony under the Soviet government. If that is so, I fail to understand why you have not gone over to the Basmachi yourselves. Evidently, Comrades Khodzhanov and Ikramov have not thought over this passage in their speeches, for they cannot help knowing that present-day Soviet Turkestan radically differs from tsarist Turkestan. I wanted to point out this obscure passage

in the speeches of these comrades in order that the comrades should try to think this matter over and rectify their mistake.

I take upon myself certain of the charges brought by Comrade Ikramov against the work of the Central Committee to the effect that we were not always attentive and did not always succeed in raising in time the practical questions dictated by the situation in the Eastern republics and regions. Of course, the Central Committee is overburdened with work and is not in a position to attend to everything. It would be ridiculous to think that the Central Committee can do everything in time. Of course, there are not enough schools in Turkestan. The use of the local languages has not yet become the practice in the state institutions, the institutions have not been naturalised. Culture in general is at a low level. All this is true. But can it seriously be hoped that the Central Committee or the Party as a whole can raise the cultural level of Turkestan in two or three years? We are all shouting and complaining that Russian culture, the culture of the Russian people, which is more cultured than the other peoples of the Union of Republics, is at a low level. Ilyich is always crying that we have no culture yet, that there is no possibility of raising Russian culture appreciably in two or three, or even ten years. And if it is impossible to raise Russian culture in two or three, or even ten years, how can we demand a rapid rise in culture in the non-Russian, backward, semi-literate regions? Is it not clear that nine tenths of the "fault" lies with the circumstances of the situation, the backwardness, and, as the phrase is, nothing can be done about it?

About the "Lefts" and the Rights.

Do they exist in the Communist organisations in the regions and republics? Of course they do. That is undeniable.

Where do the Rights sin? In that they are not and cannot be an antidote to, a reliable bulwark against, the nationalist tendencies which are developing and becoming accentuated in connection with the New Economic Policy. The fact that the Sultan-Galiyev affair did occur, that it created a certain circle of supporters in the Eastern republics, especially in the Bashkir and Tatar Republics, leaves no doubt that the Right elements, which in these republics comprise an overwhelming majority, are not a sufficiently strong bulwark

against nationalism. It should be borne in mind that our Communist organisations in the border districts, in the republics and regions, can develop and firmly establish themselves, can become genuine internationalist, Marxist cadres, only if they get rid of their nationalism. Nationalism is the chief ideological obstacle to the training of Marxist cadres, of a Marxist vanguard in the border regions and republics. The history of our Party has shown that the Bolshevik Party, as far as its Russian members were concerned, grew and gained strength in the fight against Menshevism; for Menshevism is an ideology of the bourgeoisie, Menshevism is a channel for the penetration of bourgeois ideology into our Party, and without overcoming Menshevism the Party could not have become firmly established. Ilyich has written about this repeatedly. Only as Bolshevism overcame Menshevism in its organisational and ideological forms did it grow and become consolidated as a real leading party. The same must be said of nationalism in relation to our Communist organisations in the border regions and republics. In relation to these organisations nationalism is playing the same part as Menshevism played in the past in relation to the Party of the Bolsheviks. Only under cover of nationalism can various kinds of bourgeois, including Menshevik, influences penetrate into our organisations in the border regions. Our organisations in the republics can become Marxist cadres only if they are able to withstand the nationalist ideas which are pushing their way into our Party in the border regions, which are pushing their way into our Party because the bourgeoisie is reviving, the New Economic Policy is spreading, nationalism is growing; because there are still survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, which also tend to develop local nationalism, and because there is the influence of foreign states, which are fostering nationalism in every way. The fight against this enemy in the republics and regions represents a stage through which our Communist organisations in the national republics must pass if they want to grow in strength as genuinely Marxist organisations. There is no other way. And in this fight the Rights are weak. They are weak because they are infected with scepticism with regard to the Party and easily succumb to the influence of nationalism. That is

the sin of the Right wing of the Communist organisations in the republics and regions.

But no less, if not greater, is the sin of the "Lefts" in the border regions. While the Communist organisations in the border regions cannot grow strong and develop into genuinely Marxist cadres without ridding themselves of nationalism, these cadres themselves can become mass organisations, can rally the majority of the toiling masses around them, only if they learn to be sufficiently flexible to be able to draw into our state institutions all in any way reliable national elements by making concessions to them, and if they learn to combine a resolute fight against nationalism in the Party with as resolute a fight in drawing into Soviet work all more or less reliable elements among the local people, the intelligentsia, and so on. The "Lefts" in the border regions are more or less free of a sceptical attitude towards the Party, of a tendency to succumb to nationalism. But the sins of the "Lefts" lie in the fact that they show no flexibility in relation to the bourgeois-democratic and merely reliable elements of the population, that they are unable and unwilling to manoeuvre in order to secure the co-operation of these elements, that they distort the line of the Party in the matter of gaining the support of the majority of the toiling population in the country. Yet this flexibility and ability to combine the fight against nationalism with the task of drawing all in any way reliable elements into our state institutions must be created and developed at all costs. It can be created and developed only *if* we take into account all the complexity and the specific nature of the situation prevailing in our regions and republics; *if* we do not simply engage in transplanting the models that are being created in the central districts, which cannot be transplanted mechanically to the border regions; *if* we do not ignore the nationalistically inclined elements of the population, the nationalistically inclined petty bourgeois, and *if* we learn to draw these elements into the general work of the state. The sin of the "Lefts" is that they do not understand the first-rate importance of these complex Party tasks.

While the Rights create the danger that by their tendency to succumb to nationalism they may hinder the growth of our Communist cadres in the border regions, the "Lefts" create the danger that by

their enthusiasm for an over-simplified and quick-fire "communism" they may isolate our Party from the peasantry and from the broad strata of the local population.

Which of these dangers is the more dangerous? If the comrades who deviate towards the "Left" intend to continue practising in the localities their policy of artificially splitting the population—a policy which was practised not only in Chechnya and the Yakut Region, and not only in Turkestan . . . [*Ibragimov*: "They are tactics of differentiation."]—Comrade Ibragimov has just thought of calling the tactics of splitting the population tactics of differentiation, but that changes nothing—if, I repeat, they intend to continue practising their policy of splitting the population from above; if they think that Russian models can be transplanted to a specifically national milieu without regard for the customs of the population and for the concrete conditions; if they think that in fighting nationalism everything that is national must be thrown overboard; in a word, if the "Left" Communists in the border regions intend to remain incorrigible, I must say that of the two the "Left" danger may prove to be the more dangerous danger.

That is all I wanted to say about the "Lefts" and the Rights. I have run ahead somewhat, but that is because the whole conference has run ahead and anticipated the discussion of the second item.

We must whip up the Rights in order to make them, in order to teach them to fight nationalism, so as to forge real Communist cadres from among the local people. But we must also lash the "Lefts" in order to teach them to be flexible and to manoeuvre skilfully, so as to win over the broad masses of the population. All this is essential because, as Comrade Khodzhanov correctly remarked, the truth lies "between the two," between the Rights and the "Lefts."

II

On Training and Consolidating Marxist Cadres in the National Republics and Regions

(Extract from the report on the second item on the agenda: Practical Measures of Applying the Resolution of the Twelfth Congress of the Party on the National Question. June 10, 1923)

. . . I now pass to the methods of training and consolidating Marxist cadres from among local people, cadres which may serve as an important and, in the long run, decisive bulwark of the Soviet government in the border regions and the national republics. If we examine the development of our Party (I take its Russian section, the main section) and follow the principal stages in its development, and in an analogous way construct a picture of the development of our Communist organisations for the immediate future in the regions and republics, I think we shall find the key to the specific features which in these countries distinguish the development of our Party in the border regions. The principal task in the first period of development of our Party, of its Russian section, was to create cadres, Marxist cadres. These Marxist cadres were manufactured, forged, in our fight with Menshevism. The task of these cadres then, at that period—I am referring to the period from the foundation of the Bolshevik Party to the expulsion from the Party of the Liquidators, the most finished representatives of Menshevism—the main task was to win for the Bolsheviks the most active, honest and outstanding members of the working class, to create cadres, to forge a vanguard. In this respect, the struggle was waged primarily against tendencies of a bourgeois character—especially against Menshevism—which hindered the formation of cadres and their fusion into a single unit, as the core of the Party. At that time it was still not the immediate and urgent task of the Party to establish extensive connections with the vast masses of the working class and the toiling peasantry, to gain control over these masses, to win a majority in the country. The Party was not yet mature enough for that.

Only in the following stage of development of our Party, only in its second stage, when these cadres had grown, when they had be-

come the core of our Party, when the sympathies of the best elements among the working class had already been won, or almost won—only then did it become an immediate and urgent task of the Party to win over the masses, to transform the Party cadres into a real mass workers' party. During this period the core of our Party was obliged to combat not so much Menshevism as the "Left" elements within the Party, the "Otzovists" of all kinds, who were attempting to substitute revolutionary phraseology for a serious study of the distinctive features of the new situation which arose after 1905, who by their over-simplified "revolutionary" tactics were impeding the conversion of the cadres of our Party into a genuine mass party, who by their activities were creating the danger of the Party becoming divorced from the broad working-class masses. It need hardly be shown that had the Party not resolutely combated this "Left" danger, had the Party not overcome this danger, it could not have gained control over the vast toiling masses.

Such roughly is the picture of the fight on two fronts, against the Rights and the "Lefts," the picture of the development of the principal section of our Party, the Russian section.

Comrade Lenin very convincingly portrayed this essential and inevitable development of Communist Parties in his pamphlet *"Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder*. Comrade Lenin there proved that the Communist Parties in the West must pass and are already passing through approximately the same stages of development. We will add that the same must be said of the development of our Communist organisations and Communist Parties in the border regions.

It should, however, be noted that, despite the analogy between what the Party experienced in the past and what our Party organisations in the border regions are experiencing now, there are certain important specific features in the development of our Party in the national republics and regions for which we must under all circumstances make careful provision, for otherwise we shall risk committing a number of gross errors in defining the tasks of training Marxist cadres from among local people in the border regions.

Let us now examine these specific features.

The fight against the Right and "Left" elements in our organ-

isations in the border regions is necessary and essential, for otherwise we shall not be able to train Marxist cadres which are closely connected with the masses. That is clear. But the specific feature of the situation in the border regions, the feature that distinguishes it from the past development of our Party, is that the forging of cadres and their conversion into a mass party is taking place in the border regions not under a bourgeois system, as was the case in the history of our Party, but under a Soviet system, under the dictatorship of the proletariat. At that time, under the bourgeois system, it was possible and necessary, in accordance with the conditions of the times, to flay first the Mensheviks (in order to forge Marxist cadres) and then the Otzovists (in order to turn these cadres into a mass party), and the fight against these two deviations filled two entire periods in the history of our Party. Now, in accordance with present conditions, we cannot do this, for now the Party is in power, and being in power the Party needs in the border regions dependable Marxist cadres from among local people who are at the same time connected with the broad masses of the population. Now we cannot *first* beat the Rights with the help of the "Lefts," as was the case in the history of our Party, and *then* beat the "Lefts" with the help of the Rights. We must now wage a fight on both fronts *simultaneously* and strive to overcome both dangers, so as to have in the border regions cadres of local people schooled in Marxism and connected with the masses. At that time we could speak of cadres which were not as yet connected with the masses and which were to become connected with them in the following stage of development. Now it is ridiculous even to speak of this, because for Marxist cadres, under a Soviet government, not to be connected with the masses would mean the collapse of the Soviet government. They would be cadres altogether alien both to Marxism and to a mass party. All this considerably complicates matters and dictates to our Party organisations in the border regions the need for a simultaneous struggle against both the Rights and the "Lefts." This explains the position of our Party, which is fighting on two fronts, against both deviations simultaneously.

It should further be noted that the development of our Communist organisations in the border regions is not proceeding in

isolation, as was the case in the history of our Party in relation to its Russian section, but under the immediate influence of the core of our Party, which is experienced not only in forming Marxist cadres, but also in connecting these cadres with the broad masses of the population and in revolutionary manoeuvring in the fight for Soviet government. The specific feature of the situation in the border regions in this respect is that our Party organisations in these countries, owing to the conditions of development of Soviet government in these regions, can and must manipulate their forces for the purpose of strengthening their connections with the broad masses of the population, utilising for this purpose the rich store of experience accumulated by our Party in the past. Until recently the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party itself usually did the manoeuvring in the border regions, over the heads of the Party organisations in the border regions, sometimes even in spite of these organisations, drawing all in any way reliable national elements into the general work of Soviet construction. Now this work must be performed by the organisations in the border regions themselves. They can do it, and must do it, remembering that this is the best way of converting the Marxist cadres from among the local people into a genuine mass party capable of leading the majority of the population of the country.

These are the two specific features which must be strictly borne in mind in determining the line of our Party in the border regions in the work of training Marxist cadres and in the work of these cadres in winning over the broad masses of the population.

THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE MIDDLE STRATA

(1923)

THE problem of the middle strata is undoubtedly one of the fundamental problems of a workers' revolution. The middle strata are made up of the peasantry and the petty toiling population of the towns. Under this category must also be classed the oppressed nationalities, nine tenths of which consist of middle strata. As you see, these are the strata which according to their economic position stand midway between the proletariat and the capitalist class. The relative importance of these strata is due to two circumstances: in the first place, these strata represent a majority, or, at any rate, a considerable minority of the population of the existing states; in the second place, they constitute the important reserves from which the capitalist class recruits its army against the proletariat. The proletariat cannot maintain power unless it enjoys the sympathy and support of the middle strata, primarily of the peasantry, especially in a country like our Union of Republics. The proletariat cannot even seriously contemplate seizing power unless these strata have at least been neutralised, unless these strata have already become divorced from the capitalist class and unless in their mass they no longer constitute an army of capital. Hence the fight for the middle strata, the fight for the peasantry, which ran like a crimson thread through the whole of our revolution, from 1905 to 1917, a fight which is still far from ended and which will continue to be fought in the future.

One of the reasons for the defeat of the Revolution of 1848 in France was that it failed to evoke a sympathetic response among the French peasantry. One of the reasons for the fall of the Paris Commune was that it encountered the opposition of the middle strata, especially of the peasantry. The same must be said of the

Russian Revolution of 1905. Certain vulgar Marxists, chief among them Kautsky, basing themselves on the experience of European revolutions, have come to the conlusion that the middle strata, especially the peasantry, are almost the natural enemies of the workers' revolution; that therefore a more lengthy period of development must be contemplated, as a result of which the proletariat will become the majority of the nation and thereby the proper conditions will be created for the victory of the workers' revolution. On the basis of this conclusion, they, the vulgar Marxists, warned the proletariat against "premature" revolution. On the basis of this conclusion, they, from "motives of principle," left the middle strata to the complete sway of capital. On the basis of this conclusion, they prophesied the doom of the Russian October Revolution, on the grounds that the proletariat in Russia constitutes a minority, that Russia is a peasant country and that therefore a victorious workers' revolution in Russia is impossible.

It is noteworthy that Marx himself had an entirely different opinion of the middle strata, especially the peasantry. Whereas the vulgar Marxists, having washed their hands of the peasantry and surrendered them to the complete political sway of capital, noisily bragged of their "consistency of principle," Marx, the most consistent in principle of all Marxists, urgently advised the party of the Communists not to lose sight of the peasants, to win them over to the side of the proletariat and to make sure of their support in the coming proletarian revolution. We know that in the fifties, after the defeat of the February Revolution in France and in Germany, Marx wrote to Engels, and through him to the Communist Party of Germany, saying:

"The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility to back the proletarian revolution by some second edition of the Peasants' War." [52]

This was written in reference to the Germany of the fifties, a peasant country, in which the proletariat comprised an insignificant minority, in which the proletariat was less organised than the proletariat of Russia in 1917, and in which the peasantry, because of its status, was less disposed to support a proletarian revolution than was the case in Russia in 1917.

The "highly-principled" chatterboxes notwithstanding, the October Revolution undoubtedly presented that happy combination of a "peasant war" and a "proletarian revolution" of which Marx wrote. The October Revolution proved that such a combination is both possible and feasible. The October Revolution proved that the proletariat can seize power and retain it, provided it is able to sever the middle strata, especially the peasantry, from the capitalist class and provided it is able to convert these strata from reserves of capital into reserves of the proletariat.

In brief, the October Revolution was the first of all the revolutions in the world to give prominence to the problem of the middle strata, and primarily of the peasantry, and the first to solve it successfully, despite the "theories" and jeremiads of the heroes of the Second International.

This is the first merit of the October Revolution, if one may speak of merit at all in such a connection.

But the matter did not stop there. The October Revolution went further and tried to rally the oppressed nationalities around the proletariat. It has already been said that nine tenths of these nationalities consist of peasants and of the petty toiling population of the towns. This, however, does not exhaust the concept "oppressed nationality." Oppressed nationalities are usually oppressed not only as peasants and as urban toiling populations, but also as nationalities, *i.e.*, as the toilers of a definite state, language, culture, manner of life, customs and habits. The double burden of oppression cannot but tend to revolutionise the toiling masses of the oppressed nationalities, cannot but drive them to fight the principal force of oppression—capital. This circumstance was the basis on which the proletariat managed to achieve a combination of the "proletarian revolution" not only with a "peasant war" but also with a "national war." All this could not fail to extend the field of action of the proletarian revolution far beyond the confines of Russia; it could not fail to jeopardise the most deep-seated reserves of capital. If the fight for the middle strata of a given dominant nationality is a fight for the direct reserves of capital, the fight for the emancipation of the oppressed nationalities could not but be transformed into a fight for certain of the most deep-seated reserves of capital, into a fight for the emancipation of the colonial and non-sovereign

nations from the yoke of capital. This latter fight is still far from ended—more, it has not yet yielded even the first decisive successes. But this fight for the deep-seated reserves was started by the October Revolution, and it will undoubtedly unfold itself step by step with the development of imperialism, the growing power of our Union of Republics and the development of the proletarian revolution in the West.

In brief, the October Revolution in fact started the fight of the proletariat for the deep-seated reserves of capitalism among the masses of the oppressed and non-sovereign countries; it was the first to raise the standard of war for the conquest of these reserves. That is its second merit.

The winning of the peasantry in our country was effected under the banner of socialism. The peasantry, having received land from the proletariat, having defeated the landlords with the aid of the proletariat, and having risen to power under the leadership of the proletariat, could not but feel, could not but realise, that the process of its emancipation was proceeding, and would continue to proceed, under the banner of the proletariat, under its red banner. This circumstance could not but convert the banner of socialism, which had formerly been a bogey to the peasantry, into a banner which claimed its attention and aided its emancipation from its downtrodden condition, its destitution and oppression. The same is true, but to an even greater degree, of the oppressed nationalities. The call to fight for the emancipation of the nationalities, a call backed by such facts as the liberation of Finland, the evacuation of troops from Persia and China, the formation of the Union of Republics, the moral support openly given to the peoples of Turkey, China, Hindustan, Egypt—this call was first sounded by the people who were the victors in the October Revolution. The fact that Russia, which formerly served as a symbol of oppression in the eyes of the oppressed nationalities, has now, after it has become socialist, been transformed into a symbol of emancipation cannot be said to be a mere chance. Nor is it a mere chance that the name of the leader of the October Revolution, Comrade Lenin, is now a name cherished by the downtrodden, browbeaten peasants and revolutionary intelligentsia of the colonial and non-sovereign countries. If

Christianity was formerly regarded by the oppressed and downtrodden slaves of the vast Roman Empire as a rock of salvation, we are now reaching a point where socialism may serve (and is already beginning to serve) as a banner of liberation for the millions of the vast colonial states of imperialism. It can hardly be doubted that this circumstance served considerably to facilitate the fight against the prejudices to socialism, and to open the way for the ideas of socialism in the most remote corners of the oppressed countries. If formerly it was difficult for a Socialist to show himself with open visor among the non-proletarian middle strata of the oppressed or oppressor countries, today he can openly come forward and advocate the ideas of socialism among these strata and expect to be listened to, ay, and even hearkened to; for he is backed by so cogent an argument as the October Revolution. This also is a result of the October Revolution.

In brief, the October Revolution has cleared a path for the penetration of the ideas of socialism to the middle, non-proletarian, peasant strata of all nationalities and tribes; it has made the banner of socialism a popular banner among them—that is the third merit of the October Revolution.

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THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Extract from a Series of Lectures on the Foundations of Leninism
Delivered at the Sverdlov University
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FROM this theme I shall take the two principal questions: 1) the presentation of the problem; 2) the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples and the proletarian revolution.

1. THE PRESENTATION OF THE PROBLEM

In the course of the last two decades the national question has undergone a series of changes of very great importance. The national question in the period of the Second International and the national question in the period of Leninism are far from being the same thing. They differ profoundly from each other, not only in their scope, but also in their inherent character.

Formerly, the national question was usually confined to a small group of questions chiefly affecting "cultured" nationalities. The Irish, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Finns, the Serbs and several other nationalities in Europe made up the list of non-sovereign nations in whose fate the heroes of the Second International were interested. The countless millions of Asiatic and African peoples who were suffering under the yoke of national oppression in its crudest and most brutal form usually remained outside their field of vision. They could not make up their minds to put white and black, "cultured" and "uncultured" on the same plane. Two or three meaningless, lukewarm resolutions, which carefully evaded the question of colonial emancipation, were all the leading spirits of the Second International could boast of. Such a dual and half-hearted attitude to the national question must now be considered a thing of the past. Leninism laid bare this crying incongruity, broke down the wall between whites and blacks, between Europeans

and Asiatics, between the "cultured" and "uncultured" slaves of imperialism and thus linked the national question with the question of the colonies. In this way the national question was transformed from a partial and internal question of a particular state into a general and international question, into the world question of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples in the dependent countries and colonies from the yoke of imperialism.

Formerly, the principle of self-determination of nations was usually wrongly interpreted, not infrequently being narrowed down to mean the right of nations to autonomy. Certain leaders of the Second International even went so far as to convert the right of self-determination into the right to cultural autonomy, *i.e.*, the right of oppressed nations to have their own cultural institutions while the whole political power was to remain in the hands of the dominant nation. The result of this was that the idea of self-determination stood in danger of being transformed from a means of fighting annexations into a means of justifying them. Now this confusion must be regarded as eliminated. Leninism has broadened the conception of self-determination, interpreting it as the right of the oppressed peoples in dependent countries and colonies to complete secession, as the right of nations to independent political existence. This has precluded the possibility of justifying annexations by representing the right of self-determination as the right to autonomy. As to the principle of self-determination itself, it was thus changed from the means of deceiving the masses it undoubtedly was in the hands of the social-chauvinists during the imperialist war into a means of exposing all imperialist aspirations or chauvinist machinations, a means of politically educating the masses in the spirit of internationalism.

Formerly, the question of the oppressed nations was usually regarded purely as a juridical question. The solemn proclamation of 'national equality of status" and innumerable declarations of the "equality of nations" were what sustained the parties of the Second International, which slur over the fact that "equality of nations" under imperialism, when one group of nations (a minority) lives by exploiting another group of nations, is an insult to the oppressed nations. This bourgeois juridical view of the nation-

al question must now be considered exposed. Leninism brought the national question down from the lofty heights of high-sounding declarations to solid ground and declared that declarations regarding the "equality of nations" which are not reinforced by the proletarian parties giving direct support to the struggle for emancipation of the oppressed nations are meaningless and false. In this way the question of the oppressed nations became a question of rendering support and assistance, genuine and constant assistance, to the oppressed nations in their struggle against imperialism, in their struggle for a true equality of nations and for their independent existence as states.

Formerly, the national question was regarded in a reformist way, it was regarded as an independent question separate from the general question of capitalist rule, of the overthrow of imperialism and the proletarian revolution. It was tacitly assumed that the victory of the proletariat in Europe was possible without a direct alliance with the movement for emancipation in the colonies, that the national and colonial question could be solved surreptitiously, that it would solve itself, off the highroad of the proletarian revolution, without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism. Now this anti-revolutionary point of view must be considered exposed. Leninism has proved, and the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia have confirmed, that the national question can be solved only in connection with and on the basis of the proletarian revolution, and that the road to the victory of the revolution in the West lies through a revolutionary alliance with the liberation movement of the colonies and dependent countries against imperialism. The national question is part and parcel of the general question of the proletarian revolution, part and parcel of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The question is as follows: are the revolutionary possibilities inherent in the revolutionary movement for emancipation of the oppressed countries *already exhausted* or not; and if not, is there any hope, any basis for believing that these possibilities may be utilised for the proletarian revolution, that the dependent and colonial countries may be transformed from a reserve of the imperialist bourgeoisie into a reserve of the revolutionary proletariat, into an ally of the latter?

Leninism replies to this question in the affirmative, that is, it recognises that there are revolutionary capabilities inherent in the national liberation movement of the oppressed countries, and that they can be utilised for the purpose of overthrowing the common enemy, for the purpose of overthrowing imperialism. The mechanics of the development of imperialism, the imperialist war and the revolution in Russia entirely confirm the deductions made by Leninism in this respect.

Hence the necessity for the proletariat supporting, vigorously and actively supporting, the national liberation movement of the oppressed and dependent peoples.

This of course does not mean that the proletariat must support *every* national movement, everywhere and always, in every single, concrete instance. The point is that support must be given to those national movements which tend to weaken imperialism and bring about the overthrow of imperialism, and not to strengthen and preserve it. Cases occur when the national movements in certain oppressed countries come into conflict with the interests of the development of the proletarian movement. In such cases, of course, support is entirely out of the question. The rights of nations are not an isolated and self-contained question, but part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, a part which is subordinate to the whole and which must be dealt with from the point of view of the whole. In the forties of the last century, Marx favoured the national movement of the Poles and the Hungarians and was opposed to the national movement of the Czechs and the Southern Slavs. Why? Because the Czechs and the Southern Slavs were at that time "reactionary nations," "Russian outposts" in Europe, outposts of absolutism, whereas the Poles and the Hungarians were "revolutionary nations" which were fighting absolutism; because to give support to the national movement of the Czechs and Southern Slavs at that time would have been to give indirect support to tsarism, a most dangerous enemy of the revolutionary movement in Europe.

"The various demands of democracy," writes Lenin, "including self-determination, are not an absolute, they are *particles* of the general democratic (at present general socialist) *world* movement. In individual concrete cases, a particle may contradict the whole; if it does, then it must be rejected." ("The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *Collected Works,* Vol. XIX.)

Such is the position with regard to the various national movements, with regard to the possible reactionary character of these movements, that is, of course, if they are examined concretely, from the point of view of the interests of the revolutionary movement and not from the formal point of view, from the point of view of abstract rights.

The same must be said of the revolutionary character of national movements in general. The unquestionably revolutionary character of the overwhelming majority of national movements is as relative and specific as the possible reactionary character of certain national movements. The revolutionary character of a national movement in the conditions of imperialist oppression does not necessarily presuppose the existence of proletarian elements in the movement, the existence of a revolutionary or a republican programme of the movement, the existence of a democratic basis for the movement. The struggle which the Emir of Afghanistan is waging for the independence of his country is objectively a *revolutionary* struggle, despite the monarchist views of the Emir and his entourage, for it weakens, disintegrates and undermines imperialism, whereas the struggle waged by "desperate" democrats and "Socialists," "revolutionaries" and republicans, like, for example, Kerensky and Tsereteli, Renaudel and Scheidemann, Chernov and Dan, Henderson and Clynes during the imperialist war, was a *reactionary* struggle, for it resulted in the embellishment, the reinforcement and the victory of imperialism. For the same reason, the struggle which the Egyptian merchants and bourgeois intellectuals are waging for the independence of their country is objectively *revolutionary* despite the bourgeois origin and bourgeois calling of the leaders of the Egyptian national movement and despite the fact that they are opposed to socialism; whereas the fight the British Labour Government is waging to perpetuate Egypt's state of subjection is for the same reason a *reactionary* struggle, despite the proletarian origin and the

proletarian calling of the members of that government and despite the fact that they are "for" socialism. I will not even mention the national movement in other, more extensive, colonial and dependent countries like India and China, every step of which along the road to liberation, even though it runs counter to the formal demands of democracy, is a steam hammer blow at imperialism, *i.e.,* is undoubtedly a *revolutionary* step.

Lenin was right in saying that the national movement of the oppressed countries should be judged not from the point of view of formal democracy, but from the point of view of the actual results in the sum total of the struggle against imperialism, that is to say, "not in an isolated way, but on a world scale." ("The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *Collected Works,* Vol. XIX.)

2. The Liberation Movement of the Oppressed Peoples and the Proletarian Revolution

In its solution of the national question Leninism proceeds from the following propositions:

a) The world is divided into two camps: the camp of a handful of civilised nations which possess finance capital and exploit the vast majority of the population of the globe, and the camp of the oppressed and exploited peoples of the colonies and dependent countries that comprise that majority;

b) The colonies and the dependent countries, oppressed and exploited by finance capital, constitute an enormous reserve power and a most important source of strength for imperialism;

c) The revolutionary struggle of the oppressed peoples in the dependent and colonial countries against imperialism is the only road that leads to their emancipation from oppression and exploitation;

d) The principal colonial and dependent countries have already entered on the path of the national liberation movement, which is bound to bring about a crisis in world capitalism.

e) The interests of the proletarian movement in the advanced countries and of the national liberation movement in the colonies

require the fusion of these two aspects of the revolutionary movement into a common front against the common enemy, imperialism;

f) The victory of the working class in the developed countries and the liberation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism are impossible without the formation and the consolidation of the common revolutionary front;

g) The formation of a common revolutionary front is impossible unless the proletariat of the oppressor nations renders direct and determined support to the liberation movement of the oppressed peoples against the imperialism "of its own country," for "no nation can be free if it oppresses other nations" (Marx);

h) This support implies the advocacy, defence and realisation of the slogan of the right of nations to secession and to independent political existence;

i) Unless this slogan is put into effect, the amalgamation and collaboration of nations within a single world system of economy, which constitutes the material basis for the victory of socialism, will be impossible;

j) This amalgamation can only be a voluntary one and must be based on mutual confidence and fraternal relations between the nations.

Hence the two aspects, the two tendencies in the national question: the tendency towards political emancipation from imperialist fetters and the formation of an independent national state, arising out of imperialist oppression and colonial exploitation; and the tendency towards closer economic relations between the nations resulting from the formation of a world market and a world economic system.

"Developing capitalism," says Lenin, "knows of two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and of national movements, the struggle against all national oppression, the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of all sorts of relations between nations, the breaking down of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, and of economic life in general, of politics, of science, and so forth. Both tendencies are the universal law of capitalism. The first predominates at the beginning of its development, the second characterises capitalism mature and approaching its transformation into a socialist society." ("Critical Remarks on the National Question," *Collected Works*, Vol. XVII.)

For imperialism these two tendencies represent irreconcilable contradictions because imperialism cannot subsist without the exploitation of colonies and their forcible retention within the framework of "one integral whole," for imperialism can bring the nations closer to each other only through annexations and the seizure of colonies, without which it is, generally speaking, inconceivable.

For communism, on the contrary, these tendencies are only two sides of a single cause—that of the emancipation of the oppressed peoples from the yoke of imperialism; for communism knows that the amalgamation of the nations into a single world economic system is possible only on the basis of mutual confidence and voluntary agreement; that the formation of a voluntary amalgamation of nations must be preceded by the separation of the colonies from the "integral" imperialist "whole," by the transformation of the colonies into independent states.

Hence the necessity for a stubborn, incessant and determined struggle against the Great-Power chauvinism of the "Socialists" of the dominant nations (England, France, America, Italy, Japan, etc.) who do not want to fight their own imperialist governments, who do not want to support the struggle of the oppressed peoples in "their" colonies for emancipation from oppression and for political secession.

Without such a struggle it will be impossible to educate the working class of the dominant nations in the spirit of true internationalism, in the spirit of closer ties with the toiling masses of the dependent countries and colonies, in the spirit of actual preparation for the proletarian revolution. The revolution would not have triumphed in Russia, and Kolchak and Denikin would not have been crushed, if the Russian proletariat had not had the sympathy and support of the oppressed peoples of the former Russian Empire. But to win the sympathy and support of these peoples, it had first of all to break the chain forged by Russian imperialism and free these peoples from the yoke of national oppression. Without this it would have been impossible to consolidate the Soviet power, to implant true internationalism and to create that remarkable organisation for the collaboration of peoples

which is called the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and which is the living prototype of the future amalgamation of nations in a single world economic system.

Hence the necessity of fighting the national reserve, narrow-mindedness and aloofness of the Socialists in the oppressed countries who have no desire to look beyond their national "village pump" and who do not understand the connection between the liberation movement of their country and the proletarian movement of the dominant countries.

Without such a struggle it will be impossible to have the proletariat of the oppressed nations maintain an independent policy and its class solidarity with the proletariat of the dominant countries in the fight for the overthrow of the common enemy, in the fight for the overthrow of imperialism; without such a fight internationalism would be impossible.

This is the way to educate the toiling masses of the dominant and of the oppressed nations in the spirit of revolutionary internationalism.

This is what Lenin says of the two-fold work that Communism performs in educating the workers in the spirit of internationalism:

". . . Can this education . . . be *concretely identical* in large oppressing nations and in small oppressed nations, in annexing nations and in annexed nations?

"Obviously not. The way to the one goal: to complete equality, to the most intimate contact and to the subsequent *fusion of all* nations obviously proceeds here by different roads in each concrete case—in the same way, let us say, as the direction to a point in the middle of this page is towards the left from one side, and towards the right from the other. If a Socialist belonging to a large, oppressing, annexing nation, in advocating the fusion of nations in general, were to forget even for one moment that 'his' Nicholas II, 'his' Wilhelm, George, Poincaré, etc., *also stands for fusion* with the small nations (by means of annexations)—Nicholas II for 'fusion' with Galicia, Wilhelm II for 'fusion' with Belgium, etc.—such a Socialist would prove to be a ridiculous doctrinaire in theory and an abettor of imperialism in practice.

"The weight of emphasis in internationalist education for the workers in the oppressing countries must necessarily be that they must preach and uphold the right of secession for the oppressed countries. Without this there can be *no* internationalism. It is our right and duty to treat every Socialist of an oppressing nation who *fails* to conduct such propaganda as an imperialist and a scoundrel. This is an unconditional demand, even if the *chance* of secession being possible and 'feasible' before the introduction of socialism is only one in a thousand. . . .

"On the other hand, a Socialist belonging to a small nation must concentrate the weight of his agitation on the *second* word of our general formula: 'voluntary *amalgamation*' of nations. Without violating his duties as an internationalist he may be in favour of *either* the political independence of his nation *or* its inclusion in the neighbouring state, X, Y, Z, etc. But in all cases he must fight *against* small-nation narrow-mindedness, reserve and aloofness, he must fight for the recognition of the general and the whole, for the subordination of the interests of the particular to the interests of the general.

"Those who have not thought over the question thoroughly think there is a 'contradiction' in Socialists of oppressing nations insisting on the 'right of *secession*' while Socialists of oppressed nations insist on the 'right to *amalgamation*.' A little reflection, however, will show that from *this* position there is not, nor can there be, any *other* road towards internationalism and the fusion of nations." ("The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX.)

THE NATIONAL QUESTION IN YUGOSLAVIA

Speech Delivered in the Yugoslav Commission of the E.C.C.I., March 30, 1925

COMRADES, I think Comrade Semich has not fully understood the essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question. Neither before nor after the October Revolution did the Bolsheviks ever separate the national question from the general question of revolution. The essential feature of the Bolshevik approach to the national question was that the Bolsheviks always considered the national question in inseparable connection with the prospects of the revolution.

Comrade Semich quoted Lenin and said that Lenin was in favour of embodying some solution of the national question in the constitution. By this he, Comrade Semich, meant to say that Lenin as it were regarded the national question as a constitutional question, that is, not as a question of revolution, but as a question of reform. That is entirely wrong. Lenin never suffered nor could he have suffered from constitutional illusions. We have only to consult his works to be convinced of this. When Lenin spoke of a constitution, he had in mind, not the constitutional way of settling the national question, but the revolutionary way, that is to say, he conceived a constitution as resulting from the victory of the revolution. We in the U.S.S.R. also have a constitution, and it reflects a certain solution of the national question. However, this constitution came into being not as a result of a deal with the bourgeoisie, but as a result of a victorious revolution.

Comrade Semich further referred to Stalin's pamphlet on the national question written in 1912. In it he tried to find corroboration, even if indirect corroboration, of his point of view. But this reference served no purpose, because he did not and could not find, not only a quotation, but even a remote hint that would in the

least justify his "constitutional" approach to the national question. In confirmation of this, I might remind Comrade Semich of the passage in Stalin's pamphlet where a contrast is drawn between the Austrian method of settling the national question (constitutional) and the method of the Russian Marxists (revolutionary).

Here it is:

> "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 Marxists, 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."

Clear, one would think.

And this is not Stalin's personal view, but the general view of the Russian Marxists, who consider and have always considered the national question in inseparable connection with the general question of revolution.

It can be said without straining the matter that in the history of Russian Marxism there were two stages in the presentation of the national question, the first stage, or the pre-October stage, and the second, or the October stage. In the first stage, the national question was regarded as part of the general question of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, that is to say, as part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. In the second stage, when the national question assumed wider scope and became a question of colonies, when it became transformed from an internal political question into a world question, it came to be considered part of the general question of the proletarian revolution, part of the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In both stages, it will be seen, the approach was strictly revolutionary.

In my opinion, Comrade Semich has not yet quite grasped all this. Hence his attempt to reduce the national question to the level of a constitution, *i.e.*, to regard it as a question of reform.

From this mistake follows another, namely, he is loth to regard the national question as being virtually a peasant question; not

an agrarian, but a peasant question, for these are two different things. It is quite true that the national question must not be identified with the peasant question, for, in addition to peasant questions, the national question includes such questions as national culture, national statehood, etc. But it is also undoubted that the peasant question after all constitutes the basis and intrinsic essence of the national question. It is this that explains the fact that the peasantry represents the main army of the national movement; that without the peasant army, there is not nor can there be a powerful national movement. This is what is meant by saying that the national question is *virtually* a peasant question. I think Comrade Semich's reluctance to accept this formula is due to an underestimation of the internal strength of the national movement and a lack of understanding of the profoundly popular and profoundly revolutionary nature of the national movement. This lack of understanding and this underestimation represent a grave danger, for, in practice, they imply an underestimation of the potential might latent, for instance, in the movement of the Croats for national emancipation. This underestimation is pregnant with serious complications for the whole of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

This is Comrade Semich's second error.

His attempt to deal with the national question in Yugoslavia without reference to the international situation and the probable course of events in Europe must, undoubtedly, also be regarded as an error. Starting from the fact that at the present moment there is no serious popular movement for independence among the Croats and the Slovenes, Comrade Semich arrives at the conclusion that the question of the right of nations to secession is an academic question, that, at any rate, it is not an immediate one. This, of course, is incorrect. Even if we admit that at the moment this question is not an immediate one, it might definitely become immediate if war begins, or when war begins, if a revolution breaks out in Europe, or when it breaks out. That war will inevitably begin, and that they over there are bound to come to blows, there can be no doubt, in view of the nature and development of imperialism.

When in 1912 we Russian Marxists were drawing up the first

draft of our national programme, no serious movement for national independence existed in any of the border regions of the Russian Empire. Nevertheless, we deemed it necessary to include in our programme the point on the right of nations to self-determination, *i.e.*, the right of every nationality to secede and exist as an independent state. Why did we do this? Because we based ourselves not only on what then existed, but also on what was developing and impending in the general system of international relations; that is, we took into account not only the present, but also the future. We knew that if any nationality were to demand secession, the Russian Marxists would fight to ensure the right to secede for every such nationality. Comrade Semich in the course of his speech referred repeatedly to Stalin's pamphlet on the national question. But here is what is said about self-determination and independence in Stalin's pamphlet:

> "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. . . . 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."

This was written as far back as 1912. You know that subsequently this thesis was entirely corroborated, both during the war and afterwards, and particularly after the victory of the dictatorship of the proletariat in Russia.

All the more reason, therefore, why we must reckon with such possibilities in Europe in general, and in Yugoslavia in particular, especially now, when the national revolutionary movement is becoming ever more acute in the oppressed countries, and after the victory of the revolution in Russia. We must also bear in mind the circumstance that Yugoslavia is not a fully independent country, that she is tied up with certain imperialist groups, and that, consequently, she cannot escape the great play of forces that is at work outside of Yugoslavia. If you are drawing up a national programme for the Yugoslavian Party (and this is precisely what we are now dealing with), you must remember that this programme

must be based not only on what exists at present, but also on what is developing and what will inevitably occur by virtue of international relations. That is why I think that the question of the right of nations to self-determination should be regarded as an immediate and burning question.

Now about the national programme. As the starting point of the national programme we must postulate a Soviet revolution in Yugoslavia, we must postulate that without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the revolution the national problem cannot be solved at all satisfactorily. Of course, there may be exceptions; for instance, there was such an exception before the war when Norway separated from Sweden—of which Lenin treats in detail in one of his articles. But this was before the war and under an exceptional combination of favourable circumstances. After the war, and particularly after the victory of the Soviet revolution in Russia, such cases are hardly likely to occur. At any rate, the chances of their occurring are so slight that they can be placed at zero. But if that is so, it is clear that we cannot build our programme on a zero magnitude. That is why the postulate of a revolution must be the starting point of the national programme.

Further, it is imperative to include in the national programme a special point on the right of nations to self-determination, including the right to secession. I have already said why such a point cannot be omitted in the present internal and international conditions.

Finally, the programme should include a special point providing for national territorial autonomy for those nationalities in Yugoslavia which do not find it necessary to secede from that country. Those who think that such a contingency must be excluded are wrong. That is a mistake. Under certain circumstances, as a result of the victory of the Soviet revolution in Yugoslavia, it may well be that on the analogy of what occurred in Russia certain nationalities will not desire to secede. It is therefore clear that it is necessary to provide for such a contingency and have in the programme a point on autonomy, with a view to the transformation of the state of Yugoslavia into a federation of autonomous national states based on the Soviet system.

Thus, the right of secession must be provided for those nationalities that desire secession, and the right of autonomy for those nationalities that prefer to remain within the Yugoslavian state.

To avoid all misunderstanding, I must say that the *right* to secession must not be understood as an *obligation,* as a duty to secede. A nationality may take advantage of this right and secede, but it may also forego the right, and if it does not wish to exercise this right, that is its business, and we cannot but take cognisance of the fact. Some comrades turn this right of secession into an obligation, and demand from the Croats, for instance, that they secede *at all costs.* This position is wrong, and must be rejected. We must not confuse a right with an obligation.

The Bolshevik, No. 7
April 15, 1925

THE POLITICAL TASKS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE PEOPLES OF THE EAST

Speech Delivered at a Meeting of the Students of the University, May 18, 1925

COMRADES, first of all allow me to offer my congratulations on the occasion of the fourth anniversary of the foundation of the Communist University of the Toilers of the East. I need hardly say that I wish your university every success in the difficult task of training Communist cadres for the East.

Furthermore, I want to make my excuses for having visited you so seldom, although it is my duty to visit you more often. But what would you have? Pressure of affairs makes it impossible for me to visit you more often.

And now let us proceed to the question of the political tasks of the University of the Toilers of the East.

If we analyse the student body of the University of the Toilers of the East, we cannot help noting a certain duality in its composition. This university embraces representatives of not less than fifty nationalities and ethnic groups of the East. The students of the university are all children of the East. But this definition is not yet finished and clear-cut. The point is that among the students of the university there are two main groups representing two series of absolutely distinct conditions of development. The first group is composed of people who came to us from the Soviet East, from lands where the rule of the bourgeoisie no longer exists, where the yoke of imperialism has been overthrown and where the workers are in power. The second group of students is composed of people who have come to us from colonial and dependent countries, from countries where capitalism still reigns, where the oppression of imperialism has preserved all its severity, and where independence has still to be won by driving out the imperialists.

Thus we have before us two Easts, living different lives and developing under different conditions.

Needless to say, this dual character of the student body cannot but leave its impress on the work of the University of the Toilers of the East. It is this that explains why this university has one foot on Soviet soil and the other foot on the soil of the colonies and dependent countries.

Hence the two lines of activity of the university: one, the purpose of which is to train cadres competent to minister to the needs of the Soviet republics of the East, and the other, the purpose of which is to train cadres competent to minister to the revolutionary needs of the toiling masses in the colonies and dependent countries of the East.

Hence, also, the two kinds of tasks that confront the University of the Toilers of the East.

Let us examine each of these tasks of the U.T.E. separately.

I. TASKS OF THE U.T.E. IN RELATION TO THE SOVIET REPUBLICS OF THE EAST

What are the characteristic features in the existence and development of these countries, these republics, that distinguish them from the colonial and dependent countries?

Firstly, these republics are free from the yoke of imperialism.

Secondly, they are developing and consolidating themselves as nations not under the aegis of the bourgeois regime, but under the aegis of Soviet government. This is a fact without precedent in history, but it is a fact.

Thirdly, inasmuch as they are but slightly developed industrially, they can, in their development, rely fully and completely on the support of the industrial proletariat of the Soviet Union.

Fourthly, being free of the colonial yoke, finding themselves under the aegis of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and being members of the Soviet Union, these republics can and should become fellow-builders of socialism in our country.

The fundamental task is to help the workers and peasants of these republics to become fellow-builders of socialism in our country; to create and develop conditions, in accordance with the

specific circumstances of the life of each of these republics, that will promote and accelerate this fellowship.

Hence the immediate tasks which confront active workers in the Soviet East:

1. To create industrial centres in the Soviet republics of the East as bases on which the peasants can be rallied around the working class. You know that this work has already been begun and that it will progress with the economic growth of the Soviet Union. The fact that these countries possess all kinds of raw materials is a guarantee that in time this work will be completed.

2. To advance agriculture and above all irrigation. As you know, this work, too, is progressing, at least in Transcaucasia and in Turkestan.

3. To improve and advance co-operative organisation among the broad masses of the peasants and handicraftsmen as the most reliable way of bringing the Soviet republics of the East into the general system of Soviet economic development.

4. To bring the Soviets into closer touch with the masses; to make them national in composition, and in this way to implant a national Soviet state organisation that will be close and comprehensible to the toiling masses.

5. To develop national culture; to build up a wide system of courses and schools for both general education and vocational and technical training, teaching in the native languages, with the purpose of training Soviet, Party, trade union and economic cadres from among the native people.

It is the accomplishment of these tasks that will facilitate the work of socialist construction in the Soviet republics of the East.

People talk of model republics in the Soviet East. But what is a model republic? A model republic is one that honestly and conscientiously performs all these tasks, thereby creating an impulsion among the workers and peasants of neighbouring colonial and dependent countries towards the movement for emancipation.

I have spoken of bringing the Soviets into closer touch with the toiling masses of the nationalities, of naturalising the Soviets. But what does this mean, and how does it manifest itself in practice? I think that the recent delimitation of national frontiers in Turkestan may be regarded as an excellent example of how the Soviets can be brought into closer touch with the masses. The bourgeois press regards this delimitation of frontiers as "Bolshevik trickery." Yet it is clear that this is a manifestation not of "trickery," but of the profound aspiration of the masses of the people of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan for their own organs of government, which shall be close and comprehensible to them. In the pre-revolutionary era, both these countries were torn into fragments, into various khanates and states, and were a convenient field for the exploitatory machinations of the "powers that be." The time has now come when these scattered fragments can be *reunited* into independent states, so that the toiling masses of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan can be united and welded with the organs of government. The delimitation of frontiers in Turkestan is primarily the *reunion* of the scattered parts of these countries into independent states. The fact that these states then desired to join the Soviet Union as equal members thereof merely signifies that the Bolsheviks have found the key to the profound aspirations of the masses of the East, and that the Soviet Union is the only voluntary union of the toiling masses of various nationalities in the world. In order to reunite Poland, the bourgeoisie required a series of wars. But in order to reunite Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, the Communists required only a few months of explanatory propaganda.

That is the way to bring the organs of administration, in this case the Soviets, into close touch with the broad masses of the toilers of the various nationalities.

That is the proof that the Bolshevik national policy is the only right policy.

I further spoke of raising the level of national culture in the Soviet republics of the East. But what is national culture? How is it to be made compatible with proletarian culture? Did not Lenin, even before the war, say that there are two cultures—bourgeois culture and socialist culture—and that the demand for national culture is a reactionary demand of the bourgeoisie, which strives to infect the minds of the workers with the virus of nationalism? How are we to render the development of national culture, the development of schools and courses in the native languages, and

the training of Communist cadres from among local people, compatible with the building of socialism, with the building of a proletarian culture? Is this not an irreconcilable contradiction? Of course not! We are building a proletarian culture. That is absolutely true. But it is also true that proletarian culture, which is socialist in content, assumes different forms and methods of expression among the various peoples that have been drawn into the work of socialist construction, depending on differences of language, customs, and so forth. Proletarian in content and national in form—such is the universal human culture towards which socialism is marching. Proletarian culture does not cancel national culture, but lends it content. National culture, on the other hand, does not cancel proletarian culture, but lends it form. The demand for national culture was a bourgeois demand as long as the bourgeoisie was in power and the consolidation of nations proceeded under the aegis of the bourgeois system. The demand for national culture became a proletarian demand when the proletariat came into power and the consolidation of nations began to proceed under the aegis of Soviet government. Whoever has not grasped the fundamental difference between these two situations will never understand either Leninism or the essence of the national question from the standpoint of Leninism.

Certain persons (Kautsky, for instance) talk of the creation of a single universal language in the period of socialism and the dying away of all other languages. I have little faith in this theory of a single, all-embracing language. Experience, at any rate, speaks against rather than for such a theory. Until now the situation has been that the socialist revolution has not diminished but rather increased the number of languages; for, by stirring up the profound depths of humanity and by pushing them into the political arena, it awakens to new life a number of hitherto unknown or little known nationalities. Who could have imagined that old, tsarist Russia consisted of no less than fifty nationalities and ethnic groups? However, by breaking the old chains and bringing a number of forgotten peoples and nationalities on the scene, the October Revolution gave them new life and a new development. Nowadays, India is spoken of as a single whole. Yet there can

be hardly any doubt that in the case of a revolutionary upheaval in India many hitherto unknown nationalities, each with its own language and its own distinctive culture, will emerge on the scene. And if it is a question of the participation of various nationalities in the proletarian culture, there can be hardly any doubt that such participation will assume forms corresponding to the languages and the customs of these nationalities.

Not long ago I received a letter from some Buryat comrades asking me to explain the serious and difficult questions concerning the relation between universal culture and national culture. Here it is:

"We earnestly request you to explain the following, for us very serious and difficult, questions. The ultimate aim of the Communist Party is to achieve a single universal culture. How is the transition to the single universal culture through the national cultures, which are developing in our various autonomous republics, conceived? How is the assimilation of the peculiarities of the various national cultures (language and so forth) to take place?"

I think that what has just been said might serve as an answer to the question that is agitating these Buryat comrades.

The Buryat comrades raise the question of the assimilation of individual nationalities in the process of formation of a universal proletarian culture. Undoubtedly, certain nationalities may, and even certainly will, undergo a process of assimilation. Such processes have occurred before. But the point is that the process of assimilation of certain nationalities does not preclude, but rather presupposes, the opposite process of reinforcement and development of a number of powerful nationalities, for the partial process of assimilation is a result of the general process of development of nationalities. It is because of this that the possible assimilation of individual nationalities does not weaken, but, on the contrary, confirms the proposition, an absolutely correct proposition, that universal proletarian culture does not preclude, but rather presupposes and fosters national culture, just as national culture does not nullify, but rather supplements and enriches universal proletarian culture.

Such, in general, are the immediate tasks confronting the active workers of the Soviet republics of the East.

Such is the character and substance of these tasks.

The period of intense economic development and fresh concessions to the peasantry that has supervened must be turned to account in order to hasten the fulfilment of these tasks and thus help the Soviet republics of the East, which are principally peasant countries, in becoming fellow-builders of socialism in the Soviet Union.

It is said that the new policy of the Party towards the peasantry, by making a number of concessions (short-term leases, permission to employ hired labour), involves certain elements of retreat. Is that true? Yes, it is true. But these are elements of retreat which are conceded by us while the overwhelming superiority of forces is retained by the Party and the Soviet government. A stable currency, developing industry, developing transport, a credit system growing ever stronger, with the aid of which, by granting credits on favourable terms, one can ruin any given stratum of the population or raise it to a higher level without the least disturbance—all these are such reserves in the hands of the proletarian dictatorship that thanks to them certain elements of retreat on one sector of the front can but facilitate the preparations for a general offensive along the whole front. That is why certain fresh concessions made by the Party to the peasantry should at the present time help rather than hinder the peasantry in becoming fellow-builders of socialism.

What significance can this circumstance have for the Soviet republics of the East? Its significance can only be that it places in the hands of the active workers in these republics a new weapon with which to facilitate and accelerate the work of linking these countries with the general system of Soviet economic development.

Such is the connection between the policy of the Party in the rural districts and the immediate tasks confronting the active workers in the Soviet East.

In this connection, the task of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East is to train cadres for these republics in such a way as to ensure the fulfilment of those immediate tasks which have been enumerated.

The University of the Peoples of the East cannot cut itself off from life. It is not and must not be an institution standing aloof

from life. It must be bound up with real life with every fibre of its being. It cannot, therefore, abstract itself from the immediate tasks confronting the Soviet republics of the East. That is why the task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to take account of the immediate tasks of these republics when training the appropriate cadres for them.

And one must bear in mind the two deviations in the practice of the active workers in the Soviet East, which must be combated within the walls of this university if real cadres and real revolutionaries are to be trained for the Soviet East.

The first deviation lies in over-simplification, in an over-simplification of the tasks I have spoken of, in an attempt mechanically to transplant models of economic development which are quite comprehensible and practicable in the centre of the Soviet Union but which are absolutely inapplicable to the conditions of development of what are known as the border regions. The comrades who commit this deviation fail to understand two things. They do not understand that conditions in the centre and in the "border regions" are not the same and are far from being identical. They do not understand, furthermore, that the Soviet republics of the East themselves are not all alike, that some of them, for instance Georgia and Armenia, are at a higher stage of national integration, others, such as Chechnya and Kabarda, are at a lower stage of national integration, while others, such as Kirghizistan, occupy a position midway between the two extremes. These comrades do not understand that unless the work is adapted to local conditions, unless each and every peculiarity of each country is taken into account, nothing solid and stable can be built up. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from the masses and degenerate into Left phrasemongers. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in a spirit of irreconcilable warfare against such over-simplification.

The second deviation, on the contrary, lies in an exaggeration of local peculiarities, in the fact that the common and main thing which links these Eastern republics with the industrial regions of the Soviet Union is forgotten, that socialist tasks are hushed up and that adaptations are made to the aims of a narrow and re-

stricted nationalism. The comrades who commit this deviation are little concerned with the internal development of their country, they prefer to leave this development to the natural course of events. The most important thing for them is not internal development but "foreign" politics, the extension of the frontiers of their republic, litigation with neighbouring republics, the desire to filch territory from their neighbours, and thereby to find favour with the bourgeois nationalists in their country. The result of this deviation is that they become divorced from socialism and degenerate into ordinary bourgeois nationalists. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to train cadres in a spirit of irreconcilable warfare against this latent nationalism.

Such are the tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the Soviet republics of the East.

II. Tasks of the U.T.E. in Relation to the Colonies and Dependent Countries of the East

Let us now pass to the second question, the question of the tasks of the University of the Toilers of the East in relation to the colonies and dependent countries of the East.

What are the characteristic features in the life and development of these countries that distinguish them from the Soviet republics of the East?

Firstly, these countries are living and developing under the yoke of imperialism.

Secondly, the existence of a double yoke, the internal yoke (of their own bourgeoisie) and the external yoke (of the foreign imperialist bourgeoisie) intensifies and deepens the revolutionary crisis in these countries.

Thirdly, in certain of these countries, India for instance, capitalism is growing very rapidly and is engendering and causing to crystallise a more or less numerous class of native proletarians.

Fourthly, as the revolutionary movement progresses, the national bourgeoisie in such countries splits into two sections, a revolutionary section (the petty bourgeoisie) and a compromising section (the big bourgeoisie), the former of which continues the

revolutionary struggle, while the latter enters into a bloc with imperialism.

Fifthly, besides the imperialist bloc another bloc is formed in these countries, a bloc of the workers and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie, an anti-imperialist bloc which aims at complete liberation from imperialism.

Sixthly, the question of the hegemony of the proletariat in such countries and of the emancipation of the masses from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie is assuming an increasingly urgent character.

Seventhly, the last-named circumstance greatly facilitates the work of linking the national liberation movement in these countries with the proletarian movement in the more advanced countries of the West.

From this follow at least three deductions:

1. It is impossible to achieve the liberation of colonies and dependent countries from imperialism without a victorious revolution: you will not get independence gratis!

2. The revolution cannot be advanced and the complete independence of capitalistically developed colonies and dependent countries cannot be achieved unless the compromising national bourgeoisie is isolated, unless the petty-bourgeois revolutionary masses are freed from the influence of this bourgeoisie, unless the hegemony of the proletariat is established and unless the advanced elements of the working class are organised in an independent Communist Party.

3. No lasting victory can be achieved in colonial and dependent countries unless a real bond is established between the movement for emancipation in these countries and the proletarian movement in the advanced countries of the West.

The fundamental task of Communists in the colonies and dependent countries is to base their revolutionary work on these deductions.

What are the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries in view of these circumstances?

The peculiarity of the colonies and dependent countries at the present time is that a single and all-embracing colonial East no longer exists. In earlier days the colonial East was pictured as something single and homogeneous. This picture no longer corresponds to the truth. We have now at least three categories of colonies and dependent countries. Firstly, there are countries like Morocco, which have no proletariat or almost no proletariat, and which industrially are completely undeveloped. Secondly, there are countries like, China and Egypt, which are industrially little developed, and which have a comparatively small proletariat. Thirdly, there are countries like India, which are capitalistically more or less developed, and which possess a more or less numerous national proletariat.

Clearly, it is quite impossible to put all these countries in the same category.

In countries like Morocco, where the national bourgeoisie has yet no grounds for splitting into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, the task of the Communist elements is to do everything to create a united national front against imperialism. The separation of the Communist elements into a single Communist Party can take place in these countries only in the course of the struggle against imperialism, especially after a successful revolutionary war against imperialism.

In such countries as Egypt or China, where the national bourgeoisie is already split into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but where the compromising section of the bourgeoisie cannot yet become welded with imperialism, the Communists can no longer make it their aim to form a united national front against imperialism. In such countries the Communists must pass from the policy of a united national front to the policy of a revolutionary bloc of the workers and petty bourgeoisie. In such countries this bloc may assume the form of a single party of workers and peasants, like the Kuomintang [53], on the condition, however, that this peculiar kind of party shall *actually* represent a bloc of two forces—the Communist Party and the party of the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie. The task of this bloc is to expose the temporising spirit and inconsistency of the national bourgeoisie and to

wage a determined struggle against imperialism. A party with such a dual composition is both necessary and expedient, as long as it does not bind the Communist Party hand and foot, as long as it does not restrict the freedom of the Communist Party to carry on agitation and propaganda, as long as it does not hinder the rallying of the proletarians around the Communist Party, and as long as it facilitates the actual leadership of the revolutionary movement by the Communist Party. A party with such a dual composition is neither necessary nor expedient if it does not answer all these requirements; for it can only lead to the Communist elements becoming dissolved in the ranks of the bourgeoisie, to the Communist Party losing the proletarian army.

The situation is somewhat different in countries like India. The fundamental and new feature in the conditions of existence of such colonies as India is not only that the national bourgeoisie has split into a revolutionary party and a compromising party, but, primarily, that the compromising section of this bourgeoisie has already managed in the main to come to an agreement with imperialism. Dreading revolution more than imperialism, concerned more about its moneybags than about the interests of its own country, this section of the bourgeoisie, the wealthiest and most influential section, is completely going over to the camp of the irreconcilable enemies of the revolution, having entered into a bloc with imperialism against the workers and peasants of its own country. The victory of the revolution cannot be achieved unless this bloc is broken. But in order to break this bloc fire must be concentrated on the compromising national bourgeoisie: its treachery must be exposed, the toiling masses must be emancipated from its influence, and the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat must be systematically prepared. In other words, it is a question of preparing the proletariat of such colonies as India for the role of leader in the liberation movement, and of dislodging, step by step, the bourgeoisie and its spokesmen from this honourable position. The task is to create a revolutionary anti-imperialist bloc and to ensure the hegemony of the proletariat within this bloc. This bloc may, but not always necessarily, assume the form of a joint workers' and peasants' party formally bound by a single plat-

form. The independence of the Communist Parties in such countries must be the basic slogan of the advanced elements of Communism, for the way for the hegemony of the proletariat can be prepared and the latter can be achieved only by the Communist Party. But the Communist Party can and must enter into an open bloc with the revolutionary wing of the bourgeoisie in order, after having isolated the compromising national bourgeoisie, to lead the vast masses of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie in the fight against imperialism.

Hence, the immediate tasks of the revolutionary movement in capitalistically developed colonial and dependent countries are as follows:

1. To win over the best elements of the working class to the side of Communism and to form independent Communist Parties.
2. To set up a national revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, and the revolutionary intelligentsia against the bloc of the compromising national bourgeoisie and imperialism.
3. To ensure the hegemony of the proletariat in this bloc.
4. To strive to emancipate the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie from the influence of the compromising national bourgeoisie.
5. To achieve a bond between the liberation movement and the proletarian movement in the advanced countries.

Such are the three groups of immediate tasks which face the active workers in the colonial and dependent countries of the East.

These tasks assume a particularly important character and particular significance when considered in the light of the present international situation. The international situation at the present time is marked by the fact that the revolutionary movement has entered a period of temporary lull. But what is a lull, what can it signify at the present time? It can signify only that increased pressure will be brought to bear on the workers of the West, on the colonies of the East, and, primarily, on the Soviet Union, the standard-bearer of the revolutionary movement in all countries. There can be hardly a doubt that preparations for bringing such pressure to bear on the Soviet Union have already begun in the ranks of the imperialists. The campaign of calumny launched in connection with the rising in Esthonia, the fraudulent campaign

waged against the U.S.S.R. in connection with the explosion in Sofia, the general campaign against our country carried on by the bourgeois press—all this is but the preparatory stage for an offensive. It is an artillery barrage put up with the purpose of preparing public opinion, with the purpose of getting the ordinary public accustomed to attacks on the Soviet Union, with the purpose of creating the moral atmosphere for intervention. What will come of this campaign of lies and calumnies and whether the imperialists will venture on a serious offensive remains to be seen. But that these attacks bode no good to the colonies can hardly be doubted. Therefore the question of preparing a counter-blow by the united forces of the revolution to the probable blow of imperialism is an urgent and unavoidable question.

That is why the unswerving fulfilment of the urgent tasks of the revolutionary movement in the colonies and dependent countries assumes particular importance at the present moment.

In view of all these circumstances, what is the mission of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the colonies and dependent countries? Its mission is to take account of all the specific characteristics of the revolutionary development of these countries and to train cadres coming from these countries in a way that will ensure the fulfilment of the diverse tasks we have set forth.

In the University of the Peoples of the East there are about ten different groups of students who have come to us from colonial and dependent countries. We all know that these comrades thirst for light and knowledge. The task of the University of the Peoples of the East is to forge them into genuine revolutionaries, armed with the theory of Leninism, equipped with the practical experience of Leninism and capable of conscientiously fulfilling the immediate tasks facing the liberation movement in the colonies and dependent countries.

In this connection one must not lose sight of two deviations in the practice of the active workers of the colonial East, which must be combated if genuinely revolutionary cadres are to be trained.

The first deviation consists in underrating the revolutionary possibilities of the liberation movement and in overrating the idea of a united all-embracing national front in the colonies and dependent

countries, without due regard for the state and degree of development of these countries. This is a deviation to the Right, which threatens to degrade the revolutionary movement and to submerge the Communist elements in the general welter of bourgeois nationalists. It is the direct duty of the University of the Peoples of the East to combat this deviation with the utmost determination.

The second deviation consists in overrating the revolutionary possibilities of the liberation movement and in underrating the importance of an alliance between the working class and the revolutionary bourgeoisie against imperialism. The Communists in Java, who recently erroneously put forward the slogan of a Soviet government for their country, suffer, it seems, from this deviation. This is a deviation to the Left, which threatens to isolate the Communist Party from the masses and to transform it into a sect. A determined struggle against this deviation is an essential condition for the training of really revolutionary cadres for the colonies and dependent countries of the East.

Such, in general, are the political tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East in relation to the peoples of the Soviet East and the colonial East.

Let us hope that the University of the Peoples of the East will fulfil these tasks with credit.

THE NATIONAL QUESTION ONCE AGAIN

Re Comrade Semich's Article

(1925)

ONE can only welcome the fact that Comrade Semich now, after the discussion in the Yugoslav Commission, wholly and entirely subscribes in his article to the position of the Russian Communist Party delegation to the Comintern; but it would be incorrect to assume on the strength of this that there were no differences of opinion between the Russian Communist Party delegation on the one hand and Comrade Semich on the other, either before or during the discussion in the Yugoslav Commission. Comrade Semich apparently is inclined to take precisely this view of the differences of opinion on the national question and tries to represent them as misunderstandings. But, unfortunately, he is profoundly mistaken. He asserts in his article that the controversy with him was founded on "a series of misunderstandings" arising from a "not fully translated" speech he delivered in the Yugoslav Commission. In other words, it appears that the blame lies with the scapegoat who for some reason or other did not translate Comrade Semich's speech in full. I am obliged in the interests of truth to declare that Comrade Semich's assertion does not at all tally with the facts. It would have been better, of course, if Comrade Semich had supported his contention by quotations from his speech in the Yugoslav Commission preserved in the files of the Comintern. But for some reason or other he did not do this. I am therefore obliged to perform this not very pleasant but absolutely necessary procedure for Comrade Semich.

This is all the more necessary for the reason that, even now that Comrade Semich has entirely associated himself with the position of the Russian Communist Party delegation, there is not a little that is still unclear in his present position.

In my speech in the Yugoslav Commission (see *The Bolshevik*, No. 7),[1] I spoke of differences of opinion on three questions: 1) on the question of the ways of solving the national problem, 2) on the question of the intrinsic social substance of the national movement in the present historical epoch and 3) on the question of the role of the international element in the national question.

On the first question I maintained that Comrade Semich "has not fully understood the essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question," that he separates the national question from the general question of revolution, and that he thus adopts a course which reduces the national question to a constitutional question.

Is this correct?

Read the following passages from Comrade Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission (March 30, 1925), and judge for yourselves:

"Can the national question be reduced to a constitutional question? To begin with, let us make a theoretical statement. Let us assume that in a given state X there are three nations A, B, and C. These three nations express the wish to live in one state. What, in this case, is the point at issue? It is, of course, the regulation of the internal relations within this state. In other words, a constitutional question. In this theoretical case the national question is reduced to a constitutional question. . . . If, in this theoretical case, we reduce the national question to a constitutional question, it must be said—as I have always insisted—that the self-determination of nations, including secession, is a necessary condition for the solution of the constitutional question. And it is solely on this plane that I put the constitutional question."

I think that these passages from Comrade Semich's speech require no further comment. It is obvious that those who regard the national question as an integral part of the general question of the proletarian revolution cannot reduce it to a constitutional question. And, *vice versa,* only those who divorce the national question from the general question of the proletarian revolution can reduce it to a constitutional question.

In Comrade Semich's speech we find a statement to the effect that the right of national self-determination cannot be won without a revolutionary struggle. Comrade Semich says: "It is plain that such rights can be acquired only by a revolutionary struggle. They cannot be won by parliamentary methods, but can be called forth only

[1] See pp. 200-05 in this volume.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

by revolutionary mass action." But what is the meaning of "revolutionary struggle" and "revolutionary action"? Can "revolutionary struggle" and "revolutionary action" be identified with the overthrow of the ruling class, with the seizure of power, with the victory of the revolution, as a condition for the solution of the national problem? Of course not! It is one thing to say that the victory of the revolution is a fundamental condition for the solution of the national problem, and quite another thing to make "revolutionary action" and "revolutionary struggle" conditions for the solution of the national problem. It should be noted that the path of reform, the path of constitution, in no way precludes "revolutionary action" and "revolutionary struggle." The decisive factor determining the revolutionary or reformist character of any given party is not "revolutionary action" in itself, but the political aims and tasks on behalf of which the party adopts and utilises revolutionary action. The Russian Mensheviks in 1906, after the dissolution of the First Duma, as you know suggested the organisation of a "general strike," and even of "armed insurrection." But this in no way prevented them from remaining Mensheviks. For why did they propose all this at that time? Certainly not to smash tsarism and to organise the complete victory of the revolution; their aim was to "bring pressure to bear" on the tsarist government in order to win reforms, in order to secure an extension of the "constitution," in order to secure the convocation of an "improved" Duma. "Revolutionary action" *for* the reform of the old order *while power remains in the hands of the ruling class* is one thing—that is the constitutional path. "Revolutionary action" for the purpose of smashing the old order, of overthrowing the ruling class, is a different thing—that is the revolutionary path, the path making for the complete victory of the revolution. The difference here is a fundamental one.

This is why I think that when Comrade Semich refers to "revolutionary struggle" while at the same time reducing the national question to a constitutional question he does not refute, but rather confirms my statement that Comrade Semich "has not fully understood the essence of the Bolshevik presentation of the national question"; for he has not grasped the fact that the national question must be considered not in isolation, but in inseparable connection

with the question of the victory of the revolution, as a part of the general question of revolution.

While insisting on this, I do not in the least intend to assert that I have said anything new about Comrade Semich's mistake on this question. Not at all! Mention was already made of Comrade Semich's error by Comrade Manuilsky at the Fifth Congress of the Communist International, when he declared:

"In his pamphlet *The National Question in the Light of Marxism*, and in a number of articles published in the *Radnik*, the organ of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia, Comrade Semich advocates a struggle for the revision of the constitution as a practical Communist Party slogan, that is to say, he places the whole question of self-determination of nations exclusively on constitutional grounds." (*Stenographic Report of the Fifth Congress.*)

Comrade Zinoviev, too, referred to this same error in the Yugoslav Commission, when he said:

"Only one little thing, it appears, is lacking in Comrade Semich's picture: the revolution. [The national question is] a revolutionary problem, not a constitutional one." (*Pravda*, No. 83.).

It cannot be that all these comments of the representatives of the Russian Communist Party in the Comintern regarding Comrade Semich's error were fortuitous and devoid of foundation. Where there is smoke there is fire!

So much for Comrade Semich's first and fundamental mistake.

His other errors arise directly from this fundamental mistake.

As regards the second question, I said in my speech that Comrade Semich "is loth to regard the national question as being virtually a peasant question." (*The Bolshevik*, No. 7.)

Is this correct?

Read the following passage from Comrade Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission and judge for yourselves.

"What is the social meaning of the national movement in Yugoslavia?" asks Comrade Semich, and replies: "The social meaning lies in the competitive struggle between Serbian capital on the one hand, and Croat and Slovene capital on the other." (Comrade Semich's speech in the Yugoslav Commission.)

Of course, there can be no doubt that the competitive struggle between the Slovene and Croat bourgeoisie and the Serbian bourgeoisie must here play a certain part. But it is equally certain that

anyone who perceives the social meaning of the national movement in the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisie of various nationalities cannot regard the national question as being virtually a peasant question. What is the essence of the national question now that it has been transformed from a local, internal state question into a world question, a question of the struggle of the colonies and dependent nationalities against imperialism? The essence of the national question now lies in the struggle of the masses of the people of the colonies and dependent nationalities against financial exploitation, against political enslavement, and against the cultural effacement of these colonies and these nationalities by the imperialist bourgeoisie of the ruling nationality. What significance can the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of the various nationalities have, given such a presentation of the national question? Certainly not a decisive significance, and, in certain cases, not even a serious significance. It is perfectly obvious that the chief point here is not that the bourgeoisie of one nationality is beating or may beat the bourgeoisie of another nationality in the competitive struggle, but that the imperialist group of the ruling nationality is exploiting and oppressing the greater mass, and above all the peasant mass, of the colonies and dependent nationalities, and that by oppressing and exploiting them it is drawing them into the struggle against imperialism and making them allies of the proletarian revolution. The national question cannot be regarded as being virtually a peasant question if the social meaning of the national movement is reduced to the competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of the various nationalities. And, *vice versa*, the social meaning of the national question cannot be looked for in this competitive struggle between the bourgeoisies of the various nationalities if one regards the national question as being virtually a peasant question. To place the sign of equality between these two formulas is utterly out of the question.

Comrade Semich refers to a passage in Stalin's pamphlet *Marxism and the National Question*, written at the end of 1912. It is stated there that "the national struggle . . . is a struggle of the bourgeois classes among themselves." By this he is evidently trying to hint that his own formula defining the social meaning of the national

movement in present historical conditions is correct. But Stalin's pamphlet was written before the imperialist war, at a time when the national question in the eyes of Marxists had not yet assumed world significance, and when the basic demand of the Marxists, the right to self-determination, was judged to be not a part of the proletarian revolution, but a part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution. It would be absurd to ignore the fact that the international situation has radically changed since that time, that the war on the one hand and the October Revolution in Russia on the other have converted the national question from a part of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into a part of the proletarian-socialist revolution. As early as October 1916, Lenin, in his article "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up," said that the fundamental point of the national question, the right to self-determination, had ceased to form part of the general democratic movement and that it had become converted into a component part of the general proletarian socialist revolution. I will not mention later works of Lenin and of other representatives of Russian Communism on the national question. In view of all this, what interpretation can be placed on Comrade Semich's reference to a certain passage in a pamphlet by Stalin written in the period of the *bourgeois*-democratic revolution in Russia, now that, as a result of the new historical situation, we have entered a new era, the era of the world *proletarian* revolution? The only interpretation that can be placed on it is that Comrade Semich is quoting without reference to space and time and without reference to the actual historical situation, and that he is thereby violating the most elementary demands of dialectics and failing to take account of the fact that what is correct in one historical situation may prove to be incorrect in another historical situation. I have already said in my speech in the Yugoslav Commission that two stages must be distinguished in the presentation of the national question as given by the Russian Bolsheviks: the pre-October stage, when it was a matter of the bourgeois-democratic revolution and when the national question was regarded as part of the general democratic movement, and the October stage, when it was a matter of the proletarian revolution and when the national question had become a component part of the proletarian revolution.

There is hardly any need to prove that this is a distinction of decisive significance. I fear that Comrade Semich has not yet appreciated the meaning and significance of this difference between the two stages in the presentation of the national question.

That is why I think that Comrade Semich's attempt to regard the national movement not as being virtually a peasant question, but as being a question of competition between the bourgeoisies of various nationalities "is due to an underestimation of the internal strength of the national movement and a lack of understanding of the profoundly popular and profoundly revolutionary nature of the national movement." (*The Bolshevik*, No. 7.)

So much for Comrade Semich's second error.

It is noteworthy that the same thing was said about Comrade Semich's mistake by Comrade Zinoviev in his speech in the Yugoslav Commission when he declared:

> "Comrade Semich is wrong in asserting that in Yugoslavia the peasant movement is being led by the bourgeoisie and that it is therefore not revolutionary." (*Pravda*, No. 83.)

Is this a mere coincidence? Of course not!

Again, where there is smoke there is fire.

Finally, I maintained in regard to the third question that Comrade Semich is trying "to deal with the national question in Yugoslavia without reference to the international situation and the probable course of events in Europe."

Is this so?

Yes, it is. For in his speech Comrade Semich did not give even the remotest hint that the international situation under present-day conditions, especially in relation to Yugoslavia, is a very important factor in the settlement of the national question. The fact that the Yugoslav state itself came into being as a result of a tussle between the two main imperialist coalitions, that Yugoslavia cannot escape from the great play of forces that is now going on in the surrounding imperialist states—all this remained outside Comrade Semich's field of vision. Comrade Semich's statement that he can fully conceive of certain changes in the international situation which might render the question of self-determination an urgent and practical question must now, in the present international situation, be re-

garded as insufficient. It is not now at all a question of admitting that, given certain changes in the international situation, the right of nations to self-determination may become an urgent question in the possible and distant future. In case of need, even bourgeois democrats might now admit this as a prospect. This is not the point now; the point now is not to make the present frontiers of the state of Yugoslavia, which came about as a result of war and violence, the starting point and legitimate basis for the solution of the national problem. One or the other: either the question of national self-determination, that is, of a radical change in the frontiers of Yugoslavia, is merely an *appendage* to the national programme, dimly looming in the distant future, or it is the *basis* of the national programme. In any case, it is clear that the point on self-determination cannot at one and the same time be *both* an appendage to *and* the basis of the national programme of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. I fear that Comrade Semich still continues to regard the right of self-determination as a prospective appendage to the national programme.

This is why I think that Comrade Semich is divorcing the national question from the question of the general international situation, and that, in consequence, the question of the right of self-determination, that is, of changing the frontiers of Yugoslavia, is virtually for him not a question of actual moment but an academic question.

So much for Comrade Semich's third error.

It is noteworthy that Comrade Manuilsky said the same thing regarding Comrade Semich's error in his report to the Fifth Congress of the Communist International:

"The fundamental premise of Comrade Semich's whole presentation of the national question is the idea that the proletariat must accept the bourgeois state *within those frontiers which have been set up by a series of wars and acts of violence.*" [1] (*Stenographic Report of the Fifth Congress of the Communist International.*)

Can we regard this as a mere coincidence? Of course not.

Again, where there is smoke there is fire.

The Bolshevik, No. 11-12
June 30, 1925

[1] My italics.—*J.S.*

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO COMRADE KAGANOVICH AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE UKRAINE

(1926)

THE declarations of Comrade Shumsky contain certain true ideas. It is true that a widespread movement has begun and is developing in the Ukraine in favour of a Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life. It is true that this movement must in no circumstances be allowed to fall into the hands of elements alien to our cause. It is true that a number of Communists in the Ukraine fail to understand the meaning and significance of this movement and are therefore taking no measures to gain control of it. It is true that a radical change must be brought about among the cadres of our Party and Soviet workers, who are still imbued with a spirit of irony and scepticism towards Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life. It is true that we must carefully select and create cadres of people who will be capable of gaining control of the new movement in the Ukraine. All this is true. Nevertheless, Comrade Shumsky is guilty of at least two serious errors.

Firstly, he is confusing the Ukrainisation of our Party and Soviet apparatus with the Ukrainisation of the proletariat. We can and should, while observing a certain rate of speed, Ukrainise our Party, state and other apparatus serving the population. But the proletariat cannot be Ukrainised from above. You cannot *compel* the Russian working-class masses to renounce the Russian language and Russian culture and to adopt the Ukrainian culture and language as their own. This would be contrary to the principle of the freedom of development of nationalities. This would not be national freedom, but a specific form of national oppression. There is no doubt that the composition of the Ukrainian proletariat will change with the

industrial development of the Ukraine, in proportion to the influx into industry of Ukrainian workers from the surrounding countryside. There is no doubt that the composition of the Ukrainian proletariat will be Ukrainised, just as the composition of the proletariat of Latvia and Hungary, say, which at one time bore a German character, subsequently became Latvianised and Magyarised. But this process is a lengthy, spontaneous and natural one. To attempt to replace this spontaneous process by the forcible Ukrainisation of the proletariat from above would be a utopian and dangerous policy, capable of arousing anti-Ukrainian chauvinism among the non-Ukrainian sections of the proletariat of the Ukraine. It seems to me that Comrade Shumsky conceives Ukrainisation in a wrong light and fails to realise this latter danger.

Secondly, while he quite rightly stresses the beneficial character of the new movement in the Ukraine in favour of Ukrainian culture and social life, Comrade Shumsky does not however see the dark sides of the movement. Comrade Shumsky fails to realise that, in view of the weakness of the basic Communist cadres in the Ukraine, this movement, which is very frequently led by the non-Communist intelligentsia, may in places assume the character of a fight for the alienation of Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life from general Soviet culture and social life; that it may assume the character of a fight against "Moscow" in general, against the Russians in general, against Russian culture and its supreme achievement—Leninism. I will not attempt to demonstrate that this danger in the Ukraine is increasingly becoming a real one. I should only like to say that even certain of our Ukrainian Communists are not free of such taints. I have in mind such a generally known fact as the article by the Communist Khvylevoy which appeared in the Ukrainian press. Khvylevoy's demand for "the *immediate* de-Russification of the proletariat" of the Ukraine, his opinion that "Ukrainian poetry must get away from Russian literature and its style as quickly as possible," his assertion that "the ideas of the proletariat are known to us without Moscow art," his enthusiasm for a sort of Messianic role of the "young" Ukrainian intelligentsia and his ludicrous and non-Marxist attempt to divorce culture from politics—all this, and much like it, in the mouth of a Ukrainian Communist now sounds (must sound) more than strange. Whereas the proletarians of Western Europe and their Communist Parties are full of sympathy for "Moscow," the citadel of the international revolutionary movement and of Leninism, whereas the proletarians of Western Europe turn with joy towards the banner waving over Moscow, the Ukrainian Communist Khvylevoy has nothing better to say for "Moscow" than to appeal to Ukrainian public men to get away from "Moscow" "as quickly as possible." And this is called internationalism! What can we say of other Ukrainian intellectuals, not belonging to the Communist camp, if Communists begin to talk, and not only talk, but also to write in our Soviet press, in the language of Comrade Khvylevoy? Comrade Shumsky does not understand that control can be won over the new movement for a Ukrainian culture in the Ukraine only if such extremes as those of Comrade Khvylevoy are combated within the Communist ranks. Comrade Shumsky does not understand that it is only by combating such extremes that the rising Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian social life can be transformed into a *Soviet* culture and social life.

April 26, 1926
(*First published 1934*)

CHINA

Extract from a Speech on "The International Situation and the Defence of the U.S.S.R." Delivered at a Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the C.P.S.U., August 1, 1927

LET us now pass to the question of China. I shall not dwell on the mistakes committed by the opposition on the subject of the character and prospects of the Chinese revolution. I shall not do so because enough has been said, and said quite convincingly, on this subject, and it is not worth while repeating it. Nor shall I dwell on the assertion that in its present phase the Chinese revolution is a revolution on behalf of customs autonomy (Trotsky). Nor is it worth dwelling on the assertion that there are no feudal survivals in China, and that, even if there are, they are of no great significance, which renders the agrarian revolution in China absolutely incomprehensible (Trotsky and Radek). You no doubt already know from our Party press of these and similar mistakes of the opposition on the Chinese question.

Let us pass to an examination of the fundamental positions of Leninism on which the solution of the problems of revolution in colonial and dependent countries is based.

What is the fundamental position from which the Comintern and the Communist Parties generally approach the problems of the revolutionary movement in colonial and dependent countries?

It is a strict *differentiation* between revolution in imperialist countries, countries that oppress other peoples, and revolution in colonial and dependent countries, countries that suffer from the imperialist oppression of other states. Revolution in imperialist countries is one thing: in those countries the bourgeoisie is the oppressor of other peoples; it is counter-revolutionary in all stages of the revolution; the national element, as an element in the struggle

for emancipation, is absent in these countries. Revolution in colonial and dependent countries is another thing: in these countries the oppression exercised by the imperialism of other states is one of the factors of revolution; this oppression cannot but affect the national bourgeoisie also; the national bourgeoisie, at a certain stage and for a certain period, may support the revolutionary movement of its country against imperialism, and the national element, as an element in the struggle for emancipation, is a revolutionary factor. Not to make this differentiation, not to understand this difference and to identify revolution in imperialist countries with revolution in colonial countries, is to depart from the road of Marxism, from the road of Leninism, and adopt the road of those who support the Second International.

This is what Lenin said on the subject in his report on the national and colonial question at the Second Congress of the Comintern:

"What is the *most important and fundamental* idea of our theses? It is the *distinction* between *oppressed* and *oppressor* peoples. We emphasise this distinction, unlike the Second International and the bourgeois democrats."[1] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 351.)

The fundamental mistake of the opposition is that they do not understand and will not admit this difference between the one type of revolution and the other type of revolution.

The fundamental mistake of the opposition is that they *identify* the 1905 Revolution in Russia, an imperialist country, which oppressed other peoples, with the revolution in China, an oppressed country, a semi-colonial country, which is forced to resist the imperialist oppression of other states.

With us in Russia, in 1905, the revolution was directed against the bourgeoisie, against the liberal bourgeoisie, in spite of the fact that it was a bourgeois-democratic revolution. Why? Because the liberal bourgeoisie of an *imperialist* country is bound to be counter-revolutionary. And that is why the Bolsheviks at that time did not and could not consider temporary blocs and agreements with the liberal bourgeoisie. On these grounds, the opposition assert that the same attitude should be adopted in China in all stages of the

[1] My italics.—*J.S.*

revolutionary movement, and that temporary agreements and blocs with the national bourgeoisie in China are impermissible at all times and under all circumstances. But the opposition forget that only people who do not understand and will not admit that there is a difference between revolution in oppressed countries and revolution in oppressor countries can talk like this, that only people who are forsaking Leninism and joining the followers of the Second International can talk like this.

This is what Lenin said as to the permissibility of temporary agreements and blocs with the *bourgeois* liberation movement in colonial countries:

"The Communist International must join in a *temporary alliance* with the bourgeois democrats of the colonies and backward countries, but not merge with them, and must unconditionally preserve the independence of the proletarian movement even if it is in a quite incipient form." (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 290.)

" . . . We, as Communists, should, and will, *support the bourgeois liberation movements* in the colonial countries only when these movements are truly revolutionary movements, and when their representatives will not hamper us in educating and organising the peasantry and the masses of the exploited in the revolutionary spirit." [1] (*Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 353.)

How does it "happen" that Lenin, who fulminated against agreements with the bourgeoisie *in Russia*, regarded such agreements and blocs as permissible *in China*? Perhaps Lenin made a mistake? Perhaps he turned from revolutionary tactics to opportunist tactics? Of course not. It "happened" because Lenin understood the difference between revolution in an oppressed country and revolution in an oppressor country. It "happened" because Lenin understood that at a certain stage of its development the national bourgeoisie in the colonial countries may support the revolutionary movement of its country against foreign imperialism. This is what the opposition do not want to understand; and they do not want to understand it because they are breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Lenin, because they are breaking with the revolutionary tactics of Leninism.

Have you observed how carefully the leaders of the opposition in their speeches evaded these directions of Lenin's, how they feared to refer to them, in spite of the fact that Comrade Bukharin in his

[1] My italics.—*J.S.*

report bluntly confronted them with these directions of Lenin's? Why then do they evade these well-known directions given by Lenin on tactics in relation to the colonial and dependent countries? Why do they fear these directions? Because they fear the truth. Because Lenin's directions on tactics refute the whole ideological and political position of Trotskyism on the problems of the Chinese revolution.

Now as to the stages of the Chinese revolution. The opposition have got themselves so entangled that they are denying that there are any stages whatever in the development of the Chinese revolution. But were there ever revolutions without certain stages of development? Did not our revolution have its stages of development? Take Lenin's "April Theses" and you will see that Lenin discerned two stages in our revolution: the first stage was the bourgeois-democratic revolution, with the agrarian movement as its main axis; the second stage was the October Revolution, with the seizure of power by the proletariat as its main axis. What are the stages in the Chinese revolution? In my opinion they should be three: the first stage was the revolution of the general national *united* front, the Canton period, when the revolution was striking chiefly at foreign imperialism, and the national bourgeoisie supported the revolutionary movement; the second stage is the bourgeois-democratic revolution, after the national troops reached the Yangtse River, when the national bourgeoisie deserted the revolution and the agrarian movement grew into a mighty revolution of tens of millions of peasants (the Chinese revolution is at present in the second stage of its development); the third stage is the Soviet revolution, which has not yet come about, but which will come about. Whoever does not understand that there are no revolutions without definite stages of development, whoever does not understand that there are three stages in the development of the Chinese revolution, understands nothing either of Marxism or of the Chinese question.

What is the distinguishing feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution?

The distinguishing feature of the first stage of the Chinese revolution is that, firstly, it was a revolution of a general national united front, and that, secondly, it was directed mainly against

foreign imperialist oppression (the Hongkong strike, etc.). Is it true that Canton was then the centre, the *place d'armes* of the revolutionary movement in China? Absolutely. One must be blind not to see that now.

Is it true that the first stage of a colonial revolution must bear precisely such a character? I think it is true. In the Supplementary Theses for the Second Congress of the Communist International, which deal with the revolution in China and India, it is explicitly stated that in those countries "foreign domination perpetually hinders the development of social life" and that "therefore the *first step* of a revolution in the colonies must be to overthrow foreign capitalism." [1] (*Stenographic Report of the Second Congress of the Communist International.*)

The distinguishing feature of the Chinese revolution is that it has already made this "first step," that it has already passed through this first stage of its development, the period of the general national united front, and has entered the second stage of its development, the period of the agrarian revolution.

The distinguishing feature, for instance, of the Turkish revolution (the Kemalists), on the contrary, is that it has come to a standstill at the "first step," in the first stage of its development, in the stage of the bourgeois liberation movement, without even attempting to proceed to the second stage of its development, the stage of the agrarian revolution.

What was the nature of the Kuomintang and its government in the first stage of the revolution, the Canton period? They then consisted of a bloc of workers, peasants, bourgeois intellectuals and the national bourgeoisie. Was Canton at that time the centre of the revolutionary movement, the *place d'armes* of the revolution? Was it a correct policy at that time to support the Canton Kuomintang, as a government which stood for the struggle for emancipation from imperialism? Were we right when we supported Canton in China and, let us say, Angora in Turkey at a time when Canton and Angora were fighting imperialism? Yes, we were right. We were right, and we were then following in the footsteps of Lenin; because the struggle of Canton and Angora was causing a dispersion of the

[1] My italics.—*J.S.*

forces of imperialism, and enfeebling and undermining imperialism, and was thus facilitating the development of the hearth and home of the world revolution, the U.S.S.R. Is it true that the present leaders of the opposition at that time joined with us in supporting both Canton and Angora by rendering them certain assistance? Yes, it is true. Let nobody dare to doubt it.

But how are we to conceive a united front with the national bourgeoisie in the first stage of a colonial revolution? Does that mean that Communists must not stress the struggle of the workers and peasants against the landlords and the national bourgeoisie, that the proletariat must sacrifice its independence in the slightest degree or for a single moment? No, it does not. A united front can have revolutionary significance only if and when it does not hinder the Communist Party from conducting its independent political and organisational work, only if it does not prevent it from organising the proletariat into an independent political force, rousing the peasantry against the landlords, openly organising a revolution of workers and peasants and thus preparing the conditions necessary for the hegemony of the proletariat. I think that Comrade Bukharin in his report has fully demonstrated, on the basis of generally known documents, that it was precisely this conception of the united front that the Communist International was inculcating in the Chinese Communist Party.

Comrades Kamenev and Zinoviev have here referred to a single, solitary telegram sent to Shanghai in October 1926, stating that for the time being, until Shanghai was captured, the agrarian movement should not be forced. I am far from admitting that this telegram was right. I have never considered, and do not consider, that our Central Committee has never sinned. Individual mistakes are sometimes made, and this telegram was unquestionably a mistake. But, in the first place, *we ourselves cancelled this telegram* a few weeks later (in November 1926), without any directions whatever having been given by the opposition. In the second place, why have the opposition till now remained silent on this matter, why have they remembered this telegram only *after a lapse of nine months*, and why are they concealing from the Party the fact that this telegram was cancelled by us *nine months ago*? It would therefore be

a malicious slander to assert that this telegram was characteristic of the line of our leadership. As a matter of fact, it was an isolated, episodic telegram which was absolutely not characteristic of the line of the Communist International, of the line of our leadership. That is apparent, I repeat, from the fact that it was cancelled within a few weeks by a number of documents, which laid down a line and which were undoubtedly characteristic of our leadership.

Permit me to quote from these documents.

Here, for instance, is an extract from a resolution adopted by the Seventh Plenum of the Communist International *in November 1926, i.e.,* one month after the telegram mentioned above was sent:

"The peculiar feature of the present situation is its transitional character, in that the proletariat must choose between the prospect of a bloc with large sections of the bourgeoisie and the prospect of the continued consolidation of its alliance with the peasantry. *If the proletariat does not put forward a radical agrarian programme, it will be unable to draw the peasantry into the revolutionary struggle and will forfeit its hegemony in the national liberation movement.*" [1]

And further:

"The Canton People's Government will not be able to retain power in the revolution, will not be able to achieve a complete victory over alien imperialism and native reaction until the cause of national emancipation is *identified with the agrarian revolution.*" [1] (*Resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*)

Here you have a document which indeed lays down the line of the leadership of the Communist International.

It is strange indeed that the leaders of the opposition make no mention of this generally known document of the Communist International.

Perhaps it will not be immodest on my part to refer to the speech I myself made *in November of that same year, 1926,* in the Chinese Commission of the Communist International, in which, not without my participation, of course, the resolution of the Seventh Enlarged Plenum on the Chinese question was drawn up. This speech was subsequently published as a separate pamphlet entitled *The Prospects of the Revolution in China.* Here are some passages from this speech:

[1] My italics.—*J.S.*

"I know that there are certain people among the members of the Kuomintang, and even among the Chinese Communists, who do not consider it possible to unleash the revolution in the countryside, because they fear that if the peasantry is drawn into the revolution the united anti-imperialist front will be undermined. *This is a profound mistake,* comrades. *The anti-imperialist front in China will be the stronger and more powerful the sooner and more solidly the Chinese peasantry is drawn into the revolution.*"

And further:

"I know that there are among the Chinese Communists certain comrades who regard strikes of the workers for the improvement of their material and legal position as undesirable, and who dissuade the workers from resorting to strikes. [*Voice*: "That happened in Canton and Shanghai."] That is a big mistake, comrades. That is seriously underrating the role and weight of the proletariat in China. This must be pointed out in the theses as an unquestionably undesirable thing. It would be a big mistake were the Chinese Communists not to take advantage of the present favourable situation in order to assist the workers in improving their material and legal position, if only by strikes. For otherwise what is the revolution in China for?" (*Cf.* Stalin, *The Prospects of the Revolution in China.*)

And here is a third document, dated *December 1926,* written in a period when the Communist International was being bombarded from every city in China with the assertion that the extension of the struggle of the workers would lead to a crisis, to unemployment and the stoppage of mills and factories:

"A general policy of retreat in the towns and the winding-up of the struggle of the workers for the improvement of their conditions would be *a mistake.* The struggle in the countryside must be extended, but at the same time advantage must be taken of the favourable moment in order to improve the material and legal position of the workers, while striving in every way to lend the struggle of the workers an organised character, so as to preclude excesses and extreme precipitancy. Efforts must particularly be made to have the struggle in the towns directed against the big bourgeoisie, and especially against the imperialists, so that the Chinese petty bourgeoisie and middle bourgeoisie should as far as possible be kept within the united front against the common enemy. We regard the system of conciliation boards, boards of arbitration, etc., as expedient, provided that a correct working-class policy is ensured in these institutions. At the same time we deem fit to issue the warning that decrees directed against the right to strike, workers' meetings, etc., are absolutely impermissible. In view of the importance of this subject, send us regular information."

Here is a fourth document, relating to a period one and a half months prior to the coup of Chiang Kai-shek:

"The work of the Kuomintang and Communist cells in the army must be intensified; they must be organised wherever they do not now exist and wher-

ever their organisation is possible; where the organisation of Communist cells is impossible, intense work must be carried on with the help of concealed Communists.

"Our course must be steered towards *the arming of the workers and peasants, the transformation of the peasants' committees in the localities into the actual organs of power, accompanied by armed self-defence, etc.*

"The Communist Party must everywhere come out as such; a policy of voluntary semi-legality is impermissible; the Communist Party must not act as a brake on the mass movement; *the Communist Party must not screen the treacherous and reactionary policy of the Kuomintang Rights; in order to expose them the masses must be mobilised around the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party.*

"The attention of all political workers loyal to the revolution must be drawn to the fact that the Chinese revolution at the present moment, owing to a re-grouping of class forces and the concentration of the imperialist armies, is passing through a critical period and that its further success is possible only provided vigorous effort is made to develop the mass movement. Otherwise a tremendous danger threatens the revolution. The fulfilment of directives therefore becomes more than ever essential."

And even earlier, in *April 1926*, a year before the coup of the Kuomintang Rights and Chiang Kai-shek, the Communist International warned the Chinese Communist Party and pointed out that "matters must be so arranged as to secure the resignation or expulsion of the Rights from the Kuomintang."

That is how the Communist International conceived, and still conceives, the tactics of a united front against imperialism in the first stage of a colonial revolution.

Do the opposition know about these guiding documents? Of course they do. Why then do they hush up these guiding documents? Because they are out to cause trouble and not to achieve the truth.

And yet there was a time when the present leaders of the opposition, especially Comrades Zinoviev and Kamenev, used to have some inkling of Leninism and in the main advocated the same policy with regard to the Chinese revolutionary movement as was pursued by the Communist International and as was foreshadowed in his theses by Comrade Lenin. I am referring to the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International, held in *February and March 1926*, when Comrade Zinoviev was Chairman of the Communist International, when he was still a Leninist and had not yet migrated to the camp of Trotsky. I refer to the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International because there is a resolution of that plenum on the Chinese revolution, which was adopted unanimously in February-March

1926, and in which approximately the same estimate is given of the first stage of the Chinese revolution, of the Canton Kuomintang and of the Canton government, as is given by the Communist International and by the C.P.S.U., but from which the opposition are now dissociating themselves. I refer to this resolution because it was voted for by Comrade Zinoviev and because it was not objected to by a single member of the Central Committee, including Comrades Trotsky and Kamenev and the other leaders of the present opposition.

Permit me to quote certain passages from this resolution.

This is what is said in the resolution *on the Kuomintang*:

"The Shanghai and Hongkong political strikes of the Chinese workers (June-September 1925) marked a turning point in the struggle of the Chinese people for emancipation from the foreign imperialists. . . . The political action of the proletariat served as a powerful impulse to the further development and consolidation of all the revolutionary-democratic organisations in the country and especially of the people's revolutionary party, the Kuomintang, and the revolutionary government in Canton. The Kuomintang Party, the main body of which acted in an alliance with the Chinese Communists, represents *a revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, intellectuals, and the urban democracy*, based on the community of class interests of these strata as against the foreign imperialists and the whole military-feudal form of life, and aiming at the independence of the country and a single revolutionary-democratic government."[1] (*Resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the E.C.C.I.*)

Here we have the Canton Kuomintang described as an alliance of four classes. You will see that this is very much like "Martynovism," [54] sanctified by no less a person than the then Chairman of the Communist International, Comrade Zinoviev.

On the Canton Kuomintang government:

"*The revolutionary government created by the Kuomintang Party in Canton* has already succeeded in establishing contact with wide masses of workers, peasants, and the urban democracy, and, basing itself on them, has smashed the counter-revolutionary bands supported by the imperialists (and is working for the radical democratisation of the whole political life of the Kwantung Province). Thus, representing as it does the vanguard in the struggle of the Chinese people for independence, *the Canton government serves as a model for the future revolutionary-democratic upbuilding of the country.*"[1] (*Ibid.*)

It appears that the Canton Kuomintang government, which represented a bloc of four classes, was a *revolutionary* government, and

[1] My italics.—*J. S.*

not only revolutionary, but even a *model* for a future revolutionary-democratic government in China.

On a united front of workers, peasants and the bourgeoisie:

"In face of the new dangers, the Chinese Communist Party and the Kuomintang must develop widespread political work, organising mass action in support of the struggle of the people's armies, taking advantage of the internal contradictions within the camp of the imperialists and opposing to them a *united national revolutionary front of the wide strata of the population* (workers, peasants, *and the bourgeoisie*) under the leadership of revolutionary-democratic organisations." [1] (*Ibid.*)

It accordingly appears that temporary blocs and agreements with *the bourgeoisie* in colonial countries at a certain stage of the colonial revolution are not only permissible but definitely necessary.

This is, is it not, very like what Lenin says in his well-known recommendations regarding the tactics of Communists in colonial and dependent countries. Only it is a pity that Comrade Zinoviev has already managed to forget it.

On the question of *withdrawing from the Kuomintang*:

"Certain sections of the Chinese big bourgeoisie, which had for a time grouped themselves around the Kuomintang Party, have during the past year withdrawn from it, which has resulted in the formation on the Right wing of the Kuomintang of a small group who openly opposed a close alliance between the Kuomintang and the masses of the toilers, were in favour of expelling the Communists from the Kuomintang and were hostile to the revolutionary policy of the Canton government. *The condemnation of this Right wing at the Second Congress of the Kuomintang* (January 1926) *and the re-affirmation of the necessity for a militant alliance between the Kuomintang and the Communists endorse the revolutionary tendency of the activities of the Kuomintang and the Canton government and assure the Kuomintang the revolutionary support of the proletariat.*" [1] (*Ibid.*)

It appears then that for the Communists to have withdrawn from the Kuomintang in the first stage of the Chinese revolution would have been a serious mistake. Only it is a pity that Comrade Zinoviev, having voted for this resolution, managed to forget it only a month or so later. For it was no later than April 1926 (within a month) that Zinoviev demanded the immediate withdrawal of the Communists from the Kuomintang.

[1] My italics.—*J. S.*

On the deviations within the Chinese Communist Party and the impermissibility of desiring to skip the Kuomintang phase of the revolution:

"The political self-determination of the Chinese Communists will develop in the struggle against two equally harmful deviations: Right Liquidationism, which ignores the independent class aims of the Chinese proletariat and leads to a loose amalgamation with the general democratic national movement, and the extreme Left sentiments which tend to skip *the revolutionary-democratic stage of the movement* and directly to adopt the aims of the proletarian dictatorship and the Soviet government, *forgetting the peasantry*, that basic and decisive factor in the Chinese movement for national emancipation." [1] (*Ibid.*)

Here, as you see, are all the grounds for now convicting the opposition of desiring to skip the Kuomintang phase of development in China, of underestimating the peasant movement, and of a premature sally towards Soviets. It hits the nail on the head.

Is this resolution known to Comrades Zinoviev, Kamenev, and Trotsky?

One must assume that it is. At any rate it must be known to Comrade Zinoviev, under whose chairmanship at the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International the resolution was carried, and who himself voted for it. Why are the leaders of the opposition now evading this resolution of the highest body in the world Communist movement? Why are they hushing it up? Because it turns against them on every question of the Chinese revolution. Because it upsets the whole present Trotskyist standpoint of the opposition. Because they have parted ways with the Communist International, with Leninism, and now, fearing their past, fearing their own shadows, are obliged faint-heartedly to evade the resolution of the Sixth Plenum of the Communist International.

That is how matters stand in respect to the first stage of the Chinese revolution.

Let us now proceed to the second stage of the Chinese revolution.

While the first stage was distinguished by the fact that the edge of revolution was directed mainly against foreign imperialism, the distinguishing feature of the second stage is that the edge of revolution is now directed mainly against the internal enemies, and pri-

[1] My italics.—*J. S.*

marily against the feudal lords and the feudal regime. Has the first stage achieved its aim of overthrowing foreign imperialism? No, it has not. It has bequeathed this aim as a heritage to the second stage of the Chinese revolution. It only gave a preliminary jolt in rousing the revolutionary masses against imperialism, only to end its course and leave matters to the future. It must be presumed that neither will the second stage of the revolution entirely succeed in achieving the aim of expelling the imperialists. It will give another jolt in rousing the masses of Chinese workers and peasants against imperialism, but it will do so only to leave the consummation of the cause to the next stage of the Chinese revolution, the Soviet stage. There is nothing surprising in this. Do we not know that there were analogous facts, although in a different situation and under different circumstances, in the history of our revolution? Do we not know that the first stage of our revolution did not entirely achieve its aim of completing the agrarian revolution and that it bequeathed this aim to the next stage of the revolution, the October Revolution, which fully and completely achieved the aim of eradicating the survivals of feudalism? It will therefore be no matter for surprise if the second stage of the Chinese revolution does not entirely succeed in completing the agrarian revolution, and if the second stage of the revolution, having given a jolt to the peasant millions and roused them against the survivals of feudalism, bequeaths the completion of this cause to the next stage of the revolution, the Soviet stage. This will only be to the advantage of the future Soviet revolution in China.

What was the aim of the Communists in the second stage of the revolution in China, when the centre of the revolutionary movement had been patently transferred from Canton to Wuhan and when, in addition to the revolutionary centre in Wuhan, a counter-revolutionary centre was set up in Nanking? It was to take full advantage of every opportunity for the open organisation of the Party, the proletariat (trade unions), the peasantry (peasant unions), and the revolution generally. It was to impel the Wuhan Kuomintangists to the Left, towards the agrarian revolution. It was to make the Wuhan Kuomintang the centre of the fight against counter-revolution and

the nucleus of the future revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry.

Was this the right policy? The facts have shown that it was the only right policy, the only policy capable of training the masses of workers and peasants for a further development of the revolution.

The opposition at that time demanded the immediate formation of Soviets of Workers' and Peasants' Deputies. But this was sheer adventurism, an adventurist sally, for the immediate formation of Soviets at that time would have meant skipping the Left Kuomintang phase of development. Why? Because the Kuomintang in Wuhan, supporting as it did an alliance with the Communists, had not yet managed to discredit and expose itself in the eyes of the masses of workers and peasants and had not yet exhausted itself as a bourgeois revolutionary organisation. Because to have issued the call for Soviets and for the overthrow of the Wuhan government at a time when the masses had not yet grown convinced from their own experience of the worthlessness of that government and the necessity for its overthrow would have meant to rush ahead, to become divorced from the masses, to forfeit the support of the masses and thus to bring about the collapse of the cause undertaken. The opposition think that since they themselves have realised the unreliability, instability and insufficiently revolutionary character of the Wuhan Kuomintang (and it is easy for any qualified political worker to realise that), the masses must necessarily also realise all this, and that this is sufficient for the Kuomintang to be replaced by Soviets and for the following of the masses to be secured. But this is a customary ultra-Left mistake of the opposition, who confuse their own consciousness and understanding with the consciousness and understanding of the many millions of workers and peasants. The opposition are right when they say that the Party must go ahead. This is an ordinary Marxist proposition, failing the observance of which a Communist Party is not a real Communist Party. But it is only part of the truth. The whole truth consists in the fact that the Party should not only go ahead, but should also *lead* the millions. To go ahead and not lead the millions is in fact to fall behind the movement, to lag in its tail. To go ahead and to lose contact with the rearguard and not to be capable of leading the rearguard is

to make the kind of sally which may ruin the advance of the masses for some time. Leninist leadership in fact consists in the vanguard being capable of *leading* the rearguard, in the vanguard going ahead *without losing contact* with the masses. But in order that the vanguard should not lose contact with the masses, in order that the vanguard may be truly capable of leading the millions, one decisive condition is required, namely, *that the masses should have become convinced from their own experience that the instructions, directions and slogans of the vanguard are correct.* The misfortune of the opposition in fact is that they do not recognise this simple Leninist rule for leading the millions; that they do not realise that the Party alone, that an advanced group alone, without the support of the millions, is incapable of accomplishing a revolution, and that in the final analysis a revolution "is made" by the millions of the toilers.

Why in April 1917 did we Bolsheviks not put forward the practical demand for the overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of a Soviet government, although we were convinced that in the very near future we would be faced with the necessity of overthrowing the Provisional Government and establishing a Soviet government? Because the masses of the toilers both in the rear and at the front and, finally, the Soviets themselves were not in a position to subscribe to this demand and still believed in the revolutionary nature of the Provisional Government. Because the Provisional Government had not yet managed to disgrace and discredit itself by supporting counter-revolution in the rear and at the front. Why did Lenin stigmatise the Bogdatyev group in Leningrad in April 1917, who put forward the demand for the immediate overthrow of the Provisional Government and the establishment of a Soviet government? Because Bogdatyev's attempt was a risky sally and created the danger that the Bolshevik Party might be cut off from the millions of workers and peasants.

Adventurism in politics, Bogdatyevism in the problems of the Chinese revolution—that is what is now so fatal to our Trotskyist opposition.

Comrade Zinoviev says that when I talk about Bogdatyevism I am identifying the present Chinese revolution with the October

Revolution. That, of course, is nonsense. In the first place, I myself made the reservation in my article "Notes on Present-Day Themes" that "the analogy here is a conditional one" and that "I grant it with all necessary reservations, bearing in mind the difference between China in our day and Russia in 1917." In the second place, it would be stupid to assert that generally one must not draw analogies with revolutions in other countries when describing given tendencies and given mistakes committed in the revolution of a given country. Does not a revolution in one country learn from revolutions in other countries, even if these revolutions are of a different type? If not, what is the science of revolution reduced to? Zinoviev, in fact, denies the possibility of a science of revolution. Is it not a fact that in the period just prior to the October Revolution Lenin accused Chkheidze, Tsereteli, Steklov and others of the "Louis Blanc-ism" of the French Revolution of 1848? Examine Lenin's article "Louis Blanc-ism" and you will realise that Lenin made extensive use of analogies with the French Revolution of 1848 in describing the mistakes of various political figures before the October Revolution, even though Lenin was very well aware that the French Revolution of 1848 and our October Revolution were not revolutions of the same type. And if one may speak of the "Louis Blanc-ism" of Chkheidze and Tsereteli in the period prior to the October Revolution, why cannot one speak of the "Bogdatyevism" of Zinoviev and Trotsky in the period of the agrarian revolution in China?

The opposition assert that Wuhan was not a centre of the revolutionary movement. But why then did Comrade Zinoviev declare at the time that "it is necessary to give every assistance" to the Wuhan Kuomintang, so as to make it the centre of the struggle against the Chinese Cavaignacs? Why did the Wuhan territory, and no other, become the centre of maximum development of the agrarian movement? Is it not a fact that it was precisely the Wuhan territory (Hunan, Hupeh) which at the beginning of this year was the centre of maximum development of the agrarian movement? Why may Canton, where there was no mass agrarian movement, be called "the *place d'armes* of the revolution" (Trotsky), whereas Wuhan, on the territory of which the agrarian

revolution began and developed, must not be regarded as the centre, the *place d'armes* of the revolutionary movement? How in that case are we to explain the fact that the opposition demanded that the Communist Party should *remain* within the Wuhan Kuomintang and the Wuhan government? Can it be that in April 1927 the opposition favoured a bloc with the "counter-revolutionary" Wuhan Kuomintang? Whence this "forgetfulness" and confusion on the part of the opposition?

The opposition are jubilant over the fact that the bloc with the Wuhan Kuomintang proved to be short-lived; they moreover assert that the Communist International did not warn the Chinese Communists of the possibility of the collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang. It need hardly be shown that the jubilation of the opposition only testifies to their political bankruptcy. The opposition apparently think that blocs with the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries should be long-lived. But only people who have lost the last remnants of Leninism can think that. The fact that the feudal lords and imperialists in China proved at this stage to be stronger than the revolution, that the pressure exercised by these hostile forces induced the Wuhan Kuomintang to swing to the Right and led to the temporary defeat of the Chinese revolution, can be a cause for jubilation only for people infected with defeatism. As to the assertion of the opposition that the Communist International did not warn the Communist Party of China of the possibility of the collapse of the Wuhan Kuomintang, this is only one of the usual slanders with which the arsenal of the opposition now teems.

Permit me to cite several documents in refutation of the slanders of the opposition.

The first document, relating to May 1927:

"The most important thing in the internal policy of the Kuomintang now must be to develop the agrarian revolution systematically in all the provinces, and particularly in Kwantung, under the slogan 'All Power to the Peasant Unions and Committees in the Rural Districts.' *This is fundamental for the success of the revolution and of the Kuomintang.* This is fundamental for the creation in China of a big and powerful political and military army against imperialism and its agents. Practically, the slogan of confiscating the land is quite timely in the provinces infected by a powerful agrarian movement, such as Hunan, Kwantung, etc. *Without this the extension of the agrarian revolution is impossible. . . .*[1]

"The organisation must immediately be undertaken of eight or ten divisions of revolutionary peasants and workers with an absolutely reliable command. This will serve as a guard for Wuhan both at the front and in the rear for the disarming of unreliable divisions. This must not be delayed.

"Work must be intensified in the rear and within the divisions of Chiang Kai-shek, in order to disintegrate them, and assistance must be given to the peasant insurrectionaries in Kwantung, where the rule of the landlords is particularly intolerable."

Here is a second document, relating to May 1927:

"Without an agrarian revolution victory is impossible. Without it the Central Committee of the Kuomintang will be converted into a wretched plaything of unreliable generals. Excesses must be combated, not however with the help of troops but through the Peasant Unions. We are decidedly in favour of the land actually being seized by the masses from below. The fears regarding Tang Ping-shan's visit are not devoid of foundation [55]. You must not sever yourselves from the worker and peasant movement but must assist it in every possible way. *Otherwise you will ruin the cause.*

"Certain of the old leaders of the Central Committee of the Kuomintang are afraid of what is taking place, they are vacillating and compromising. A large number of new peasant and working-class leaders from the ranks must be drawn into the Central Committee of the Kuomintang. *Their bold voice will stiffen the backs of the old leaders, or throw them into the discard.* The present structure of the Kuomintang must be changed. The leadership of the Kuomintang must be freshened and reinforced by new leaders who have come to the fore in the agrarian revolution, while local organisations must be enlarged by bringing into them the millions belonging to the working-class and peasant unions. *Otherwise, the Kuomintang runs the risk of becoming divorced from realities and losing every atom of authority.*

"This dependence upon unreliable generals must be put an end to. Mobilise about 20,000 Communists, add about 50,000 revolutionary workers and peasants from Hunan and Hupeh, form several new army corps, utilise the students of the school for commanders and *organise your own reliable army before it is too late. Otherwise there can be no guarantee against failures.* It is a difficult matter, but there is no other course.

"Organise a Revolutionary Military Tribunal headed by prominent non-Communist Kuomintangists. *Punish officers who maintain contact with Chiang Kai-shek or who set the soldiers on the people, the workers and peasants.* Persuasion is not enough. It is time to act. *The scoundrels must be punished. If the Kuomintangists do not learn to be revolutionary Jacobins they will be lost both to the people and to the revolution."* [1]

As you see, the Communist International foresaw events, it gave timely admonition of the dangers and warned the Chinese Com-

[1] My italics.—*J. S.*

munists that the Wuhan Kuomintang would perish if the Kuomintangists failed to become revolutionary Jacobins.

Comrade Kamenev said that the policy of the Communist International was responsible for the defeat of the Chinese revolution and that we "bred Cavaignacs in China." Comrades, this sort of thing can be said of the Party only by one who is ready to commit a crime against the Party. This is the sort of thing that the Mensheviks said of the Bolsheviks during the July defeat of 1917, when the Russian Cavaignacs appeared on the scene. In his article "On Slogans," Lenin said that the July defeat was "a victory for the Cavaignacs." The Mensheviks at that time were burning with malice and asserted that Lenin's policy was responsible for the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs. Does Comrade Kamenev think that the appearance of the Russian Cavaignacs during the July defeat of 1917 was due to the policy of Lenin, the policy of our Party, and not to some other cause? Is it decent for Comrade Kamenev in this case to imitate the Menshevik gentlemen? [*Laughter.*] I did not suspect that the comrades of the opposition could sink so low. . . . We know that the Revolution of 1905 suffered defeat and that, moreover, that defeat was more profound than the present defeat of the Chinese revolution. The Mensheviks at that time said that it was the extreme revolutionary tactics of the Bolsheviks which were responsible for the defeat of the 1905 Revolution. Does Comrade Kamenev here too propose to take an example from the Menshevik interpretation of the history of our revolution and cast a stone at the Bolsheviks? And how are we to explain the defeat of the Bavarian Soviet Republic? By the policy of Lenin, perhaps, and not by the relation of class forces? How are we to explain the defeat of the Hungarian Soviet Republic? By the policy of the Communist International, perhaps, and not by the relation of class forces? How can it be asserted that the tactics of a party can abolish or reverse the relation of class forces? Was our policy in 1905 correct, or not? Why were we defeated at that time? Do not the facts go to show that if the policy of the opposition had been followed the revolution in China would have suffered defeat sooner than actually was the case? What are we to say of people who forget the relation of class

forces in time of revolution and who try to explain everything by the tactics of a party? Only one thing can be said of such people—that they have abandoned Marxism.

What are the conclusions? The chief mistakes of the opposition are as follows:

1. The opposition do not understand the nature and prospects of the Chinese revolution.

2. The opposition can see no difference between the revolution in China and the revolution in Russia, between revolution in colonial countries and revolution in imperialist countries.

3. The opposition are abandoning Leninist tactics in the attitude to be adopted towards the national bourgeoisie in colonial countries in the first stage of revolution.

4. The opposition do not understand the participation of Communists in the Kuomintang.

5. The opposition are violating the foundations of Leninist tactics in the question of the relations between the vanguard (the Party) and the rearguard (the mass of toilers).

6. The opposition are departing from the resolutions of the Sixth and Seventh Plenums of the Communist International.

The opposition noisily brag about their policy in the Chinese question and assert that had their policy been adopted in China the situation would now be much more favourable. It need hardly be shown that, in view of the gross mistakes committed by the opposition, the Chinese Communist Party, had it adopted the anti-Leninist and adventurist policy of the opposition, would have completely driven itself into an impasse. The fact that the Communist Party in China grew in a very short period from a small group of 2,000 into a mass party of 60,000 members; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in organising nearly 3,000,000 proletarians in trade unions during this period; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in arousing millions of peasants from their torpor and in drawing tens of millions of peasants into the revolutionary peasant unions; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during this period in winning over whole regiments and divisions of national troops; the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded during

this period in converting the idea of the hegemony of the proletariat from a wish into a fact—the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has succeeded in so brief a period in gaining all these achievements is due incidentally to the fact that it followed the path outlined by Lenin, the path indicated by the Communist International.

It need hardly be said that if the policy of the opposition, with their mistakes and their anti-Leninist line in the problems of colonial revolution, had been followed, these achievements of the Chinese revolution would either never have been secured at all or would have been reduced to a minimum.

Only ultra-Left renegades and adventurists can doubt this.

THE PROLETARIAN METHOD OF SOLVING THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

Extract from an Article Entitled "The International Character of the October Revolution"

(1927)

THE October Revolution has shaken imperialism not only in its centres of domination, in the "mother countries"; it has also severely affected the rear of imperialism, its periphery, having undermined the domination of imperialism in the colonial and dependent countries.

By overthrowing the landlords and capitalists, the October Revolution broke the chains of national-colonial oppression and freed every single oppressed nation in this vast state from its yoke. The proletariat cannot emancipate itself without emancipating the oppressed nations. It is a characteristic trait of the October Revolution that it accomplished these national-colonial revolutions in the U.S.S.R. not under the flag of national animosity and inter-national conflict, but under the flag of mutual confidence and fraternal amity between the workers and peasants of the nationalities inhabiting the U.S.S.R.; not in the name of *nationalism*, but in the name of *internationalism*.

It is precisely because the national-colonial revolutions in our country were accomplished under the leadership of the proletariat and under the banner of internationalism that the pariah nations, the slave nations, have for the *first time* in the history of mankind risen to the level of nations that are *really* free and *really* equal, and are setting a contagious example for the oppressed nations of the whole world.

This means that the October Revolution has *ushered in* a new era, the era of *colonial* revolutions, which are being conducted in

the *oppressed countries* of the world in *alliance* with the proletariat and *under the leadership* of the proletariat.

It was formerly the "accepted idea" that the world has been divided from time immemorial into inferior and superior races, into black peoples and white peoples, the former of which are unfit for civilisation and are doomed to be objects of exploitation, while the latter are the sole vehicles of civilisation, whose mission it is to exploit the former. This legend must now be regarded as shattered and discarded. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt this legend a mortal blow, by showing in practice that the liberated non-European nations, once having been drawn into the channel of Soviet development, are no less capable than the European nations of promoting a *truly* progressive culture and a *truly* progressive civilisation.

It was formerly the "accepted idea" that the only method of liberating the oppressed nations was that of *bourgeois nationalism,* the method of separating nations from each other, the method of disuniting them, the method of accentuating national animosity between the toiling masses of the various nations. This legend must now be regarded as disproved. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it has dealt this legend a mortal blow, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of the *proletarian, international* method of liberating oppressed nations, as being the only correct method, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of a *fraternal alliance* between the workers and peasants of the most diverse nations based on the principles of *voluntary consent* and *internationalism.* The existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the prototype of the future amalgamation of the toilers of all countries into a single world economic system, is but a direct proof of this.

It need hardly be said that these and similar results of the October Revolution could not and cannot but exercise an important influence on the revolutionary movement in the colonial and dependent countries. Facts like the growth of the revolutionary movement of the oppressed nations in China, Indonesia, India, etc.,

and their growing sympathy for the U.S.S.R. unquestionably bear this out.

The era of undisturbed exploitation and oppression of the colonies and dependent countries *is over.*

The era of revolutions for emancipation in the colonies and dependent countries, the era of the awakening of the *proletariat* of these countries, the era of its *hegemony* in the revolution, *has begun.*

Pravda, No. 255
November 5-7, 1927

DEVIATIONS ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Extract from a Report Delivered at the Sixteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U., June 27, 1930

THE picture of the struggle against deviations in the Party will be incomplete if we do not touch upon the deviations on the *national question* which exist in the Party. I have in mind, firstly, the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism and, secondly, the deviation towards local nationalism. These deviations are not so noticeable and insistent as the "Left" or Right deviations. They might be called creeping deviations. But this does not mean that they do not exist. They do exist and, what is more, they are growing. Of this there can be no doubt. There can be no doubt of this, because the general atmosphere of accentuated class struggle is bound to lead to a certain accentuation of national friction, which is in its way reflected in the Party. Therefore, we must lay bare the nature of these deviations and expose them to the light of day.

What is the essence of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism in our present-day conditions?

The essence of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism is an endeavour to ignore national differences of language, culture and mode of life; an endeavour to prepare the way for the liquidation of the national republics and regions; an endeavour to undermine the principle of national equality and bring into disrepute the Party policy of naturalising the administrative apparatus, and of naturalising the press, schools and other state and public organisations.

The deviators of this type proceed from the argument that since with the victory of socialism nations must become fused into a single whole, and their national languages must become converted into a single, common language, the time has come to put an end to national differences and to renounce the policy of fostering the

development of the national culture of formerly oppressed peoples. In this connection they usually refer to Lenin, misquoting him, and sometimes directly distorting and slandering him. Lenin said that under socialism the interests of nationalities will become fused into a single whole; does it not follow from this that it is time to put an end to the national republics and regions, in the interests of . . . internationalism? Lenin said in 1913 in the controversy with the Bundists that the watchword of national culture is a bourgeois watchword; does it not follow from this that it is time to put an end to the national culture of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., in the interests of . . . internationalism? Lenin said that national oppression and national barriers will be abolished under socialism; does it not follow from this that it is time to put an end to the policy of reckoning with the national peculiarities of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and to adopt the policy of assimilation, in the interests of . . . internationalism? And so on, and so forth.

There can be no doubt that this deviation in the national question, which, moreover, is decked by a mask of internationalism and the name of Lenin, is the most subtle and therefore the most dangerous form of Great-Russian nationalism.

Firstly, Lenin never said that national differences must disappear and national languages become fused into one common language within the boundaries of a *single* state, *before the victory* of socialism *on a world scale*. Lenin, on the contrary, said something diametrically opposite, namely, that "national and state *differences* among peoples and countries . . . will continue to exist for *a very long time*, even *after* the dictatorship of the proletariat has been established on *a world scale*." ("'Left-Wing' Communism, an Infantile Disorder," *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV.) How can people refer to Lenin and forget this cardinal statement of his?

True, one of the former Marxists, today a renegade and a reformist, Mr. Kautsky, says something which is quite contrary to what Lenin teaches us. He asserts, despite Lenin, that the victory of the proletarian revolution in a united Austro-German state in the middle of the last century would have led to the creation of a *single, common* German language, and to the *Germanising* of the

Czechs, because "the force of unfettered intercourse alone, the force of the modern culture brought by the Germans alone would, without any forcible Germanisation, *have transformed into Germans the backward Czech petty bourgeois, peasants and proletarians, who could expect nothing from their shabby nationality.*" (See his preface to the German edition of *Revolution and Counter-Revolution.*) Naturally, such a "conception" fully harmonises with Kautsky's social-chauvinism. It was these views of Kautsky's that I combated in 1925, in my speech to the University of the Peoples of the East. But can we, Marxists, who desire to be consistent internationalists, really attach any positive significance to such anti-Marxist rubbish of an arrant German social-chauvinist? Who is right, Kautsky or Lenin? If Kautsky is right, how can we explain the fact that such relatively backward nationalities as the White-Russians and the Ukrainians, which are closer to the Great-Russians than the Czechs are to the Germans, were not Russified as a result of the victory of the proletarian revolution in the U.S.S.R., but, on the contrary, were regenerated and developed as independent nations? How are we to explain the fact that, in spite of their backwardness, such nations as the Turkmens, the Kirghiz, the Uzbeks, the Tadjiks (not to mention the Georgians, Armenians, Azerbaidjanians, and so on), far from being Russified in consequence of the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R., were regenerated and developed into independent nations? Is it not clear that our worthy deviators, in their chase after sham internationalism, have fallen into the clutches of Kautskian social-chauvinism? Is it not clear that in agitating for one common language within the boundaries of a *single* state, within the boundaries of the U.S.S.R., they are in fact striving for the restoration of the *privileges* of the formerly dominant language, namely, the *Great-Russian* language? Where does internationalism come in here?

Secondly, Lenin never said that the abolition of national oppression and the fusion of the interests of nationalities into a single whole is equivalent to the abolition of national differences. We have abolished national oppression, we have abolished national privileges and established national equality. We have abolished state frontiers in the old sense of the term, frontier posts and

customs barriers between the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. We have established a unity of economic and political interests of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. But does this mean that we have thereby abolished national differences: national languages, culture, customs, and so on? Obviously, it does not mean that. But if national differences, language, culture, customs, and so on, remain, is it not obvious that the demand for the abolition of the national republics and regions in the present period of history is a reactionary demand, directed against the interests of the proletarian dictatorship? Do our deviators realise that to abolish the national republics and regions now would mean to deprive the vast masses of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. of the opportunity of receiving education in their *native* language, to deprive them of the opportunity of having their schools, courts, administration, public and other organisations and institutions operating in their *native* language, and to deprive them of the possibility of partaking in socialist construction? Is it not obvious that in the chase after a sham internationalism our deviators have fallen into the clutches of the reactionary Great-Russian chauvinists and have forgotten, completely forgotten, the watchword of cultural revolution in the period of proletarian dictatorship, which applies equally to *all* the peoples of the U.S.S.R., both to the Great-Russians and to the non–Great-Russians?

Thirdly, Lenin never said that the watchword of developing national culture *under the proletarian dictatorship* is a reactionary watchword. On the contrary, Lenin was always in favour of *helping* the peoples of the U.S.S.R. to develop their national culture. It was under the guidance of none other than Lenin that the Tenth Party Congress drew up and adopted a resolution on the national question which explicitly states that:

"The task of the Party is to *help* the toiling masses of the non–Great-Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which is ahead of them, and to *help* them a) to develop and consolidate their own Soviet state system in forms consistent with the national social conditions of these peoples; b) to develop and consolidate their own courts, administrative bodies, economic organs and government organs, functioning in the native language and recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs and psychology of the local population; c) to develop a press, schools, theatres, clubs and cultural and educational institutions generally functioning in the native language, and

d) to organise and develop an extensive system of courses and schools, both for general education and for vocational and technical training given in the native languages."

Is it not obvious that Lenin was entirely and completely in favour of the watchword of developing national culture *under the dictatorship of the proletariat*?

Is it not obvious that the denial of the watchword of national culture under the dictatorship of the proletariat is a denial of the necessity for the cultural progress of the non–Great-Russian peoples in the U.S.S.R., the denial of the necessity for universal compulsory education for these peoples, and their consignment to spiritual enslavement to the reactionary nationalists?

Lenin, it is true, described the watchword of national culture *under the supremacy of the bourgeoisie* as a reactionary watchword. But could it have been otherwise? What is national culture under the supremacy of the national bourgeoisie? A culture *bourgeois* in content and national in form, the aim of which is to infect the masses with the virus of nationalism and to consolidate the supremacy of the bourgeoisie. What is national culture under the dictatorship of the proletariat? A culture *socialist* in content and national in form, the aim of which is to educate the masses in the spirit of internationalism and to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat. How can these two fundamentallly different things be confused, unless one renounces Marxism? Is it not obvious that in fighting the watchword of national culture under the bourgeois system Lenin was striking at the bourgeois *content* of national culture, and not at its national form? It would be foolish to imagine that Lenin considered socialist culture to be a *non-national* culture, which did not possess a definite national form. The Bundists in fact did at one time attribute such nonsensical views to Lenin. But from Lenin's works we know that he vigorously protested against this slander and resolutely dissociated himself from such nonsense. Can it be that our worthy deviators have after all followed in the footsteps of the Bundists?

What remains, after what has been said, of the arguments of our deviators?

Nothing, except a juggling with the flag of internationalism and slanders against Lenin.

The deviators towards Great-Russian chauvinism are profoundly mistaken if they think that the period of the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is a period of decay and liquidation for national cultures. Quite the opposite is the case. As a matter of fact, the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat and the building of socialism in the U.S.S.R. is a period in which national culture, socialist in content and national in form, *blossoms*. Apparently they do not realise that the development of national cultures is bound to proceed *with a new impetus* when universal compulsory elementary education in the respective native languages has been introduced and has taken root. They fail to realise that only if the national cultures develop will it be possible to secure the real participation of the backward nationalities in the work of socialist construction. They do not realise that this is the very basis of the Leninist policy of *assisting* and *supporting* the development of the national cultures of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

It may seem strange that we, who are in favour of the *fusion* of national cultures in the future into one common culture (both in form and in content), with a single, common language, are at the same time in favour of the *blossoming* of national cultures at the present time, in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat. But there is nothing strange in this. The national cultures must be permitted to develop and expand and to reveal all their potential qualities, in order to create the conditions necessary for their fusion into a single, common culture with a single, common language. The blossoming of cultures national in form and socialist in content under a proletarian dictatorship in one country, *with the object of* their fusion into a single, common, socialist (both in form and content) culture, with a single, common language, when the proletariat is victorious throughout the world and socialism becomes an everyday matter—such is the dialectical nature of the Leninist presentation of the question of national culture.

It may be said that, presented in this way, the question is "self-contradictory." But is there not the same sort of "self-contradiction" in our treatment of the question of the state? We are in favour of the withering away of the state, yet we are at the same time in favour of strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat,

which represents the most powerful and mighty of all forms of state power that have hitherto existed. The supreme development of the power of the state, with the object of preparing the way for the withering away of state power—such is the Marxist formula. Is that "self-contradictory"? Yes, it is "self-contradictory." But this contradiction is a living thing, and it is a complete reflection of Marxian dialectics.

Or take, for example, the way Lenin presents the question of the right of nations to self-determination, including secession. Lenin sometimes expressed the thesis of national self-determination in the form of a simple formula: "disunion for the purpose of union." Just think—disunion for the purpose of union! It even smacks of the paradoxical. And yet this "self-contradictory" formula reflects that living truth of Marxian dialectics which enables the Bolsheviks to capture the most impregnable fortresses in the sphere of the national question.

The same must be said of the formula of national culture: the blossoming of national cultures (and languages) in the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat in one country, with the object of preparing the way for their dying away and fusion into a single, common, socialist culture (and a single, common language) in the period of the victory of socialism all over the world.

Whoever has failed to understand this peculiarity and this "self-contradictory" nature of our transitional times, whoever has failed to understand this dialectical character of historical processes, is lost to Marxism.

It is the misfortune of our deviators that they do not understand and do not want to understand Marxian dialectics.

That is the position with regard to the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism.

It is not difficult to understand that this deviation reflects the striving of the moribund classes of the formerly dominant Great-Russian nation to win back their lost privileges.

Hence the danger of Great-Russian chauvinism, the principal danger in the Party in the sphere of the national question.

What is the essence of the deviation towards local nationalism?

The essence of the deviation towards local nationalism consists

in the attempt to isolate oneself and shut oneself up within one's own national shell, in the attempt to hush up class differences within one's own nation, in the attempt to resist Great-Russian chauvinism by turning aside from the general current of socialist construction, in the attempt to shut one's eyes to that which brings together and unites the toiling masses of the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. and to see only that which tends to estrange them.

The deviation towards local nationalism reflects the dissatisfaction of the moribund classes of the formerly oppressed nations with the regime of the proletarian dictatorship, their endeavour to separate themselves off into their national state and there to establish their own class supremacy.

The danger of this deviation lies in the fact that it cultivates bourgeois nationalism, weakens the unity of the toiling peoples of the U.S.S.R. and plays into the hands of the interventionists.

That is the essence of the deviation towards local nationalism.

The task of the Party is to wage a resolute struggle against this deviation and to create the conditions necessary for the international education of the toiling masses of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPLY TO THE DISCUSSION

The second group of written questions concerns the national problem. One of these written questions, which I regard as the most interesting of all, compares the treatment of the problem of national languages in my report at the Sixteenth Congress with the treatment of it in my lecture at the University of the Peoples of the East in 1925 and finds a certain lack of clarity requiring elucidation. The note says:

> "You objected then to the theory [*Kautsky's*] about the dying away of national languages and the creation of a single, common language in the period of socialism [*in one country*], while now, in your report at the Sixteenth Congress, you declare that Communists favour the fusion of the national cultures and national languages into a single, common culture with a single, common language [*in the period of the victory of socialism on a world scale*]. Is there not a lack of clarity here?"

I think there is neither a lack of clarity nor a contradiction here. When I spoke in 1925, I was opposing Kautsky's national-

chauvinist theory, according to which a victory of the proletarian revolution in the middle of the last century in a united Austro-German state would have led to the fusion of nations into a single, common *German* nation with a single, common *German* language and to the *Germanising* of the Czechs. I objected to this theory on the grounds that it was an anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist theory, and cited facts from the life of our country after the victory of socialism in the U.S.S.R. which refute this theory. I still object to this theory, as is evident from my report at this Sixteenth Congress. I object to it because the theory of the fusion of all the nations of, say, the U.S.S.R. into a single, common *Great-Russian* nation with a single, common *Great-Russian* language is a national-chauvinist, anti-Leninist theory, which is contrary to the cardinal principle of Leninism that national differences cannot disappear in the near future, and that they are bound to remain for a long time, even after the victory of the proletarian revolution *on a world scale*. As to the remoter prospects of national cultures and national languages, I have always maintained, and continue to maintain, the Leninist view that in the period of the victory of socialism *on a world scale*, when socialism has been consolidated and has become a matter of everyday life, the national languages will inevitably fuse into a single, common language, which, of course, will be neither Great-Russian nor German, but something new. Of this I also spoke quite definitely in my report at the Sixteenth Congress.

Where then is the lack of clarity here, and what is it really that requires elucidation?

I think the writers of the note are not entirely clear on at least two points.

Firstly, they have not realised that we in the U.S.S.R. have already entered the period of socialism, and that in spite of the fact that we have entered this period the nations, far from dying away, are developing and blossoming. Have we, in fact, entered the period of socialism? Our period is usually called a period of transition from capitalism to socialism. It was called a transition period in 1918, when Lenin, in his famous article, "'Left-Wing' Childishness," first described this period with its five forms of

economic life. It is called a transition period today, in 1930, when some of these forms, having become obsolescent, are already going to the bottom, while one of them, namely, the new form in industry and agriculture, is growing and developing with unprecedented speed. Can it be said that these two transitional periods are identical, that they do not radically differ from each other? Clearly not. What did we have in 1918 in the economic sphere? A ruined industry and mechanical cigarette-lighters,[1] no collective or Soviet farms as a mass phenomenon, the growth of the "new" bourgeoisie in the towns and the kulaks in the country. What have we today? A socialist industry, restored and being reconstructed, a developed system of Soviet and collective farms embracing over forty per cent of the total sown area of the U.S.S.R. for spring crop alone, a moribund "new" bourgeoisie in the town and a moribund kulak class in the country. The first was a transitional period, the second is a transitional period. And yet they are as far removed as heaven and earth. And yet no one can deny that we are on the eve of liquidating the last important capitalist class, the kulak class. It is obvious that we have already emerged from the transitional period in the old sense and have entered a period of direct and extensive socialist construction along the whole line. It is obvious that we have already entered the period of socialism, because the socialist sector now controls all the economic levers of the entire national economy, although we are still a long way from the completion of a socialist society and the abolition of class differences. And yet, despite this, far from the national languages dying away and fusing into a single, common language, we find that the national cultures and the national languages are developing and blossoming. Is it not obvious that the theory of the dying away of national languages and their fusion into a single, common language within a *single* state in the period of extensive socialist construction, in the period of socialism in *one* country, is an incorrect, anti-Marxist, anti-Leninist theory?

Secondly, the writers of the note have not realised that the

[1] At that time, when the metal industry was in a state of disorganisation and the factories at a standstill, the workers frequently resorted to making cigarette-lighters for their own account.—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

dying away of national languages and their fusion into a single common language is not an *internal state question*, not a question of the victory of socialism in *one* country, but an *international* question, a question of the victory of socialism on an *international* scale. The writers of the note have failed to realise that we must not confuse the victory of socialism *in one country* with the victory of socialism *internationally*. It was not without good reason that Lenin said that national differences will remain for a long time even after the victory of the proletarian dictatorship on an international scale. Furthermore, we must bear in mind another circumstance which affects a number of nationalities of the U.S.S.R. There is a Ukraine in the U.S.S.R. But there is another Ukraine in other states. There is a White Russia in the U.S.S.R. But there is another White Russia in other states. Do you imagine that the question of the Ukrainian and White-Russian languages can be settled without taking these peculiar conditions into account? Take, further, the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. situated along the Southern frontier, from Azerbaidjan to Kazakstan and Buryat-Mongolia. They are all in the same position as the Ukraine and White Russia. Obviously, here too we have to reckon with the peculiar conditions of development of these nationalities. Is it not clear that all these and similar questions associated with the problem of national cultures and national languages cannot be settled within the framework of one state, within the framework of the U.S.S.R.?

That is the situation, comrades, as regards the national question in general, and the note on the national question I have mentioned in particular.

DEVIATIONS TOWARDS NATIONALISM

Extract from the Report on the Work of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U. Delivered at the Seventeenth Party Congress. January 26, 1934

OR take, for example, the *national question.* Here too, in the sphere of the national question, as in other questions, there is confusion in the minds of a certain section of the Party, which creates a certain danger. I have spoken of the tenacity of the survivals of capitalism. It should be observed that the survivals of capitalism in the minds of men are much more tenacious in the sphere of the national question than in any other sphere. They are more tenacious because they are able to disguise themselves in a national costume. Many think that Skrypnik's fall was an individual case, an exception to the rule. That is not true. The fall of Skrypnik and his group in the Ukraine is not exceptional. Similar "dislocations" are observable among certain comrades in other national republics.

What does a deviation towards nationalism mean—irrespective of whether it is a deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism or towards local nationalism? The deviation towards nationalism is the adaptation of the internationalist policy of the working class to the nationalist policy of the bourgeoisie. The deviation towards nationalism reflects the attempts of "one's own" "national" bourgeoisie to undermine the Soviet system and to restore capitalism. The source of these deviations is, as you see, a common one. It is a *departure* from Leninist internationalism. If you want to keep both these deviations under fire, then aim primarily against this source, against those who depart from internationalism—irrespective of whether the deviation is towards local nationalism or towards Great-Russian nationalism.

There is a controversy as to which deviation represents the

major danger, the deviation towards Great-Russian nationalism, or the deviation towards local nationalism. Under present conditions this is a formal and therefore a purposeless controversy. It would be absurd to attempt to give ready-made recipes for the major and minor danger suitable for all times and for all conditions. Such recipes do not exist. The major danger is the deviation against which one has ceased to fight and has thus enabled to grow into a danger to the state.

Only very recently, in the Ukraine, the deviation towards Ukrainian nationalism did not represent the major danger; but when they ceased to fight it and enabled it to grow to the extent that it joined forces with the interventionists, this deviation became the major danger. The question as to which is the major danger in the sphere of the national question is determined not by futile and formal controversies, but by a Marxist analysis of the situation at the given moment, and by a study of the mistakes that have been committed in this sphere.

APPENDIX

I. PRINCIPAL DECISIONS OF THE C.P.S.U. ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

RESOLUTION ON THE NATIONAL QUESTION

Adopted by the Seventh (April) All-Russian Conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party, 1917

THE policy of national oppression, inherited from the autocracy and monarchy, is supported by the landlords, capitalists and petty bourgeoisie in order to protect their class privileges and to cause disunity among the workers of the various nationalities. Modern imperialism, which accentuates the tendency to subjugate feeble nations, is a new factor intensifying national oppression.

To the extent that the elimination of national oppression is achievable at all in capitalist society, it is possible only under a consistently democratic republican structure and state administration that guarantee equality of status for all nations and languages.

The right of all the nations forming part of Russia to freely secede and form independent states shall be recognised. To negate this right, or to fail to take measures guaranteeing its practical realisation, is equivalent to supporting a policy of seizure and annexation. The recognition by the proletariat of the right of nations to secede can alone bring about complete solidarity among the workers of the various nations and help to bring the nations closer together on truly democratic lines.

The conflict which has at present arisen between Finland and the Russian Provisional Government is a striking illustration of the fact that the negation of the right of unhampered secession leads to a direct continuation of the policy of tsarism.

The question of the right of nations freely to secede must not be confused with the question of whether it would be expedient for any given nation to secede at any given moment. This latter question must be settled by the Party of the proletariat in each particular case independently, from the point of view of the interests of the social development as a whole and the class struggle of the proletariat for socialism.

The Party demands wide regional autonomy, the abolition of tutelage from above, the abolition of a compulsory state language and the determination of the boundaries of the self-governing and autonomous regions by the local population itself based on economic and social conditions, the national composition of the population, and so forth.

The Party of the proletariat decisively rejects what is known as "national cultural autonomy," under which education and so on is removed from the competence of the state and placed within the competence of something in the nature of National Diets. National cultural autonomy artificially divides the workers living in one locality, and even working in the same industrial enterprises, in accordance with their membership of a particular "national culture"; in other words it strengthens the ties between the workers and the bourgeois culture of individual nations, whereas the aim of Social-Democracy is to strengthen the international culture of the proletariat of the world.

The Party demands that a fundamental law shall be embodied in the constitution nullifying all privileges enjoyed by all nations whatever and all violations of the rights of national minorities.

The interests of the working class demand the amalgamation of the workers of all the nationalities of Russia into common proletarian organisations, political, trade union, co-operative, cultural, and so forth. Only such amalgamation of the workers of the various nationalities into common organisations will permit the proletariat to wage a successful struggle against international capital and bourgeois nationalism.

THE IMMEDIATE TASKS OF THE PARTY IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL PROBLEM

Resolution Adopted by the Tenth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, March 1921

I. The Capitalist System and National Oppression

1. Modern nations are a product of a definite epoch—the epoch of rising capitalism. The process of the abolition of feudalism and the development of capitalism was also the process of formation of people into nations. The British, French, Germans, and Italians formed into nations during the victorious march of capitalism and its triumph over feudal disunity.

2. Where the formation of nations on the whole coincided in time with the formation of centralised states, the nations naturally became invested in a state integument and developed into independent bourgeois national states. Such was the case with Great Britain (without Ireland), France and Italy. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the formation of centralised states, accelerated by the exigencies of self-defence (against the invasions of the Turks, Mongols, and others), took place prior to the break-up of feudalism and therefore prior to the formation of nations. Here, as a result, the nations did not, and could not, develop into national states, but formed into several mixed, multi-national bourgeois states, consisting of one powerful, dominant nation and several weak, subject nations. Such are Austria, Hungary, and Russia.

3. National states, such as France and Italy, depending at first mainly on their own national forces, were generally speaking unacquainted with

national oppression. In contradistinction, the multi-national states, based as they are on the domination of one nation—or rather of its ruling class—over the other nations, were the original home and the chief scene of national oppression and national movements. The contradictions between the interests of the ruling nations and the interests of the subject nations are such that unless they are solved the stable existence of multi-national states becomes impossible. The tragedy of the multi-national bourgeois state is that it is unable to overcome these contradictions and that every attempt it makes to "level" the nations and "protect" the national minorities while preserving private property and class inequality usually ends in a new failure and a further intensification of national hostilities.

4. The subsequent growth of capitalism in Europe, the need for new markets, the search for raw materials and fuel, and, finally, the development of imperialism, the export of capital, and the necessity of protecting the great sea and rail routes have led, on the one hand, to the seizure of new territories by the old national states and the conversion of the latter into multi-national (colonial) states with the national oppression and national conflicts characteristic of multi-national states (Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy), and, on the other hand, have intensified the strivings of the dominant nations in the old multi-national states not merely to preserve the old state boundaries but to extend them and to subjugate new (weak) nationalities at the expense of neighbouring states. In this way the national problem was enlarged and finally, in the very course of events, became merged with the general problem of the colonies; while national oppression was transformed from an internal question into an inter-state question, into a question of conflict (and war) between the "Great" imperialist powers for the subjugation of weak and non-sovereign nationalities.

5. The imperialist war, which exposed to their very roots the irreconcilable national contradictions and the internal insolvency of the bourgeois multi-national states, led to an extreme aggravation of national conflicts within the victorious colonial states (Great Britain, France, Italy), to the complete disintegration of the defeated former multi-national states (Austria, Hungary, Russia in 1917), and, finally—as the most "radical" solution of the national problem of which the bourgeoisie is capable—to the formation of new bourgeois national states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Finland, Georgia, Armenia, etc.). But the formation of new independent national states did not result, and could not result, in the peaceful co-existence of nationalities, and did not eliminate, and could not eliminate, either national inequality or national oppression; for the new national states, based as they are on private property and class inequality, cannot exist a) without oppressing their own national minorities (Poland, which oppresses the White-Russians, Jews, Lithuanians and Ukrainians; Georgia, which oppresses the Ossets, Abkhasians and Armenians; Yugoslavia, which oppresses the Croats and Bosnians, and others); b) without extending their territories at the expense of their neighbours, which leads to conflict and war (Poland

against Lithuania, the Ukraine and Russia; Yugoslavia against Bulgaria; Georgia against Armenia and Turkey, and so on); and c) without becoming subject financially, economically and militarily to the "Great" imperialist powers.

6. Thus the post-war period presents a gloomy picture of national enmity, inequality, oppression, conflict, war and imperialist brutality on the part of the nations of civilised countries, both towards each other and towards the non-sovereign peoples: on the one hand we have a few "Great" Powers, which oppress and exploit the mass of dependent and "independent" (but in fact wholly dependent) national states, and the struggle of these powers among themselves for the monopoly of exploiting the national states; and on the other hand we have the struggle of the national states, dependent and "independent," against the intolerable oppression of the "Great" Powers; the struggle of the national states among themselves for the extension of their national territory; the struggle of the national states, each in particular, against its own oppressed national minorities; and, finally, the growth of the movement for emancipation on the part of the colonies against the "Great" Powers and the intensification of national conflicts both within these powers and within the national states, which as a rule contain a number of national minorities. Such is the "world picture" inherited from the imperialist war.

Bourgeois society has proved to be utterly bankrupt in the matter of solving the national problem.

II. The Soviet System and National Freedom

1. Whereas private property and capital inevitably disunite people, inflame national enmity and intensify national oppression, collective property and labour just as inevitably bring people closer, undermine national dissension and destroy national oppression. The existence of capitalism without national oppression is just as inconceivable as the existence of socialism without the emancipation of oppressed nations, without national freedom. Chauvinism and national conflict are inevitable, unavoidable, as long as the peasantry (and the petty bourgeoisie—primarily of the sovereign nations—generally) is permeated with nationalist prejudices and follows the bourgeoisie; while, on the contrary, national peace and national freedom may be regarded as assured when the peasantry follows the proletariat, that is to say, when the dictatorship of the proletariat has been secured. Hence the triumph of the Soviets and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat is a basic condition for the abolition of national oppression, the institution of national equality and the guarantee of the rights of national minorities.

2. The experience of the Soviet revolution entirely bears out this assertion. The establishment of a Soviet system in Russia and the declaration of the right of nations to political secession have brought about a complete change in the relations between the toiling masses of the nationalities of

Russia; they have undermined the old national enmity, deprived national oppression of its foundation, won for the Russian workers the confidence of their brothers of other nationalities not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia, and have raised this confidence to a pitch of enthusiasm and readiness to fight for the common cause. The creation of Soviet republics in Azerbaidjan and Armenia has been productive of similar results and has put an end to national collisions and the "age-old" enmity between the Turkish and Armenian toiling masses and between the Armenian and Azerbaidjanian toiling masses. The same must be said of the temporary success of the Soviets in Hungary, Bavaria, Finland and Latvia. On the other hand, it may safely be said that the Russian workers could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin, and the Azerbaidjan and Armenian Republics could not have been put on their feet without the elimination of national enmity and national oppression at home, and without the confidence and enthusiasm displayed towards them by the toiling masses of the nationalities of the West and the East. The consolidation of the Soviet republics and the abolition of national oppression are two aspects of one and the same process of emancipation of the toilers from imperialist bondage.

3. But the existence of the Soviet republics, even the smallest in size, represents a fatal menace to imperialism. This menace lies not merely in the fact that the Soviet republics, having broken away from imperialism, have been converted from colonies and semi-colonies into really independent states and have thereby deprived the imperialists of a certain part of their territories and revenues, but also, and primarily, in the fact that the very existence of the Soviet republics, and every step taken by these republics in the direction of suppressing the bourgeoisie and consolidating the dictatorship of the proletariat, is a great piece of agitation against capitalism and imperialism, agitation for the emancipation of dependent countries from imperialist bondage, and an insuperable factor in the disintegration and disorganisation of capitalism in all its forms. Hence the inevitability of the struggle of the "Great" imperialist powers against the Soviet republics and the endeavours of the "Great" Powers to annihilate these republics. The history of the struggle of the "Great" Powers against Soviet Russia, in which they are raising against her one bourgeois border state after another and one group of counter-revolutionary generals after another, carefully blockading her and generally endeavouring to isolate her economically, furnishes eloquent testimony to the fact that under present international conditions, under the conditions of a capitalist encirclement, not a single Soviet republic taken alone can regard itself as secure against economic exhaustion and military destruction on the part of world imperialism.

4. Hence, in isolation, the existence of the various Soviet republics is uncertain and unstable because of the menace to their existence offered by the capitalist states. The joint interests of the Soviet republics in the matter of defence, in the first place, the restoration of the productive forces

shattered during the war, in the second place, and the fact that the Soviet republics which are rich in food must come to the aid of the Soviet republics which are poor in food, in the third place, all imperatively dictate the political union of the various Soviet republics as the only means of escaping imperialist bondage and national oppression. Having liberated themselves from their "own" and "foreign" bourgeoisies, the national Soviet republics can defend their existence and defeat the combined forces of imperialism only by amalgamating themselves into a close political union, or not at all.

5. A federation of Soviet republics based on common military and economic affairs is that general form of political union which makes it possible a) to guarantee the integrity and economic development both of the individual republics and of the federation as a whole; b) to embrace the various social, cultural and economic conditions of the various nations and peoples, which are at different levels of development, and accordingly to apply one form of federation or another; and c) to bring about the peaceful co-existence and fraternal collaboration of the nations and peoples which have in one form or another thrown in their lot with that of the federation. The experience of Russia in applying various forms of federation, passing from federation based on Soviet autonomy (the Kirghiz Republic, the Bashkir Republic, the Tatar Republic, the Gortsi, Daghestan) to federation based on contractual relations between independent Soviet republics (the Ukraine, Azerbaidjan), with intermediate phases (Turkestan, White Russia), has fully proved the value and flexibility of federation as a general form of political union for the Soviet republics.

6. But federation may be durable, and the results of federation real, only if it is based on mutual confidence and the voluntary consent of the countries constituting the federation. If the R.S.F.S.R. is the only country in the world in which the experiment in the peaceable co-existence and fraternal collaboration of a large number of nations and peoples has succeeded, it is because it contains neither ruling nor subject peoples, neither mother countries nor colonies, neither imperialism nor national oppression. In the R.S.F.S.R. federation rests on mutual confidence and a voluntary desire for union on the part of the toiling masses of the various nations. This voluntary character of the federation must absolutely be preserved in the future, for only a federation of this kind can serve as a transition stage to that supreme unity of the toilers of all countries in a single world economic system the necessity for which is growing more and more palpable.

III. Immediate Tasks of the Russian Communist Party

1. Since the proletarian revolution replaces the imperialist multi-national state by a free federation of national Soviet republics, the Soviet system ensures for the toilers of formerly oppressed nationalities a gradual and painless development towards communism and enables them to derive support from the revolutionary experience and organised strength of the proletariat of the advanced countries in their struggle against the survivals of national oppression and inequality and against their own exploiting upper classes.

The R.S.F.S.R. and its allied independent Soviet republics are representative of a population of about 140,000,000 people. Of these, the non-Great-Russian peoples amount to about 65,000,000 (Ukrainians, White-Russians, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, Turkmens, Tadjiks, Azerbaidjanians, Volga Tatars, Crimean Tatars, Bokharans, Khivans, Bashkirs, Armenians, Chechens, Kabardians, Ossets, Circassians, Ingushes, Karachais, Balkarians,[1] Kalmucks, Karelians, Avarians, Darghis, Kazikumukhians, Kurins, Kumyks,[2] Maris, Chuvashes, Vots, Volga Germans, Buryats, Yakutians, etc.). The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, towards these peoples was to destroy every germ of statehood among them, to cripple their culture, restrict the use of their native tongue, hold them in a state of ignorance, and, finally, as far as possible to Russify them. The effects of this policy are reflected in the low level of development and political backwardness of these peoples.

Now that the landlords and bourgeoisie have been overthrown and a Soviet government has been proclaimed by the masses of the people in these countries also, the task of the Party is to help the toiling masses of the non-Great-Russian peoples to catch up with Central Russia, which is ahead of them, and to help them a) to develop and consolidate their own Soviet state system in forms consistent with the national social conditions of these peoples; b) to develop and consolidate their own courts, administrative bodies, economic organs and government organs, functioning in the native language and recruited from among local people acquainted with the customs and psychology of the local population; c) to develop a press, schools, theatres, clubs and cultural and educational institutions generally, functioning in the native language, and d) to organise and develop an extensive system of courses and schools both for general education and for vocational and technical training given in the native languages (first and foremost, for the Kirghiz, Bashkirs, Turkmens, Uzbeks, Tadjiks, Azerbaidjanians, Tatars and Daghestanians), in order to accelerate the training of native cadres of skilled workingmen and Soviet and Party workers in all spheres of administration, and particularly in the sphere of education.

2. If from the 65,000,000 of the non-Great-Russian population we exclude the Ukraine, White Russia, part of Azerbaidjan, and Armenia, which in a more or less degree have passed through the period of industrial capitalism, there remain about 30,000,000, consisting principally of Turkic peoples (Turkestan, the greater part of Azerbaidjan, Daghestan, the Gortsi,

[1] The Chechens, Kabardians, Ossets, Circassians, Ingushes, Karachais, and Balkarians form the Gortsi group of peoples.

[2] The Avarians, Darghis, Kazikumukhians, Kurins, and Kumyks form the Daghestanian group of peoples.

Tatars, Bashkirs, Kirghiz, and others), who have not passed through a capitalist development, who do not, or practically do not, possess an industrial proletariat of their own, who in the majority of cases preserve the pastoral and patriarchal tribal form of life (Kirghizia, Bashkiria, the Northern Caucasus), or who have not yet progressed completely beyond a semi-patriarchal, semi-feudal form of life (Azerbaidjan, the Crimea, etc.), but who have already been drawn into the common current of Soviet development.

The elimination of actual national inequality in this case is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery. Up to now national inequality was here based on historically evolved economic inequality. This inequality found expression primarily in the fact that these border regions of Russia (especially Turkestan), which were in the position of colonies or semi-colonies, were forcibly retained as suppliers of various raw materials for manufacture at the centre. This was the cause of their chronic backwardness and it hindered the creation, let alone the development, of an industrial proletariat among these oppressed peoples. The proletarian revolution was bound to be confronted by all this in the Eastern border regions, and its prime duty is consistently to eliminate all remnants of national inequality in every sphere of social and economic life, and in the first place systematically to create an industry in the border regions by transferring factories to the sources of raw materials (textile, wool, leather, and other industries to Turkestan, Bashkiria, Kirghizistan and the Caucasus, etc.).

While winning the confidence of the toiling masses of the Eastern border regions by its resolute and consistent struggle for the abolition of all forms of national inequality, the Party must also rally and unite them with the purpose of finally eliminating patriarchal-feudal relations within the formerly oppressed nations themselves and securing their participation in the work of communist development. The first step in the policy of class differentiation in the Eastern border regions must be to deprive all the native exploiting elements of influence over the masses, to fight them in all the organs of Soviet local government, and to deprive them of their class privileges by getting the native masses to organise themselves into Soviets of toilers. In this respect it is primarily the numerically relatively small native proletarian elements employed in the various small industries, in the mines, on the railways, in the salt works and kulak farms who should be organised and drawn in the most solicitous way into the ranks of the Communist Party and into Soviet work.

The next step must be to create an economic organisation of the native poor of a mixed trade union and co-operative type, a type necessitated by the transition of the native toiling masses from backward economic forms to higher forms—from a nomadic life to agriculture, from guild handicrafts working for the open market to artels working for the Soviet state (the semi-proletarian artisans to be drawn into trade unions), from artel handicraft production to factory production, from small husbandry to the planned collective cultivation of the soil. The Soviet government must first of all, through the branches of a unified system of consumers' co-operatives, come to the assistance of the native semi-proletarian masses, who owing to economic disruption are faced with the danger of extinction. The work of the economic organs must be reorganised in accordance with these specific conditions of Soviet economic development, concentrating attention on the native population, including handicrafts and similar industries in the system of planned economic organisation, establishing firm contact with the main producing mass of the population and drawing up a concrete plan for introducing industry in the border regions in conformity with local conditions. Just as energetically must a warning be issued against blind imitation of Central Russian models, especially in exercising the grain monopoly in the border regions; the food policy must be connected not formally but actually with the policy of class differentiation among the native population. Any mechanical transplantation to the Eastern border regions of the economic measures of Central Russia, which are suitable only for a higher stage of economic development, must be rejected. Only by organising the masses of the native poor on the basis of their vital economic interests will the Soviets of the toilers succeed in arousing the peoples of the East to the struggle jointly and shoulder to shoulder with the proletariat of the advanced countries.

3. If from these 30,000,000, consisting principally of Turkic peoples, we exclude Azerbaidjan, the greater part of Turkestan, the Volga and Crimean Tatar Republics, Bokhara, Khiva, Daghestan, a part of the Gortsi (Kabardians, Circassians, Balkarians) and several other peoples which have already become settled and permanently attached to a definite territory, there remain about 10,000,000 Kirghiz, Bashkirs, Chechens, the Southern part of Turkestan, Ossets, and Ingushes, whose lands until recently had been subject to colonisation by Russian settlers, the latter having already seized the best of their arable land, systematically forcing them into the sterile desert. The policy of tsarism, the policy of the landlords and the bourgeoisie, was to settle these parts with the greatest possible number of kulaks from among the Russian peasants and the Cossacks, and to make the latter a reliable basis for Great-Power ambitions. This policy led to the gradual extermination of the natives (Kirghiz, Bashkirs) who had been forced into the sterile wilderness. The duty of the Party in relation to the toiling masses of these peoples (in addition to the duties enumerated in Pars. 1 and 2) is to unite their efforts with the efforts of the toiling masses of the local Russian population in the struggle for emancipation from the kulaks in general and from the predatory Great-Russian kulaks in particular, to help them in every way to throw off the yoke of the kulak colonisers and thus to provide them with land suitable and essential for human subsistence.

4. In addition to the nations and peoples already mentioned, possessing a definite class structure and occupying definite territory, there exist within

the R.S.F.S.R. various casual national groups, national minorities interspersed among compact majorities of other nations, who in most cases do not possess a definite territory (Letts, Esthonians, Poles, Jews, and others). The policy of tsarism was to exterminate these minorities by every possible means, including massacre (Jewish pogroms).

Now that national privileges have been abolished and the equality of nationalities established, and the right of national minorities to free national development is guaranteed by the very nature of the Soviet system, the duty of the Party towards the toiling masses of these national groups is to help them to make the fullest possible use of the right to free development which they have secured.

5. The development of Communist organisations in the border regions is taking place under rather peculiar circumstances, which tend to hinder the normal growth of the Party in these parts. On the one hand, the Great-Russian Communists working in these regions, who have grown up under the conditions of a "sovereign" nation, and who have never known national oppression, not infrequently minimise the importance of national peculiarities in Party and Soviet work, or else ignore them altogether, and fail in their work to reckon with the peculiarities of class structure, culture, social life, and historical past of the given people, and so vulgarise and distort the policy of the Party on the national question. This circumstance leads to a deviation from communism towards the dominant-power spirit, the colonising spirit, the spirit of Great-Russian chauvinism. On the other hand, the native Communists, who have lived through the painful period of national oppression and have not entirely ceased to be haunted by the horrors of that period, not infrequently exaggerate the importance of national peculiarities in Party and Soviet work, leave the class interests of the toilers in the background, or else simply identify the interests of the toilers of the given nation with what are called the "general national" interests of that nation, failing to pick out the former from the latter and to base their Party work on them. This circumstance in its turn leads to a deviation from communism towards bourgeois-democratic nationalism, which at times assumes the form of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism (in the East).

Both these harmful deviations from the principles of communist internationalism derive their strength from the adulteration, inevitable in the early period, of the Communist organisations in the border regions. On the one hand, kulak and coloniser elements worm their way into the Party, while on the other the representatives of native exploiting groups penetrate into the Party.

The congress, emphatically condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, deems it necessary to point out the particular danger and the particular harm of the first deviation, the deviation towards the Great-Power spirit, the colonising spirit. The congress calls attention to the fact that unless colonising and nationalist survivals within the ranks of the Party are eliminated it will be impossible

in the border regions to create strong, genuinely Communist organisations closely bound up with the masses and uniting within their ranks the proletarian and semi-proletarian elements of the native and Russian populations on the basis of internationalism. The congress therefore considers that one of the main tasks of the Party in the border regions is to eliminate the nationalist, and particularly the coloniser, vacillations among the Communists.

The congress calls for a vigorous struggle against all pseudo-Communist elements who have wormed their way into the party of the proletariat, and warns the Party against the temptation of "enlarging" itself by the admission of petty-bourgeois nationalist and kulak elements.

At the same time the congress emphasises the necessity for the skilful and organised utilisation for Soviet work in the Eastern border regions of all elements among the national intelligentsia of formerly oppressed peoples who are honest and have proved their devotion to the Soviet government.

NATIONAL FACTORS IN PARTY AND STATE DEVELOPMENT

Resolution Adopted by the Twelfth Congress of the Russian Communist Party, April 1923

I

1. Even as early as the last century the development of capitalism betrayed a tendency to internationalise the means of production and exchange, to eliminate national aloofness, to bring peoples into closer economic relations, and gradually to merge vast territories into a single connected whole. The further development of capitalism, the development of the world market, the perfection of the great rail and sea routes, the export of capital, and so on, still further accentuated this tendency and bound all kinds of peoples by ties arising out of the international division of labour and universal interdependence. Inasmuch as this process was a reflection of a colossal development of productive forces, inasmuch as it helped to destroy national isolation and the contradiction between the interests of the various peoples, it was and is a progressive process, for it is creating the material conditions for a future world socialist economic system.

2. But this tendency developed in specific forms which were completely at variance with its intrinsic historical significance. The interdependence of peoples and the economic amalgation of territories arose in the course of the development of capitalism not as a result of the collaboration of peoples enjoying equal status, but by means of the subjection of certain peoples by others, by means of the oppression and exploitation of less developed peoples by more developed peoples. Colonial plunder and annexations, national oppression and inequality, imperialist violence and arbitrary rule, colonial slavery and national inequality, and, finally, the struggle between the "civilised" nations for mastery over the "uncivilised" peoples—such were the forms in which the process of economic amalgamation of peoples took place. For this reason we find that side by

side with the tendency to amalgamation there grew up a tendency to destroy the violent forms assumed by this amalgamation, a struggle for the emancipation of the oppressed colonies and dependent nationalities from the imperialist yoke. Inasmuch as the latter tendency implied a revolt of the oppressed masses against imperialist forms of amalgamation, inasmuch as it demanded the amalgamation of peoples on the basis of collaboration and voluntary union, it was and is a progressive tendency, for it is creating the psychological conditions for the future world socialist economic system.

3. The conflict between these two principal tendencies, expressed in forms that are natural to capitalism, fills the history of the multi-national bourgeois states during the last half-century. The fact that the contradiction between these tendencies is irreconcilable within the framework of capitalist development was the basic reason for the intrinsic insolidity and the organic instability of the bourgeois colonial states. Inevitable conflicts within such states and inevitable wars between such states; disintegration of the old colonial states and the formation of new ones; a new drive for colonies and again the disintegration of multi-national states, leading to a new rearrangement of the political map of the world—such are the results of this fundamental contradiction. The disintegration of the old Russia, of Austria-Hungary and of Turkey on the one hand, and the history of such colony-owning states as Great Britain and the old Germany on the other; and, lastly, the "great" imperialist war and the growth of the revolutionary movement among the colonial and non-sovereign peoples—all these and similar facts clearly point to the instability and insolidity of the multi-national bourgeois states.

Thus the irreconcilable contradiction between the process of economic amalgamation of the peoples and the imperialist methods of accomplishing this amalgamation was the cause of the inability, helplessness and impotence of the bourgeoisie in finding a correct approach to the solution of the national problem.

4. Our Party took these circumstances into consideration when it made the basis of its policy in the national question the right of nations to self-determination, the right of peoples to lead an independent political existence. From the first days of its existence, at its very first congress (in 1898), when the contradictions of capitalism in connection with the national question had not yet become fully and clearly defined, the Party recognised this inalienable right of nations. In subsequent years it steadfastly endorsed its national programme in specific decisions and resolutions of its congresses and conferences down to the October Revolution. The imperialist war and the mighty revolutionary movement which arose in connection with it in the colonies only provided new corroboration of the correctness of the decisions adopted by the Party on the national question. These decisions consist of a) the vigorous repudiation of all forms of compulsion in relation to the nationalities; b) the recognition of the equal and sovereign right of the peoples to determine their own destinies; c) the recognition of the thesis

that a durable amalgamation of peoples can be accomplished only on a basis of collaboration and voluntary consent; d) the proclamation of the truth that such an amalgamation is possible only as a result of the overthrow of the power of capital.

Our Party in its work never tired of advancing this programme of national emancipation in opposition to both the frankly coercive policy of tsarism and the half-hearted, semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Whereas the tsarist Russification policy created an abyss between tsarism and the nationalities of old Russia, and whereas the semi-imperialist policy of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries led the best elements among these nationalities to desert Kerenskyism, the policy of emancipation pursued by our Party won for it the sympathy and support of the broad masses of these nationalities in the struggle it waged against tsarism and the imperialist Russian bourgeoisie. There can be little doubt that this sympathy and support was one of the decisive factors that determined the triumph of our Party in the October Revolution.

5. The October Revolution confirmed and gave practical effect to the decisions of our Party on the national question. By overthrowing the power of the landlords and capitalists, to whom national oppression was chiefly due, and by putting the proletariat in power, the October Revolution at one blow smashed the fetters of national oppression, destroyed the old relations between peoples, removed the grounds of the old national enmity, cleared the way for the collaboration of peoples, and won for the Russian proletariat the confidence of its brothers of other nationalities, not only in Russia, but also in Europe and Asia. It need hardly be shown that had it not enjoyed this confidence the Russian proletariat could not have defeated Kolchak and Denikin, Yudenich and Wrangel. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the oppressed nationalities could not have achieved their emancipation if the dictatorship of the proletariat had not been established in the centre of Russia. National enmity and national conflicts are inevitable, unavoidable, as long as capital is in power, as long as the petty bourgeoisie, and in particular the peasantry, of the former "sovereign" nation, permeated as they are by nationalist prejudices, follow the capitalists; and, on the contrary, national peace and national freedom may be considered assured when the peasantry and the other petty-bourgeois strata follow the proletariat, that is, when the dictatorship of the proletariat is assured. Hence, the triumph of the Soviets and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat constitute the basis and foundation on which the fraternal collaboration of peoples within a single confederate state can be built up.

6. But the results of the October Revolution are not confined to the elimination of national oppression and the creation of a basis for the amalgamation of peoples. In the course of its development the October Revolution also evolved the forms of this amalgamation and laid down the main lines for the amalgamation of peoples into a single confederate state. In the first period of the revolution, when the toiling masses of the nationalities first

came to feel that they were independent national units, while the threat of foreign intervention had not yet become a real danger, collaboration between the peoples did not yet assume a fully and strictly defined form. In the period of civil war and intervention, when the requirements of military defence in the national republics assumed prime importance, while questions of economic construction had not yet been placed on the order of the day, collaboration took the form of a military alliance. Finally, in the post-war period, when the problems of the restoration of the productive forces destroyed by the war assumed prime importance, the military alliance was supplemented by an economic alliance. The amalgamation of the national republics into the Union of Soviet Republics represents the concluding stage in the development of the forms of collaboration, which have now assumed the character of a military, economic and political amalgamation of peoples into a single multi-national Soviet state.

Thus in the Soviet state structure the proletariat has found the key to the national problem, has found the way to organise a durable multi-national state on the basis of national equality and voluntary consent.

7. But the fact that the key has been found to the national problem does not yet mean that it has been solved fully and finally, that the solution has been exhaustively realised concretely and practically. In order to give proper effect to the national programme advanced by the October Revolution, it is necessary to surmount obstacles which have been left to us as a heritage from the period of national oppression, obstacles that cannot be surmounted at a single blow and at short notice.

This heritage consists, in the first place, in the survivals of Great-Power chauvinism, which is a reflection of the former privileged position of the Great-Russians. These survivals still persist in the minds of our Soviet officials, both central and local; they breed in our state institutions, central and local; they are receiving reinforcements in the shape of the "new" Smenovekh Great-Russian chauvinist spirit, which the New Economic Policy tends to accentuate. In practice they find expression in an arrogant, negligent and soullessly bureaucratic attitude on the part of Russian Soviet officials towards the needs and requirements of the national republics. The multi-national Soviet state can be truly durable, and the collaboration of the peoples within it truly fraternal, only if these survivals are vigorously and irrevocably eradicated from the practice of our state institutions. The situation in a number of the national republics (the Ukraine, White Russia, Azerbaidjan and Turkestan) is complicated by the fact that a considerable section of the working class, which forms the main support of Soviet government, are by nationality Great-Russian. In these districts the alliance between the town and the countryside, between the working class and the peasantry, encounters a powerful obstacle in the form of the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism, in both Party and Soviet organs. Under these circumstances, to talk of the superiority of Russian culture and to advance the thesis that the victory of the superior Russian culture over the cultures of more backward peoples (Ukrainian, Azerbaidjanian, Uzbek, Kirghiz and so on) is inevitable is nothing but an attempt to perpetuate the domination of the Great-Russian nationality. Thus the first immediate task of our Party is to wage determined warfare on the survivals of Great-Russian chauvinism.

This heritage consists, secondly, in the actual, *i.e.*, economic and cultural, inequality of the nationalities of the Union of Republics. The equality of legal status of the nations won by the October Revolution is a great achievement for the peoples, but it does not in itself solve the whole national problem. A number of republics and peoples, which have not passed, or have hardly entered, the stage of capitalism, which have no proletariat, or hardly any proletariat, of their own, and which on this account are backward economically and culturally, are incapable of utilising to the full the rights and opportunities offered them by national equality; they are incapable of achieving a higher level of development, and thus catching up with the more advanced nationalities, unless they receive real and prolonged assistance from outside. The causes of this actual inequality lie not only in the history of these peoples, but also in the policy pursued by tsarism and the Russian bourgeoisie, which aimed at converting the border regions into areas exclusively producing raw materials and exploited by the industrially developed central districts. To remove this inequality in a short space of time, to eliminate this heritage in a year or two, is impossible. The Tenth Congress of our Party has already pointed out that "the elimination of actual national inequality is a lengthy process involving a stubborn and persistent struggle against all survivals of national oppression and colonial slavery." But eliminated it must be at all costs. And it can be eliminated only if real and prolonged assistance is given by the Russian proletariat to the backward peoples of the Union in their economic and cultural advancement. This assistance must first and foremost take the form of a series of practical measures for creating in the republics of formerly oppressed nationalities industrial centres, into the operation of which the local population should be drawn to the greatest possible extent. Lastly, this assistance must, in accordance with the resolution of the Tenth Congress, be rendered simultaneously with the struggle of the toiling masses against the local and foreign exploiting upper strata, which are gaining in strength in connection with the New Economic Policy, and for the consolidation of their social positions. Since these republics are chiefly agricultural districts, domestic social measures must first and foremost proceed along the lines of allotting to the toiling population land from the free state reserve. Otherwise there are no grounds for expecting the establishment of a proper and durable collaboration of peoples within the framework of a single confederate state. Hence, the second immediate task of our Party is to strive to eliminate the actual inequality of the nationalities and to raise the cultural and economic level of the backward peoples.

This heritage consists, lastly, in the survivals of nationalism among a number of peoples which have suffered the heavy yoke of national oppression and have not yet managed to rid themselves of old national grudges. These

survivals find practical expression in a certain national aloofness and a lack of complete trust on the part of the formerly oppressed peoples in measures proceeding from the Russians. However, in some of the republics the population of which is made up of several nationalities, this defensive nationalism often turns into aggressive nationalism, into the outright chauvinism of the stronger nationality directed against the weaker nationalities of these republics. Georgian chauvinism (in Georgia) against the Armenians, Ossets, Adjarians and Abkhasians; Azerbaidjanian chauvinism (in Azerbaidjan) against the Armenians; Uzbek chauvinism (in Bokhara and Khorezm) against the Turkmens and Kirghiz, Armenian chauvinism, and so on—all these forms of chauvinism, which moreover are fostered by the conditions of the New Economic Policy and by competition, are a great evil which threatens to make certain of the national republics the scene of squabbling and wrangling. It need hardly be said that all these factors hinder the cause of the actual amalgamation of the peoples into a single confederate state. When the survivals of nationalism are a peculiar form of defence against Great-Russian chauvinism, the surest means of overcoming nationalist survivals is to wage determined war on Great-Russian chauvinism. When, however, these survivals assume the form of local chauvinism directed against the weak national groups in certain of the republics, it is the duty of Party members to wage direct war on these survivals. Thus the third immediate task of our Party is to combat nationalist survivals, and particularly the chauvinist forms of these survivals.

8. We must regard as one of the most pronounced expressions of the heritage of the past the fact that a considerable number of Soviet officials in the centre and in the localities regard the Union of Republics not as an alliance of equal political units, whose mission it is to guarantee the free development of the national republics, but as a step towards the abolition of these republics and as the beginning of the formation of what is called the "single and indivisible."

We must regard as a similar consequence of the heritage of the past the endeavour of certain departments of the R.S.F.S.R. to render the independent Commissariats of the autonomous republics subordinate to themselves and to pave the way for abolishing the latter.

The congress condemns this conception as anti-proletarian and reactionary, proclaims the absolute necessity of the existence and continued development of the national republics, and calls upon the members of the Party to keep vigilant watch lest the amalgamation of the republics and the fusion of the Commissariats should be utilised by chauvinistically-minded Soviet officials as a screen for their attempts to ignore the economic and cultural needs of the national republics. The fusion of the Commissariats is a test for the Soviet apparatus: if this experiment were in practice to betray a Great-Power tendency, the Party would be obliged to adopt the most resolute measures against such a distortion, even to the extent of raising the question of annulling the fusion of certain Commissariats until such time as the Soviet

apparatus has been properly re-educated so that it will give genuinely proletarian and genuinely fraternal attention to the needs and requirements of the small and backward nationalities.

9. The Union of Republics, established on the principle of the equal status and the voluntary consent of the workers and peasants of each republic, is the first experiment on the part of the proletariat in regulating international relations between independent countries and the first step towards the creation of the future World Soviet Labour Republic. Since the Union of Republics is a new form of co-existence of peoples, a new form of collaboration of peoples within a single confederate state, within which the survivals outlined above are to be eliminated in the process of co-operative work of the peoples, the supreme organs of the Union must be so constructed as fully to reflect not only the common needs and requirements of all the nationalities of the Union, but also the specific needs and requirements of each individual nationality. For this reason, there should be created, in addition to the existing central organs of the Union, which represent the toiling masses of the entire Union without distinction of nationality, a special organ representing all the nationalities on an equality basis. Such a structure of the central organs of the Union would make it fully possible to lend an attentive ear to the needs and requirements of the peoples, to render them timely and necessary aid, to create an atmosphere of complete mutual confidence, and thus to nullify the heritage mentioned above in the most painless way.

10. On the basis of what has been said, the congress recommends the members of the Party to secure the accomplishment of the following practical measures:

a) That in establishing the central organs of the Union, equality of rights and duties of the republics be ensured both in relations between themselves and in their relations with the central government of the Union;

b) That within the system of supreme organs of the Union a special organ be instituted representing on an equality basis all national republics and national regions without exception, possible provision being made for the representation of all nationalities forming part of these republics;

c) That the executive organs of the Union be so constructed as to ensure the real participation of the representatives of the republics and the satisfaction of the needs and requirements of the peoples of the Union;

d) That the republics be granted sufficiently wide financial and, in particular, budgetary powers to enable them to exercise their own initiative in matters of state administration, culture and economy;

e) That the organs of the national republics and regions be recruited chiefly from among the local inhabitants acquainted with the language, social life, manners and customs of the peoples concerned;

f) That special legislation be promulgated providing that in all state organs and in all institutions serving the local non-native population and the national minorities the language of these latter be employed and that all

violators of national rights, in particular the rights of national minorities, be punished with revolutionary severity;

g) That educational work be intensified in the Red Army with the object of instilling the idea of the brotherhood and solidarity of the peoples of the Union and that practical measures be taken to organise national military units, all necessary steps being taken fully to ensure the defence of the republics.

II

1. The development of the organisations of our Party in the majority of the national republics is taking place under conditions which do not wholly favour their growth and consolidation. The economic backwardness of these republics, the numerical weakness of the national proletariat, the shortage or even total lack of old Party workers belonging to the native population, the lack of suitable Marxist literature in the native languages, the weakness of Party educational work, and, lastly, the persistence of survivals of radical-nationalist traditions, which have not yet died out, have produced among the local Communists a definite deviation in the direction of overrating the specific national features and of underrating the class interests of the proletariat, a deviation towards nationalism. This factor becomes especially dangerous in the case of republics inhabited by several nationalities, where it frequently assumes the form of a deviation among the Communists of the stronger nationality towards chauvinism directed against the Communists of the weak nationalities (Georgia, Azerbaidjan, Bokhara, Khorezm). The deviation towards nationalism is dangerous because, by hindering the emancipation of the national proletariat from the ideological influence of the national bourgeoisie, it impedes the knitting of the proletarians of the various nationalities into a single internationalist organisation.

2. On the other hand, the presence in both the central institutions of the Party and in the organisations of the Communist Parties of the national republics of large numbers of old Party workers of Russian descent, who are unfamiliar with the manners, customs and language of the toiling masses of these republics, and who for this reason are not always attentive to their requirements, has given rise in our Party to a deviation which consists in underrating specific national features and national language in Party work, to an arrogant and negligent attitude towards these specific features—a deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism. This deviation is pernicious not only because, by impeding the formation of Communist cadres of local inhabitants acquainted with the local language, it creates the danger that the Party may become isolated from the proletarian masses of the national republics, but also, and primarily, because it feeds and nourishes the deviation towards nationalism outlined above and hinders the struggle against this deviation.

3. Condemning both these deviations as harmful and dangerous to the cause of communism, and drawing the attention of the members of the Party to the particular danger of the deviation towards Great-Russian chauvinism,

the congress calls upon the Party to eliminate as quickly as possible these survivals of the past in our Party development.

The congress instructs the Central Committee to carry out the following practical measures:

a) To form Marxist study circles of an advanced type among the local Party workers in the national republics;

b) To develop literature dealing with fundamental Marxist principles written in the native languages;

c) To reinforce the University of the Peoples of the East and its branches in the localities;

d) To establish groups of instructors of the Central Committees of the national Communist Parties recruited from among local workers;

e) To develop mass Party literature in the native languages;

f) To intensify Party educational work in the republics;

g) To intensify work among the youth in the republics.

4. In view of the great importance which attaches to the activity of responsible workers in the autonomous and independent republics and in the border regions generally (realisation of the bond between the toilers of the particular republics and the toilers of the rest of the Union), the congress charges the Central Committee to take steps for the especially careful selection of these workers in order that it may fully ensure the carrying into effect of the decisions of the Party on the national question.

EXTRACT FROM THE RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE C.P.S.U. ON THE REPORT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

July 1930

THE congress notes that in connection with the accentuation of the class struggle in the country, *national deviations* towards Great-Power and local chauvinism have become more active within the ranks of the Party.

In the present stage, the greatest danger is the *Great-Power deviation*, which strives to secure a revision of the basis of the Leninist national policy and which conceals under the flag of internationalism the endeavour of the moribund classes of the formerly dominant Great-Russian nation to recover their lost privileges.

At the same time, the deviation towards local nationalism, which undermines the unity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. and plays into the hands of the interventionists, is becoming more active.

The Party must intensify the struggle against both deviations in the national question and against attempts to compromise with these deviations, and at the same time devote increased attention to the practical application of the Leninist national policy, the elimination of elements of national inequality and the wide development of the national cultures of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

EXTRACT FROM THE PARTY PROGRAMME

Adopted by the Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.
March 1919

In the Sphere of National Relations

In the national question the Russian Communist Party is guided by the following propositions:

1. The cornerstone is the policy of drawing together the proletarians and the semi-proletarians of the various nationalities for the purpose of waging a joint revolutionary struggle for the overthrow of the landlords and the bourgeoisie.

2. In order to overcome the distrust felt by the toiling masses of oppressed countries towards the proletariat of states which oppressed these countries it is necessary to abolish all the privileges enjoyed by any national group whatsoever, to establish complete equality of rights for all nationalities, to recognise the right of colonies and non-sovereign nations to secession.

3. With the same aim in view the Party proposes, as one of the transitional forms towards complete unity, a federation of states of the Soviet type.

4. On the question as to who is to express the will of the nation to secede, the Russian Communist Party adopts the historical class viewpoint and in this takes into consideration the stage of historical development of the given nation: whether it is evolving from mediaevalism to bourgeois democracy or from bourgeois democracy to Soviet or proletarian democracy, etc.

In any case, the proletariat of the nations which have been oppressing nations must exercise special caution and pay special attention to the survivals of national sentiment among the toiling masses of oppressed or non-sovereign nations. Only by pursuing such a policy will it be possible to create conditions for really lasting, voluntary unity among the nationally heterogeneous elements of the international proletariat, as has been shown by the experience of uniting a number of national Soviet republics around Soviet Russia.

II. EXPLANATORY NOTES

Note 1 (p. 3). *"Marxism and the National Question"* was written at the end of 1912 and the beginning of 1913 in Vienna. It first appeared in the Bolshevik magazine *Prosveshcheniye* (*Enlightenment*), 1913, Nos. 3-5, under the title "The National Question and Social-Democracy" and signed *K. Stalin*. In 1914 it was published by the Priboy Publishing House in St. Petersburg as a separate pamphlet entitled *The National Question and Marxism*. In 1920 the article was republished by the People's Commissariat of Nationalities in a *Collection of Articles* by Stalin on the national question. It was supplied with a preface by the author which contained the following passage relating to the present article:

> "The article reflects the period when a controversy on the fundamental principles of the national problem was being waged within the ranks of the Russian Social-Democratic Party; it was the era of the landlord-tsarist reaction, a year and a half before the outbreak of the imperialist war, the era of the growth of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Russia. At that time there were two conflicting theories of nations and, correspondingly, two national programmes: the *Austrian* programme, supported by the Bund and the Mensheviks, and the *Russian* programme, the programme of the Bolsheviks. The reader will find a description of these two currents in this article. Subsequent events, particularly the imperialist war and the disintegration of Austria-Hungary into several national states, clearly demonstrated which side was right. Now, when Springer and Bauer are standing over the spilt milk pail of their national programme, there can hardly be room for doubt that history has condemned the 'Austrian school.' Even the Bund has been obliged to admit that 'the demand for national cultural autonomy [*i.e.*, the Austrian national programme.—*J.S.*], which was put forward under the capitalist system, loses all meaning in the conditions of a socialist revolution.' (*The Twelfth Conference of the Bund*, 1920.) The Bund does not even suspect that it thereby admitted (inadvertently admitted) the *fundamental* unsubstantiality of the theoretical basis of the Austrian national programme and the *fundamental* unsubstantiality of the Austrian theory of nations."

Note 2 (p. 4). *Zionism*—a reactionary and nationalist political movement which recruited its followers from among the Jewish petty and middle bourgeoisie, intellectuals, business employees, artisans and the more backward sections of the Jewish workers. Its aim is to organise a Jewish bourgeois state in Palestine and it endeavours to isolate the Jewish working-class masses from the general struggle of the proletariat.

NOTE 3 (p. 4). *Pan-Islamism*—the political ideology of the upper classes (khans, mullahs, landlords, merchants) of the Turkish and Tatar peoples, which aims at uniting into a single unit all the nations professing Islam, or Mohammedanism. Pan-Islamism is akin to *Pan-Turkism*, which aims at uniting all the Turkic-Mohammedan peoples under the supremacy of the Turks.

NOTE 4 (p. 4). *The Bund*—the General Jewish Labour League of Lithuania, Poland and Russia—was formed in September 1897 at a congress held in Vilna. It developed widespread activity, principally confined to the masses of Jewish artisans. The Bund joined the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party in 1898 at the First Congress of the latter, "as an autonomous organisation, independent only in matters specifically affecting the Jewish proletariat." Up to 1901 the Bund put forward only one political demand of its own, the demand for civil equality for the Jews. At the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party held in 1903, the Bund withdrew from the Party when the congress rejected its claim to be recognised as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat and its demand that the Party should be constructed on federal lines. At its own Sixth Congress in 1905, the Bund adopted "national cultural autonomy," as expressed in the demand that "all functions connected with cultural matters (popular education, etc.) shall be removed from the control of the state and local and territorial government bodies and shall be transferred to the nation itself as represented by specific institutions, both local and central, elected by all the members on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage." The Bund rejoined the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party after the Fourth (Stockholm) Congress of the latter, held in 1906. The congress did not discuss the national programme of the Bund and left the question open. In the internal Party struggle the Bund as a rule adopted a Right position, supporting the Mensheviks; in 1912 it formed close organisational contacts with the Liquidators. During the war, the Bund (with the exception of a few internationalists) advocated national defence. After the February Revolution it supported the coalition government and fought the Bolsheviks. Towards the end of 1918 Left groups began to form within the Bund and in May 1919 the first conference of the Communist Bund of the Ukraine, which had split away from the main body, was held in Kiev. At this conference the Communist Bund of the Ukraine merged with the United Jewish Communist Party to form a joint Jewish Communist League, which was admitted into the Russian Communist Party in August 1919. In White Russia, the Left wing of the Bund, which had formed a Jewish Communist Party, also merged with the Russian Communist Party in March 1919. Finally, at a conference held in Minsk in March 1921, the remnants of the Bund decided to join the Russian Communist Party officially, only an insignificant section of the Bund, headed by Abramovich, remaining outside the Party. Still earlier, at its Twelfth Conference held in 1920, the Bund decided that its oppositional tactics towards the Soviet government should be abandoned and admitted that its principal nationalist demand, "national cultural autonomy," was superfluous, declaring

that "the demand for national cultural autonomy, which was put forward under the capitalist system, loses all meaning in the conditions of a socialist revolution."

NOTE 5 (p. 4). *The Ninth Conference of the Bund* was held in Vienna in June 1912 and discussed the elections to the Fourth State Duma and the summoning of the August (Liquidator) Conference (*cf.* Note 6), in which the Bundists took part. The decisions of the Ninth Conference of the Bund were of an extremely opportunist and Liquidationist character (the demand for a republic was abandoned, illegal work was pushed into the background and the revolutionary aims of the proletariat were forgotten). The conference sanctioned an open alliance of the Bund with the Menshevik Liquidators and the Left wing of the Polish Socialist Party.

NOTE 6 (p. 5). The reference is to the conference of the Liquidators held in Vienna in August 1912 (known as the August Conference), the purpose of which was to organise an anti-Bolshevik bloc. Represented at the conference were the Liquidators, the Bund, the Lettish Social-Democrats and a section of the Caucasian Social-Democrats. The prime initiator and moving spirit of the conference was L. Trotsky. For the resolution of the conference on the national question and a criticism of this resolution, see pp. 51-56 of this book.

NOTE 7 (p. 22). *The Fourth Congress of the Bund* was held at the end of April 1901 in Byelostok. The congress declared that "the concept nationality is also applicable to the Jewish people," and that Russia should be transformed into a federation of nationalities, each of which should enjoy complete autonomy, irrespective of the territory it occupied. In place of the former demand for civil equality, the congress demanded national equality and the reconstruction of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party on federal lines. These decisions, as well as the demand for national cultural autonomy advanced at this congress and then supported in Bund literature, called forth the severe criticism of the old *Iskra* and particularly of Lenin (*cf.* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vols. V and VI).

NOTE 8 (p. 22). *The Brünn Parteitag*, or Congress, of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held on September 24-29, 1899. The discussion at the congress mainly centred around the national question. The congress rejected the resolution of the South-Slavic Social-Democrats, which advocated extra-territorial national cultural autonomy, and adopted a resolution proposed by the Joint Executive Committee (the Central Committee) advocating a union of nationally-delimited states, which, of course, was a compromise between the Austro-German Social-Democrats, who advocated a centralised state, and the South-Slavic, Czech and other Social-Democrats, who held a nationalist position. On the question of Party organisation the Brünn Congress went even further than the Wimberg Congress (*cf.* Note 11) towards forming

isolated national Social-Democratic groups and reformed the central administration of the Party into a federal body made up of the executive committees of the national Social-Democratic organisations (German, Czech, Polish, Ruthenian [Ukrainian], Italian and South-Slavic).

NOTE 9 (p. 25). *"Here there is no parliament, thank God,"* were the words uttered by V. Kokovtsov, the tsarist Minister of Finance (later Prime Minister), in the State Duma on April 24, 1908.

NOTE 10 (p. 33). These words are taken from Chapter II ("Proletarians and Communists") of *The Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

NOTE 11 (p. 34). *The Vienna* (or *Wimberg*—as it was called after the name of the hotel in which it met) Congress of the Austrian Social-Democratic Party was held June 6-12, 1897. The party, which had till then been a united party, was at this congress dismembered into six independent national Social-Democratic groups (German, Czech, Polish, Ruthenian [Ukrainian], Italian and South-Slavic), which were united only by the fact that they held joint congresses and had a joint Central Committee.

NOTE 12 (p. 35). The reference is to an article by Karl Marx entitled "Zur Judenfrage" ("The Jewish Question"), published in 1844 in the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Annual*), in which Marx argued against the leader of the German freethinking radicals, Bruno Bauer.

NOTE 13 (p. 36). *The Sixth Congress of the Bund* was held in October 1905 in Zürich, Switzerland. At this congress the Bund gave final form to its national programme, which demanded "the creation of public institutions" which "can only result in extra-territorial autonomy in the form of national cultural autonomy . . . which presumes: 1) that all functions connected with cultural matters (popular education, etc.) shall be removed from the control of the state and local and territorial government bodies and 2) that these functions shall be transferred to the nation itself as represented by specific institutions, both local and central, elected by all the members on the basis of universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage."

NOTE 14 (p. 40). *The Eighth Conference of the Bund* was held in September 1910 in Lvov, Galicia. The conference chiefly devoted its attention to the questions of the Jewish community and the Sabbath rest-day, the resolutions on which are evidence of the further accentuation of nationalism in the Bund.

NOTE 15 (p. 42). *"Adapting socialism to nationalism"*—this phrase was used of the Bundists and the Caucasian Social-Democrats by Plekhanov in an article entitled "Another Schismatic Conference," printed in *Za Partiyu*

(*For the Party*—the organ of the Plekhanovist Party Mensheviks and the conciliationist Party Bolsheviks, published in 1912-14) of October 2, 1912, No. 3. In this article Plekhanov severely condemned both the fact of convocation and the resolutions of the August Conference of the Liquidators.

NOTE 16 (p. 42). The reference is to a letter by V. Kossovsky to the journal of the Liquidators, *Nasha Zarya* (*Our Dawn*), 1912, Nos. 9-10, under the caption "Unpardonable Demagogy," in which Kossovsky criticised Plekhanov's article, "Another Schismatic Conference," mentioned in the previous note.

NOTE 17 (p. 43). *The Seventh Congress of the Bund* was held in Lvov, Galicia, at the end of 1906. The congress declared in favour of the Bund's joining the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party on the basis of the rules adopted by the latter at its Fourth (Stockholm) Congress, with the reservation, however, that "while joining the R.S.D.L.P. and adopting its programme, the Bund holds to its own programme on the national question." After the Seventh Congress the Bund definitely and finally went over to Menshevism.

NOTE 18 (p. 44). *Nashe Slovo* (*Our Word*)—a legal weekly of the Bund which was published in Vilna in 1906. Only nine numbers appeared.

NOTE 19 (p. 44). The reference is to the election to the Fourth State Duma as deputy from Warsaw of Jagiello, a member of the Left wing of the Polish Socialist Party. His election was secured with the help of a bloc of the Bundists and the Polish Socialist Party with the Jewish bourgeois nationalists as against the vote of the Polish Social-Democratic electors who comprised the majority in the workers' electoral college. The Social-Democratic fraction in the Fourth State Duma, thanks to the fact that its majority at that time consisted of Liquidators, adopted Jagiello, who was not a Social-Democrat, into its midst and thereby supported the schismatic action of the Bund and accentuated the split among the workers of Poland.

NOTE 20 (p. 44). *The old Iskra*—this was the way the *Iskra* of the period 1900-03 (down to No. 51), when Lenin was an active member of the editorial board, was later referred to in order to distinguish it from the *new Iskra*, the *Iskra* of the period when it had adopted the Menshevik position. The old *Iskra* vigorously combated the nationalism of the Bund. A number of articles in the *Iskra*, including articles by Lenin, were devoted to criticising the Bund and its views on the national question and on the organisational structure of the Party.

NOTE 21 (p. 45). *Karel Vanek*—a Czech Social-Democrat member of the Austrian Reichsrat and the Brünn Landtag, a director of the Sick Benefit Society of Brünn and one of the leaders of the Czech separatists. In 1910

Karel Vanek published a number of articles in the journal *Rovnost* (*Equality*) under the general title "Do We Want Tutelage or Freedom?" devoted to a defence of separatist ideas and imbued with a nationalist chauvinist spirit. These articles (which had also been published in pamphlet form) were reproduced with other documents in a collection of articles, *Dokumente des Separatismus* (*Documents on Separatism*), published by the Austrian Metal Workers' Union, which by means of this book endeavoured to prevent the development of the split to which Vanek, Burian, Tusar and other leaders of the Czech separatists were leading the Czech working-class movement.

The passage from Karel Vanek's pamphlet here referred to by Stalin runs as follows:

> "How can the Czech worker hope, before the complete renaissance of society, to save his son or daughter from ruin, or to secure for them in the future a better existence than has fallen to his lot if the Czech people as consumers do not consider it necessary to utilise the services of our own artisans, merchants and industrialists?
>
> "And how can the Czech working-class masses expect that they will secure what is due to them in the state of the future and that they will acquire an equal status politically, socially and nationally, if they place their economic base at the disposal of others and surrender the productive opportunities, the power embodied in money, to their comrades of another nationality?"

NOTE 22 (p. 46). *N.*—the pseudonym of Noah Jordania, leader of the Georgian Mensheviks, former head of the Menshevik government in Georgia and now a White émigré and rabid advocate of intervention against the U.S.S.R.

NOTE 23 (p. 47). *Chveni Tskhovreba* (*Our Life*)—a daily newspaper published by the Georgian Mensheviks in Kutais in 1912. Nineteen numbers appeared.

The quotations given here are taken from an article by *N.* (Noah Jordania) entitled "The Old and the New," which appeared in *Chveni Tskhovreba*, Nos. 11-14.

NOTE 24 (p. 51). The clause on self-determination in the programme of the R.S.D.L.P. adopted at the Second Congress in 1903 runs as follows:

"9. The right of self-determination for all nations forming part of the state."

NOTE 25 (p. 56). The reference is to the first Balkan War, which broke out in October 1912 between Bulgaria, Serbia, Greece, and Montenegro on the one hand, and Turkey on the other. The war was the result of the conflict of interests in the Balkan Peninsula between the powers of the Entente (France, Great Britain, and Russia) and the powers of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy). This war and the second Balkan War (1913), which broke out among the former allies over the division of the spoils and which ended in the defeat of Bulgaria, only tightened the knot of imperialist contradictions in the Balkans and served as a prologue to the world imperialist war.

NOTE 26 (p. 61). The reference is to the resolutions of the Fourth (also known as the Third All-Russian) Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., held November 5-12, 1907 (Old Style), and the Fifth (known as the December) Conference of the R.S.D.L.P., held December 21-27, 1908 (O.S.).

NOTE 27 (p. 62). The Seventh (known as the April) All-Russian Conference of the Bolsheviks, held in Petrograd April 24-29, 1917 (O.S.), devoted considerable attention to the national question. Stalin's report defending the draft resolution written by Lenin (see pp. 269-70) on behalf of the Commission on the National Question was opposed by a counter-report made by Y. Pyatakov, who held an anti-Leninist position and rejected the slogan "the right of nations to self-determination." Pyatakov's position was supported by F. Dzerzhinsky, who expressed the point of view of the Polish Social-Democrats (R. Luxemburg) and by F. Makharadze. An important speech on this question was delivered by Lenin (*Selected Works*, Vol. V). The conference rejected the resolution proposed by Pyatakov and by an overwhelming majority adopted the resolution supported by Stalin.

NOTE 28 (p. 65). The reference is to the conference between the Central Committee and Party workers held in Cracow on December 28, 1912-January 1, 1913 (O.S.). On the subject of national cultural autonomy the conference adopted the following decision:

> "The advocacy of national cultural autonomy by Comrade Chkhenkeli, on behalf of the [Duma] fraction, under the pretext of 'creating the institutions necessary for the free development of every nationality,' represents a direct violation of the Party programme. Essentially the same formulation was rejected by a special vote of the Second Party Congress, at which the Party programme was endorsed. A proletarian party cannot make such a concession to nationalist sentiments even in so concealed a form."

NOTE 29 (p. 68). *The article "The October Revolution and the National Question"* was referred to in the author's preface to Stalin's *Collection of Articles* on the national question issued by the People's Commissariat of Nationalities in 1920 in the following way:

> "The article is a reflection of the period that followed the October Revolution, when the Soviet government, having overcome counter-revolution in Central Russia, came into conflict with the bourgeois nationalist governments in the border countries, which were hotbeds of counter-revolution, when the Entente, alarmed at the growing influence of the Soviet government in its (the Entente's) colonies, began openly to support the bourgeois nationalist governments in order to stifle Soviet Russia, and when, in the course of the triumphant fight against the bourgeois nationalist governments, we were confronted with the practical problem of

deciding on the concrete forms of regional Soviet autonomy, the organisation of autonomous Soviet republics in the border regions, the extension of Soviet Russia to the oppressed countries of the East *via* the Eastern regions of Russia, and the creation of a united revolutionary front of the West and the East against world imperialism. The article notes the inseparable connection between the national question and the question of power, and represents the national policy as being part of the general problem of the oppressed peoples and colonies, *i.e.*, that to which the 'Austrian school,' the Mensheviks, the reformists, and the Second International usually objected and which was subsequently confirmed by the whole course of events."

NOTE 30 (p. 68). *The Central Rada in the Ukraine* was organised at a congress of Ukrainian petty-bourgeois parties and nationalist organisations held in Kiev in April 1917. The Rada frequently came into sharp collision with the Provisional Government, which resorted to repressive measures in order to crush the national movements. After the October Revolution the Rada became the stronghold of "bourgeois counter-revolution clothed in a national democratic form" (Stalin). In his report to the Third Congress of Soviets (January 1918), Stalin thus characterised the petty-bourgeois kulak "Socialists" who controlled the Rada:

"In words, and in the edict, they declared themselves in favour of transferring all the land to the people, but later they published an interpretation which limited this transfer, proclaiming that a certain part of the landed estates were inviolable and not subject to transfer to the people.

"In words, they proclaimed their loyalty to the Soviets, but in actual fact they waged bitter war on the Soviets, disarmed the Soviet troops, arrested the Soviet officials, and rendered the continued existence of the Soviets impossible.

"In words, they proclaimed their loyalty to the revolution, but in actual fact they proved themselves to be malicious enemies of the revolution. They said they were neutral in the struggle against the Don, but in actual fact they rendered direct and open support to General Kaledin, helping him to shoot down Soviet soldiers and preventing the transport of food to the North."

In February 1918, the Rada was overthrown by the insurgent Ukrainian workers and peasants, but was shortly after restored by the Austro-German troops when they invaded the Ukraine. In April 1918, peace negotiations were to have taken place (in Kursk) between representatives of the Rada and a delegation of the Council of People's Commissars headed by Stalin; however, the *coup d'état* of Hetman Skoropadsky put an end to the Central Rada once and for all before the negotiations could be held.

NOTE 31 (p. 68). The Rada in White Russia was a petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation, formed at a congress of White-Russian nationalist organisations held in Minsk in July 1917. Controlled by chauvinist nationalists, the Rada after the October Revolution joined the enemies of the Soviet government, dissolved the local Soviets, proclaimed the independence of the White-Russian People's Republic and sent a letter of thanks to the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, for having sent German troops to occupy White Russia. On January 1, 1919, the Provisional Workers' and Peasants' Government of White Russia outlawed the Rada and proclaimed White Russia a Soviet republic.

NOTE 32 (p. 68). *The Sfatul Tarii* (Regional Council), the regional "parliament" organised in Kishinev (Bessarabia) by agents of the Rumanian general staff (Bessarabia was at that time occupied by Rumanian troops), lasted from November 1917 to November 1918 and consisted of appointed (not elected) representatives of the Moldavian "National Party," and of several fake organisations boycotted by a number of districts and organisations. In March 1918, the Sfatul-Tarii, although a considerable number even of its own members abstained from voting, passed an act making Bessarabia an autonomous part of Rumania, and in November 1918 the Rumanian army of occupation caused a vote to be passed in the Sfatul-Tarii providing for the complete annexation of Bessarabia to Rumania without any rights of autonomy whatever. As we know, the annexation of Bessarabia, then and subsequently, has evoked energetic resistance on the part of the population to the army of occupation. This resistance at times assumed the form of open revolts, which were savagely suppressed.

NOTE 33 (p. 68). *The Kurultai in the Crimea* was convoked on December 10, 1917, in Bakhchisarai (it subsequently held its sessions in Simferopol). The majority of its members reflected the aspirations and sentiments of the Tatar petty bourgeoisie, who followed the Tatar nationalist "People's Party." The Kurultai set up a Crimean Tatar "National Government" (a "Directory") headed by Chelebiyev and Saidamet and backed by armed troops (the "Squadron") under the command of Russian counter-revolutionary officers. In January 1918, when the Kurultai endeavoured to oppose its armed forces to the Sevastopol Revolutionary Military Committee, it was dispersed together with the National Government, although it re-emerged for a brief period during the German occupation of the Crimea.

NOTE 34 (p. 68). *The Kurultai in Bashkiria* was convoked in November 1917 in Orenburg. It was controlled by nationalist elements, headed by Zaki Validov, representing the interests of the bourgeois and kulak sections of the Bashkir population. The Kurultai set up a Bashkir government headed by Validov, which carried on anti-Soviet activities and established contact with Generals Dutov and Kolchak. However, the Great-Power character of the policy of Kolchak, who, incidentally, issued a decree abolishing the autonomy of Bashkiria, compelled Validov's government in 1919, under the pressure of the masses, to declare adherence to the Soviet government. When the Bashkir Soviet Republic was formed, the bourgeois nationalist elements, headed by

Validov, soon raised the standard of revolt against the Soviet government, but did not meet with the support of the toiling masses of Bashkiria.

NOTE 35 (p. 68). *The Autonomous Government in Turkestan*, headed by Tanyshbayev, Shagi-Akhmetov and Chokayev, was formed in opposition to the Tashkent Council of People's Commissars at what was called a Pan-Mussulman Congress convened by bourgeois nationalist organisations in November 1917 in Kokand (hence the term "Kokand autonomy"). With the support of Russian Whiteguards, this government started civil war in Turkestan, but was overthrown in February 1918 by Tashkent and Samarkand Red Army divisions.

NOTE 36 (p. 78). *"The Policy of the Soviet Government on the National Question in Russia"* is referred to in the author's preface to the *Collection of Articles* on the national question by Stalin issued by the People's Commissariat of Nationalities in 1920 as follows:

> "This article deals with the present period of the still uncompleted administrative reconstruction of Russia on the basis of regional autonomy and the organisation in the border regions of administrative communes and autonomous Soviet republics as integral parts of the R.S.F.S.R. The central theme of the article is the question of how to put Soviet autonomy into practice, in other words, how to bring about a revolutionary alliance between the centre and the border regions as a guarantee against intervention on the part of imperialism. It may appear strange that the article emphatically rejects the demand for the separation of the border regions from Russia on the grounds that it is a counter-revolutionary proposal. We are *in favour of* the separation of India, Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and the other colonies from the Entente, for here separation implies the liberation of these oppressed countries from imperialism, thus undermining the position of imperialism and strengthening the position of revolution. We are *against* the separation of the border regions from Russia, since separation would here involve imperialist servitude for the border regions, thus undermining the revolutionary power of Russia and strengthening the position of imperialism. It is precisely for this reason that the Entente, while resisting the separation of India, Egypt, Arabia, and the other colonies, is working for the separation of the border regions from Russia. It is precisely for this reason that Communists, while working for the separation of the colonies from the Entente, cannot but resist the separation of the border regions from Russia. Obviously, the question of separation must be decided in accordance with the concrete international situation and the interests of the revolution."

NOTE 37 (p. 105). The reference is to certain articles by G. V. Chicherin, who at that time was People's Commissar of Foreign Affairs, which appeared in the *Pravda* of March 6, 7 and 9, 1921, Nos. 50, 51 and 52, entitled "Against the Theses of Comrade Stalin."

NOTE 38 (p. 111). *The Two-and-a-Half International*—the International Association of Socialist Parties formed in Vienna in February 1921 by a number of parties (including the Russian Mensheviks) which had for the time being withdrawn from the Second International during the rising tide of revolution. Among its leaders were F. Adler, O. Bauer and L. Martov. The aim of the Two-and-a-Half International was to counteract the growing influence of the Communist International among the working-class masses, who had turned away from the discredited Second International. In 1923 the Two-and-a-Half International merged with the Second International.

NOTE 39 (p. 114). *The Council of Propaganda and Action of the Peoples of the East* was formed in September 1920 at a congress of peoples of the East held in Baku. Its purpose was to organise propaganda and to support and unite the movement for the emancipation of the East in the struggle against imperialism under the slogan of a world proletarian revolution. The Council existed for about a year and published a journal, *The Peoples of the East*, in Russian, Turkish, Persian and Arabic.

NOTE 40 (p. 122). *Genoa and the Hague*—The purpose of the international economic conference held in 1922 in Genoa (Italy) and at the Hague (Holland), with the participation of capitalist states (Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan and others) on the one hand, and Soviet Russia on the other, was ostensibly to discuss measures for the economic restoration of Central and Eastern Europe, but its real purpose was to settle the "Russian question," in other words, to determine the relations between Soviet Russia and the capitalist world. Soviet Russia came to Genoa "with a practical aim—to extend trade and to create the conditions which would make for its widest and most successful development" (Lenin), and at this conference gave a vigorous rebuff to the attempts of foreign capital to secure the payment by Soviet Russia of the war and pre-war loans, the return to foreign owners of nationalised property, and the establishment in Russia of a legal and financial system which would virtually result in the conversion of Soviet Russia into a colony of West European capital.

NOTE 41 (p. 122). *Leslie Urquhart*—a British industrialist who before the revolution controlled vast territories, forests, mines, etc., in Russia and who later became one of the organisers of the war against the Soviet government and an adviser of Kolchak. In September 1922 Urquhart signed a provisional agreement with the People's Commissar of Foreign Trade, L. Krassin, according to which he was to obtain a concession from the Soviet government over a large part of his former possessions in the Urals and Kazakstan. However, the extortionate terms of this agreement, coupled with the hostile policy pursued towards the Soviet government by the British government, headed at that time by Lord Curzon, which found expression in particular in an attempt to prevent the representation of Soviet Russia at the Lausanne Conference (*cf.* Note 42), compelled the Soviet government to refuse to ratify the agreement with Urquhart.

NOTE 42 (p. 122). *The Lausanne Conference* was held in November 1922 for the purpose of concluding a treaty of peace between the Greeks and the Turks. It was attended by representatives of the U.S.A., Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey. Upon the insistence of the Allies, particularly of Great Britain, the representatives of Soviet Russia were permitted to attend only for the discussion of the question of the Dardanelles. The Soviet government made a number of energetic protests against this decision of the Allies and at the conference itself put up a vigorous opposition to the imperialist standpoint, which demanded that the Dardanelles should be kept open for ships of war both in time of peace and in time of war (which was directed against Soviet Russia), proposing instead that the Dardanelles should be closed to the ships of war of every country, with the exception of Turkey. The Allies later endeavoured to keep the Soviet delegation out of the conference entirely. On May 10, 1923, the Soviet representative, V. Vorovsky, was assassinated in Lausanne by a Whiteguard, Conradi.

NOTE 43 (p. 141). *Smenovekhism* (from the words *smena vekh*, meaning a change of landmarks)—a current which arose in 1921 among the Russian Whiteguard émigrés, particularly among the intellectuals. It was headed, among others, by N. V. Ustryalov, published a collection of articles entitled *Smena Vekh* and later a journal with the same title.

> "Smenovekhism is the ideology of the new bourgeoisie, which is steadily growing and gradually joining forces with the kulaks and the bureaucratic intellectuals. The new bourgeoisie has created its own ideology, the Smenovekh ideology, which declares that the Communist Party is bound to degenerate and the new bourgeoisie to consolidate itself. We Bolsheviks, it appears, will imperceptibly to ourselves move towards the threshold of a democratic republic and cross this threshold, and then, with the help of a Caesar, who is to arise either from the military or from the civil ranks, we are to find ourselves in the position of an ordinary bourgeois republic." (Stalin.)

NOTE 44 (p. 159). *Dashnaks*—the Dashnaktsutyun Party, an Armenian petty-bourgeois nationalist party formed in the beginning of the nineties, the programme of which closely resembled that of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries. During the years of reaction and war this party served as a militant vanguard of the Armenian bourgeoisie and as a protector of the interests of tsarism. In 1918-20, as leaders of the bourgeois Republic of Armenia set up by the Turkish military command, the Dashnaks made Armenia a stronghold of the Anglo-French interventionists and the Russian Whiteguards in their war on the Soviet government and the Communist Party. After Armenia turned Soviet the leaders of this party went abroad, where they conducted a savage campaign against Soviet Armenia.

NOTE 45 (p. 159). *Mussavatists*—the Mussavat Party, formed in 1912 in Baku, a Turkic bourgeois "democratic" party, infected by Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. In 1918 it was the main counter-revolutionary force in Azerbaidjan, organised a revolt against the Baku Commune, invited the help of the Turks, and later of the British, and waged a savage fight against the working-class and peasant movement. When Azerbaidjan became Soviet in 1920, this party lost its influence. At the present time its followers are to be found only among the émigrés abroad who are working for intervention against the Soviet Union.

NOTE 46 (p. 160). The reference is to a statement made by Orjonikidze at the Twelfth Party Congress to the effect that the Georgian "deviators" had issued an order closing the frontiers of Georgia to famine refugees from the Northern Caucasus and the Volga Region and establishing cordons on the frontiers. The deviators unsuccessfully attempted to lay the blame on L. Serebryakov, who was at that time in Georgia at the head of a commission of the Central Committee.

NOTE 47 (p. 163). The reference is to a commission consisting of F. Dzerzhinsky, V. Mickevicius-Kapsukas and D. Manuilsky and a commission consisting of V. Kuibyshev (at the time Secretary of the Central Committee) and L. Kamenev, which had in 1923 been sent to Georgia to investigate a number of questions connected with the activities of a small group of leaders of the Georgian Communists—known as the "deviators" (Mdivani, Makharadze, Tsintsadze, among others) who had frequently violated decisions of the Central Committee of the Party.

NOTE 48 (p. 168). Stalin is referring to the following statement made by Bukharin at the Twelfth Congress:

> "In the capacity of a former Great-Power nation we must counter nationalist ambitions and place ourselves in a position of inequality, in the sense of making still greater concessions to national tendencies. By such a policy alone, one of a counter movement, a policy whereby we artificially place ourselves in an inferior position as compared with others, only at such a price can we purchase the real confidence of the formerly oppressed nations."

NOTE 49 (p. 169). The quotation is taken from Lenin's article "On the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (*Selected Works*, Vol. IV).

NOTE 50 (p. 171). Both quotations are taken from Lenin's theses "The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination" (*Selected Works*, Vol. V).

NOTE 51 (p. 172). *The Fourth Conference of the Central Committee with responsible workers of the national republics and regions* was convened on Stalin's initiative, and was held in Moscow on June 9-12, 1923. The chief question on the agenda of the conference was Stalin's report on practical measures for putting into effect the resolution on the national question adopted by the Twelfth Party Congress. Representatives of twenty Party organisations in the national republics and regions reported on the situation in their localities. The conference also discussed the question of Sultan-Galiyev, a Tatar Party worker and member of the Collegium of the People's Commissariat of Nationalities, who took advantage of his responsible post in order to create an illegal organisation with the purpose of opposing the measures adopted by the Party in connection with the national question and of establishing contacts with open counter-revolutionary forces, in particular, the Basmachi of Bokhara and Turkestan. The conference was attended, in addition to the members and alternate members of the Central Committee, by fifty-eight representatives of the national republics and regions.

NOTE 52 (p. 186). The quotation is from a letter written by Karl Marx to Frederick Engels, dated April 16, 1856.

NOTE 53 (p. 216). For further details regarding the Kuomintang, see the excerpt "China" from Stalin's speech at the Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Commission on August 1, 1927, pp. 232-52 of this book.

NOTE 54 (p. 241). *Martynovism*—after A. Martynov (a former Menshevik who was admitted into the ranks of the C.P.S.U. at the Twelfth Congress). In one of his articles on the Chinese revolution Martynov advocated a peaceful passage to the dictatorship of the proletariat "without decisive collisions and acute conflicts with the existing government, without a second revolution." The anti-Party Trotsky-Zinoviev bloc endeavoured in every way to lay the responsibility for this erroneous thesis of Martynov's on the leadership of the Communist International and the C.P.S.U.

NOTE 55 (p. 249). *Tang Ping-shan* was a member of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and at one time its representative on the Executive Committee of the Communist International. In 1927, while Minister of Agriculture of the Wuhan Government, he endeavoured in every way to hinder the development of the agrarian revolution in China. He was later expelled from the Party and went over to the counter-revolutionaries.

III. INDEX OF NAMES

Adigamov, 173, 174.
Alexander the Great, 5.

Bakunin, M. A., 33.
Bauer, Otto, 9-12, 19, 22-25, 28-35, 38, 65, 76, 80, 112, 114.
Beist, F., 161.
Bogdatyev, S. J., 246.
Bukharin, N. I., 168-70, 234, 237.

Cavaignac, 247, 250.
Chernov, V. M., 194.
Chiang Kai-shek, 239, 240, 249.
Chicherin, G. V., 105, 106.
Chkheidze, N. S., 247.
Clynes, J. R., 194.
Curzon, Lord, 119.
Cyrus, 5.

Dan (F. I. Gurvich), 194.
Denikin, A. I., 91, 119, 129, 140, 149, 153, 155, 197.
Dzerzhinsky, F. E., 67, 163.

Enbayev, 175.
Engels, Frederick, 186.

Firdevs, 175, 176.

Galin, 55.
George V, 198.
Goldblatt (V. Medem), 23, 38, 54.

Henderson, A., 194.

Ibragimov, S., 180.
Ikramov, A., 176, 177.

Jagiello, E. I., 61.

Kaganovich, L. M., 229.
Kaledin, A. M., 73.
Kalinin, M. I., 126, 150.
Kamenev, L. B., 126, 150, 163, 237, 240, 241, 243, 250.
Kastelyansky, A. I., 36.
Kautsky, Karl, 35, 75, 112, 186, 210, 257, 258, 263.
Kerensky, A. F., 69-71, 154, 194.
Khalikov, 126, 174.
Khodzhanov, 176, 180.
Khvylevoy, 230, 231.
Kolchak, A. V., 91, 118, 119, 129, 140, 155, 197.
Koltsov, D. (B. A. Ginsburg), 54.
Kornilov, L. G., 73.
Kossovsky, V. (Levinson), 22, 42, 55.
Kuibyshev, V. V., 163.

Lenin, V. I., 163, 168-69, 171, 178, 182, 188, 194-96, 198, 200, 204, 209, 226, 233-36, 240, 242, 246, 247, 250, 252, 257-60, 262, 264, 266.
Lvov, G. E., 69.

Makharadze, F. I., 160.
Mansurov, 126.
Manuilsky, D. Z., 224, 228.
Martov, Y. O., 47.
Martynov, A. S., 54.
Marx, Karl, 21, 33, 35, 169, 186, 187, 193, 196.
Mdivani, Budu, 163.
Medem, V. D. (see also Goldblatt), 44.
Mikoyan, A. I., 108.

Milyukov, P. N., 69-71.
Molotov, V. M., 126.
Mukhtarov, 126.
Murtazin, 174.

N. (Noah Jordania), 46-50.
Nicholas II, 198.
Nobel, 109.

Panin, M. S., 27.
Plekhanov, G. V., 42.
Poincaré, 198.
Pyatakov, Y. L., 66, 67, 126.

Radek, K., 232.
Rakhimbayev, 126.
Rakovsky, C. G., 168, 169.
Renaudel, P., 194.
Renner, Karl (see also R. Springer), 76.
Rothschild, 109.
Rudzutak, J. E., 126.
Rykov, A. I., 126, 150.
Ryskulov, 174, 175.

Safarov, G. I., 109.
Said-Galiyev, 126.
Sapronov, 126.
Scheidemann, F., 194.
Semich, M., 200-03, 221-28.
Serebryakov, L. P., 160.
Shamigulov, 174.
Shumsky, 229-31.
Skrypnik, N. A., 267.
Sokolnikov, G. J., 126, 150.
Springer, Rudolph (K. Renner), 9, 22-25, 28-30, 32, 33, 40, 65, 80, 112, 114.
Stalin, J. V., 106, 126, 200, 201, 203, 225, 226, 238.
Steklov, Y. M., 247.
Strasser, Joseph, 17, 61.
Sultan-Galiyev, M., 172-76.

Tang Ping-shan, 249.
Trotsky, L. D., 126, 150, 232, 240, 241, 243, 247.
Tsereteli, I. G., 194, 247.
Tsurupa, A. D., 126.

Urquhart, Leslie, 122.

Validov, 173, 174, 176.
Vanek, K., 45.

Wilhelm II, 198.
Wischau, 109.
Wrangel, N. N., 97, 119, 140, 155.

Yanson, J., 126.
Yegorov (E. J. Levin), 54.
Yudenich, N. N., 140, 155.

Zatonsky, V. P., 107.
Zinoviev, G. E., 224, 227, 237, 240-43, 246, 247.