



THE TRUE STORY OF THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION
AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

**Eduard
Bagramov**

One Hundred Nationalities— One People





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AND THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM

“We want a *voluntary* union of nations—a union which precludes any coercion of one nation by another—a union founded on complete confidence, on a clear recognition of brotherly unity, on absolutely voluntary consent.”

Lenin



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One Hundred Nationalities— One People

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FROM THE PUBLISHERS

The centuries-long history of the struggle for social progress shows that the national barriers the exploiting classes erected, strife and mistrust between nations and nationalities and the inequality of nations gave rise to very acute problems which hampered national progress. In his *Complaint* (1517) the distinguished Dutch scholar Erasmus urged people to unite to end dissention and bloody wars. "Use your wisdom and experience to bind yourselves to one another not with ropes, but with inseverable, diamond-hard bonds," he wrote. "You must realize the tremendous strength inherent in the accord of a multitude that opposes the tyranny of the nobility."

It was only after class-conscious masses of working people appeared on the political scene as the makers of history, after the first socialist revolution triumphed in Russia in 1917, that it became actually possible to achieve "the accord of a multitude" essential for the establishment of social justice.

In 1913, several years before the socialist revolution in Russia, Lenin wrote:

"To the old world, the world of national oppression, national bickering, and national isolation the workers counterpose a new world, a world of the unity of the working people of all nations, a world in which

there is no place for any privileges or for the slightest degree of oppression of man by man.”

Attaching paramount importance to a correct solution of the nationalities question for promoting the whole subsequent development of multi-national Russia and of the world-wide revolutionary and national liberation movement Lenin and the Bolsheviks drew up a Party programme on the nationalities question which they persistently carried out. Its basic principles were the free self-determination of nations, the complete equality of nations in all spheres of public life and the solidarity of working people of all nationalities in the fight for socialism and communism.

As was stressed in the Statement of the CPSU Central Committee “On the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics” the formation of the USSR was a vivid embodiment of Lenin’s ideas, of the Leninist principles of the nationalities policy.

Sixty years ago, in December, 1922, a Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was formed. Over one hundred nations and nationalities united to form a single community, at the same time preserving all that formed the pride of every nation. How did this work? What was the essence of what was then a new type of association of peoples? What are the historical advantages of the social and national relations that took shape? The present pamphlet seeks to answer these questions.

I. AN ACUTE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The parable is told about two warring tribes living on opposite banks of a river. One day a tribesman living on the right bank met a magician who said: "I shall grant you whatever you wish but only on condition that a tribesman living on the left bank will get double." The man replied: "Put out one of my eyes."

Peoples and tribes fought each other for ages. It seemed as if in no other sphere of social relations were efforts to establish sensible human relations so strongly opposed by conservative forces, obsolete customs and absurd prejudices. Even the rapid advances in production, science and culture which were brought about by the industrial revolution in Europe failed to make any essential changes for the better in international relations. So it is not surprising that pessimistic views about the inevitability of antagonisms between nations and nationalities were expressed by 19th-century and early 20th-century social philosophers.

Sources of National Strife and Hostility

The endless wars which took millions of lives only testified to the tragic character of human relations.

The causes of strife are not, however, rooted in racial or national distinctions between peoples. They stem from the antagonistic nature of capitalist society. The economic interests of the exploiting classes give rise to conflicts and clashes between peoples, as well as between the representatives of different races and nationalities of one and the same country.

It frequently happened that the selfish ambitions of reactionary sections of society were palmed off as "national interests". Deceived in this way peoples were set against one another. They were told that to perform their patriotic duty and defend their national rights, they should destroy other people, lay their countries waste and hold national minorities in rein. It was not easy to discard absurd ideas about a "national mission", for once nationalism got a grip of people's minds, it led to such feelings as blind hatred and contempt for other peoples.

Learned men in many countries anxiously noted that it was an innate feature of "Western civilization" to incite racial and national dissention artificially and to spread misanthropic ideas.

The eminent American psychologist Gordon W. Allport in his book *The Nature of Prejudice* wrote:

"Civilized men have gained notable mastery over energy, matter, and inanimate nature generally, and are rapidly learning to control physical suffering and premature death. But, by contrast, we appear to be living in the Stone Age so far as our handling of human relationships is concerned." To end the new Stone Age it is vital to alter social relations. The restructuring of social and national relations and the establishment of humane relations between peoples is the historic mission of socialism today.

The Soviet people were the first to pave the way to

a new social system. It was not an easy task. World history knew of no previous instances of a socialist society, a really free federal state based on the equality of peoples, or a just and thorough solution of the nationalities question.

There are over 2,000 nations, nationalities and tribes in the world. Over 90 per cent of them form part of multi-national or multi-tribal states. It is worth noting that more than three-quarters of all the national and ethnic groups live in Asian and African countries that have already thrown off the fetters of colonialism or are still fighting for liberation. Commenting on the drafting and implementation of a sound nationalities policy, Lenin wrote in 1921: "This is a world-wide question, and that is no exaggeration. There you must be especially strict... It is no joke, it calls for exceptional caution."

Though nationalities problems are extremely complex, because of the distinctive historical development of each people, this does not justify the mystical approach to the nationalities question typical of bourgeois thinkers. It calls for a dialectical analysis of the real essence of national relations at every stage in history. One must rise above national barriers to see the perspective of advance for the whole of mankind.

It is not typical of Marxism-Leninism either to exaggerate national distinctions, or to display a narrowly national approach, underestimate the importance of national traits or ignore the national factor. The nationalities question does not arise in a "pure form", so to say. In reality national relations are a complex reflection of the social class relations between people belonging to different nations or national groups, relations which are noticeably affected by geographical and distinctive cultural factors, historical traditions, social feeling and senti-

ment. The very concept of the "nationalities question" emerged historically in reference to the relations between oppressed and oppressor nations, to the problems of abolishing national oppression, the inequality of nations and racial and national groups and creating conditions for their free development.

One cannot solve the nationalities question without removing the causes that breed hostility between nations and nationalities. Private ownership and private capital inevitably disunite people, kindle national dissension and bring about national oppression, whereas collective ownership of the means of production and joint labour for the common good just as inevitably bring people together, help end national strife and remove national oppression.

Russian Marxists and the Nationalities Question

Way back in the pre-revolutionary period the Russian Marxists drew up a programme on the nationalities question. Its aim was: (a) to reject all forms of compulsion with respect to nationalities; (b) to recognize the equality and sovereignty of peoples in determining their own destinies; (c) to establish the fact that a sound union of peoples can be formed only on the principles of co-operation and voluntary choice; and, (d) that such a union was possible only with the abolition of the power of capital.

It was a specific feature of pre-revolutionary Russia that the proletariat, which rose to fight tsarism and capitalism, belonged to the oppressor nation while the majority of the oppressed peoples formed the peasant masses. Therefore, in solving the nationalities question on a country-wide scale it was among other things necessary to establish sound

relations between the proletariat (which then belonged to the nation in power) and the peasantry of the oppressed nationalities.

Leninism approached all questions bearing on the development of the socialist state from internationalist class positions. This did not, of course, mean that the national factor was merely of "instrumental value". The Communists of Russia always regarded the national movement of the oppressed nationalities as an important process in the country's entire social life. Western sociologists sought to ascribe to them totally different attitudes. They have claimed and continue to claim that, though Communists recognize national feeling and the potential power of national movements, they are interested only in using the national factor in pursuit of their political aims and interests. The intention of these Western authors has been and is to undermine the prestige of the Communists among those participating in the national liberation movement and to accuse the Communists of ignoring national interests.

To achieve a sound solution of the nationalities question one must approach it from a specific historical standpoint. This means that the Communists must take account of the conditions of national development, correctly combine general laws and specific national features and show a profound understanding of the social essence of the nationalities question. Communists maintain that the key element in solving the nationalities question is the rallying of all working people, regardless of nationality, in the common struggle against all forms of oppression, for a new social system free from exploitation. This stand is contrary to that of the bourgeoisie and opportunists of all hues who seek to conceal the social essence of the nationalities question, to present it as a clash of certain demoniac

forces innate in the national or racial element, and to exaggerate and mystify nationalism as an "eternal" phenomenon that one "cannot be rid of".

When broad masses of people are fighting against foreign oppressors, the Marxists support democratic liberation movements, even though conducted under the flag of nationalism. That is precisely why the USSR and other countries of the socialist community always side with the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America in their fight against imperialism. It is true, however, that when national independence has been won and a new stage of the struggle for social emancipation sets in, nationalism sometimes prevents the masses of working people from identifying the exploiters among their own nationals. In this way nationalism ceases to be a weapon of progressive forces and becomes an instrument of reactionary forces which use it to strengthen the domination of exploiters, while calling for class peace within a nation. In such circumstances the Communists are compelled to abandon their support of the nationalistic forces and to criticize and condemn their alliance with the reactionaries. They are forced to combat nationalism in order to dispel the nationalist illusions of the working people, to help the masses realize that their interests are in common with all toilers in the struggle for building a new society, to help the masses adopt the standpoint of proletarian internationalism. The slogan of internationalism was a key slogan of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia in 1917.

Experience of World-Wide Importance

A whole set of circumstances determined the epoch-making importance of Soviet experience in solving the nationalities question.

Firstly, before the revolution Russia was not only a multi-national country, but also a country with a multi-structural economy. Whereas several nations, such as the Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians and the peoples of Transcaucasia and the Baltic countries, began rapid capitalist development at the turn of the century, many peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan were at the stage of semi-capitalist, semi-feudal relations. A portion of the population (in particular, those living in the Far North and the North Caucasus) were at the stage of primitive society. Side by side with industrially developed regions marked by a growing proletarian population there were many economically backward, mostly peasant regions. Thirty million people, mainly Turkic peoples (Turkestan, most Azerbaijan, Daghestan, mountain peoples, Tatars, Bashkirs and Kirghizes), had no industrial proletariat among them. As herdsmen they retained a patriarchal-tribal mode of life. That is precisely why the difficult and varied experience which the Soviet state accumulated in the socialist development of nations, nationalities and ethnic groups, with account taken of their multi-structural economy, is of such great importance.

Secondly, the USSR occupies vast territories both in Europe and in Asia. The composition of the population is extremely mixed and its multi-national structure is very complex. Despite this, co-operation between peoples with widely varying historical traditions, cultural features, religious beliefs and mental outlooks had to be achieved. It is true that some of the peoples had their own state formations even before the revolution, but these were few in number. So, the creation and development of socialist statehood both for the whole multi-national country and for each separate republic, forming an organic component of a single multi-national state with all the

republics enjoying equality, was a unique experiment in history.

Thirdly, the country was inhabited by big and small nations and nationalities. While some of these formed compact groups in their own territories, their national minorities were scattered in various parts of the country. It was important to establish truly internationalist relations between all of them, taking strict account of the distinctive national features of each people or nationality. It was an experiment without precedent.

The Soviet Union was to become a huge laboratory where, for the first time in history, the soundness of Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the nationalities question would be tested and the viability of the theory and practice of socialist internationalism proved. One had to find practical answers to many questions. How to unite the will, sympathies and ambitions of the different social sections of various nationalities? How to direct the national awareness of the peoples (which was aroused by the revolution) into the channel of combined efforts to build a new society? How should nations and nationalities be remoulded in accordance with socialist principles? What should be done to end as quickly as possible such phenomena as national alienation and distrust the old regime has fostered?

Before the revolution, as Lenin said, the Marxists set before the proletariat of Russia mainly a *negative* task, namely that of abolishing national oppression and the privileges enjoyed by a certain nation and removing all obstacles to resolute and consistent democratization in this sphere. After the revolution, that is to say, following the taking of state power, the Marxists faced a task of moulding national and state relations which would be radically different from

those of the past, relations based on principles of equality, friendship and mutual assistance. While continuing to combat the survivals and consequences of national oppression and manifestations of chauvinism and nationalism, the working class and its vanguard—the Communist Party—accomplished this task with the help of a new political instrument—proletarian state power, which concentrated its effort on the *positive* task, namely, on the establishment of a multi-national socialist state based on the free determination by the nations of their own destinies and the promotion of close co-operation among the peoples in building socialism and communism.

A Scientific Approach, Not “Political Alchemy”

The enemies of socialism said that if nations were granted the right to self-determination the state would fall apart. From the outset the Western bourgeoisie ridiculed the intention of Soviet Communists to change the character of national relations. Commenting on the autonomy granted to the small peoples of the Caucasus a bourgeois paper wrote in 1922: “What political alchemy can possibly help transform the leaden instincts of the highlanders into the golden ethics of enlightenment and culture?”

But the Communists did not work on the basis of “political alchemy”. They proceeded from a sober, scientific analysis of the nationalities question and the ways to solve it. They maintained that, if the peoples freely chose their path of social and economic development, it would be a guarantee of a sound union being formed in the future, a union

determined by the realization of their vital interests and by their common desire for rapid progress.

The Communist Party had to combat attempts to "skip" objective stages of historical development. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that Marxists advocated the creation of the biggest possible centralized state, the establishment of proletarian unity and not division. At the same time Lenin sharply criticized those who belittled the principle of the equality of nations and ignored the right of nations to self-determination.

Criticizing the opportunists at the 8th Party Congress for proposing to delete from the Party Programme the clause on the right of nations to self-determination, Lenin said: "If we do away with this point, or formulate it differently, we shall be deleting the nationalities question from the programme. This might be done if there were people with no specific national features. But there are no such people, and we cannot build socialist society in any other way."

Marxism-Leninism regards the nation as an objective form of historical development. This form does not wither away with the abolition of capitalism, but continues to develop on a fundamentally different social and economic basis at definite stages of the new social and economic formation. Such features of the nation as a common economic life, language, territory, sum total of cultural distinctions, and mentality continue to exist and play a definite role under socialism, though many of these features acquire a new substance.

Communists who are real internationalists set above all else the principle of international working people's solidarity and their fraternal relations in the struggle for a brighter future. But loyalty to proletarian internationalism does not mean disregard for the national factor. Only a policy that reflects

national interests, that combines them with and, if necessary, subordinates them to the fundamental interests and aims of the international proletariat, can be regarded as a truly internationalist policy.

The idea that nations and national relations today are a mere survival of the past, which should be tolerated because it cannot be removed, has nothing in common with a scientific world outlook. Take the Maoist attempts to effect the forceful assimilation of nations and nationalities during the "cultural revolution" in China. Mao's adherents claimed that the "class struggle calls for the elimination of national distinctions". They condemned as "revisionism" and "bourgeois nationalism" the desire of the national minorities of the People's Republic of China to study their native languages and culture and they sought to "Sinify" these nationalities by force.

To belittle the national factor under socialism means, in practice, to be unable or unwilling to use it together with international factors, in the interests of the new society which is being built. It is equally impermissible to identify the national element with the nationalist element, because these are quite different things.

Socialism has established a new view of the *national* element. Its value is not determined by mythical "exclusiveness", which is said to be the work of divine providence. As a result of the material and cultural activities of a people over a long period of several eras the national element combines features characteristic of all mankind with specific features of its own. On the one hand, national experience (particularly in the modern age of broad ties between peoples) forms a part of the international experience of mankind and, on the other hand, it embodies the values any particular people have accumulated in intercourse with other peoples. One can properly

appraise the national element only from class positions, from the standpoint of the interests of the universal struggle for social progress. In this instance, the national element will not be in conflict with the international element. Far from it.

The *international* element is, so to say, a "distillation" of the specific historical experience accumulated by peoples, a synthesis of the common element that is born out of their fight for common ideals. In dealing with a combination of the national and international elements under socialism one should not regard it as a static equilibrium of both, but as a dialectical unity with the internationalist elements playing an increasingly greater role in the life of society. As a result of this the national factor is further developed and transformed. A sound solution of the nationalities question is inconceivable without the organic combination of the working people's national and international interests.

"Life has borne out Lenin's prophesy that the new social structure brings about basically new international relations free from discrimination, domination and oppression characteristic of capitalism," is stressed in the Statement of the CPSU Central Committee "On the 60th Anniversary of the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics". "The fraternal socialist countries are an example of relations of such a kind.

"The socialist community is the embodiment of a new socialist type of international relations between sovereign equal states united by bonds of common interests and aims, the Marxist-Leninist ideology, fraternal solidarity and mutual assistance and all-round co-operation.

"The leading and guiding force of the socialist countries are their Communist and Worker's Parties. It has been borne out by practice that loyalty to the

principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism and the close co-operation of fraternal parties in all spheres of activity make it possible correctly to combine the common and national interests of the socialist countries, successfully to resolve all the contradictions and difficulties which may be encountered in the process of development and for each country separately and the socialist community as a whole to move forward confidently. These aims are also promoted by the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the Warsaw Treaty Organization”.

How did the USSR in fact solve the nationalities question?

II. UNION OF REPUBLICS: ORIGIN AND ESTABLISHMENT

One of the first legislative acts of Soviet Russia was the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia which proclaimed the policy of a "voluntary and sincere union of the peoples of Russia", the equality of nations and the right of nations to self-determination, including secession and the formation of independent states. It was on the basis of this act that state independence was granted to the Polish, Finnish, Ukrainian, Byelorussian and other peoples. The national minorities that inhabited Central Russia and had had no independent states in the past were granted autonomy. That was how the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) appeared.

From the RSFSR to the USSR

At the same time other independent Soviet republics, which established relations on the basis of treaties with Soviet Russia, namely, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Armenia and several others, were formed on the territory of Russia. Some of them, the Transcaucasian republics, for instance, soon formed an independent federation of their own. Strong tendencies towards unification manifested themselves in other republics too.

In those days the Soviet republics were weak and defenceless. They existed in a hostile encirclement of capitalist states. The need for unification was obvious to them. The reason why the socialist republics founded a single federal state more than five years after the triumphant revolution of 1917 was that the Soviet leaders were eager to avoid haste which might have inhibited future co-operation between the peoples.

In November, 1917, the revolutionary government adopted an appeal "To All the Working Muslims of Russia and the East" which read in part:

"Your faith and customs, your national and cultural institutions shall henceforth be free and immune. You may organize your national life freely, as you see fit. You have a right to this. You are hereby informed that your rights, just like the rights of all the peoples of Russia, shall be protected by the entire might of the revolution and its bodies, the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies."

The centuries of oppression by feudal and capitalist private ownership and of strife between nations and nationalities had left painful memories in the minds of the peoples of the East. They had created mistrust between these and other peoples, which could not be removed overnight but had to be overcome gradually with the utmost patience and caution. The nationalities policy of Soviet power was marked by profound tact. It took strict account of the interests and specific features of nations and national groups. It showed an understanding of the outlook of the mass of the people and at the same time it was irreconcilable towards all manifestations of chauvinism and nationalism. This fostered trust between nations, promoted cohesion and brought about unification in a single federal state.



Moscow, capital of the USSR, a union of fifteen free and equal republics

On December 30, 1922, the First All-Union Congress of Soviets gave legislative form to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

The founding of the Union on the principles of equality and voluntary association was an act of historic importance. It helped to pool the material resources of the constituent republics for their rational utilization in the interests of all the peoples of the country, to expand their economies on the basis of a single plan of economic development taking full advantage of the benefits offered by the socialist economic system. This played a decisive role in eliminating the actual inequality of nations and in promoting their economic, social, political and cultural progress.

The unification of the Soviet peoples in a single state considerably increased the political might of the world's first socialist country and enhanced its international prestige. All peoples eager to promote social progress regarded it as a beacon. Closing the First All-Union Congress of Soviets, Mikhail Kalinin, Chairman of the All-Union Central Executive Committee, said: "For many thousands of years the best minds of mankind have worked on the theoretical problem and searched for forms that would enable people to live in friendship and fraternity without going through tremendous suffering. Only now, today, has the first step been taken in this direction."

Harmony of National and International Elements

The Soviet federation built on the national principle proved to be a viable state structure which very effectively combined the interests of the entire state with the interests of each people. Its inviolable principle is the voluntary association of its members. This principle has been consolidated in the Constitution of the USSR. Each Union Republic retains its state sovereignty. In addition to all-Union and Union-republican administrative bodies, republican bodies exercising the authority of the Union Republics were set up. All Union Republics, regardless of the size of their territory and population, are represented by the same number of deputies in the Soviet of Nationalities—one of the two chambers of the USSR Supreme Soviet. It should be mentioned that no law can be passed without the approval of the Soviet of Nationalities. Both chambers of the Soviet Parliament are equal. The Chairmen of the

Presidiums of the Supreme Soviets of all the 15 Union Republics are *ex-officio* Vice-Chairmen of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

In discussing the forms of national structures mention must also be made of autonomous formations. Introduced immediately after the 1917 Revolution Soviet autonomy continued to mature in the years that followed. The Tuva Autonomous Region has acquired the status of an Autonomous Republic, and some of the Autonomous Republics (such as the Kazakh, Kirghiz and Moldavian ASSRs)—the status of Union Republics. There are also Autonomous Areas. The Constitution of the USSR establishes the manner in which each form of autonomy is represented in the Soviet Parliament.

Though legal equality is an important condition for the real equality of nations, it is not the only one. Real equality could be achieved only after the nations had attained more or less the same level of economic and cultural development and the same level of education. Furthermore, they all had to possess roughly equal numbers of qualified people from among their own nationals. So the task was within a brief period of time to abolish the disparity between the levels of development of nations and to ensure not only their legal and political equality, but their real equality too.

The disparity between the levels of development of nations and nationalities could be removed by aiding the formerly backward peoples (such aid was granted, above all, by the Russian people) and by pursuing a purposeful nationalities policy which consisted in the priority development of the formerly backward outlying regions of the country. With this aim in view, the state took a number of steps to ensure a more rapid improvement of the people's living standards,

including tax relief, the regulation of the prices of industrial and farm consumer goods and the switching of some of the resources of the more advanced regions to meet the needs of economic and cultural development in national regions.

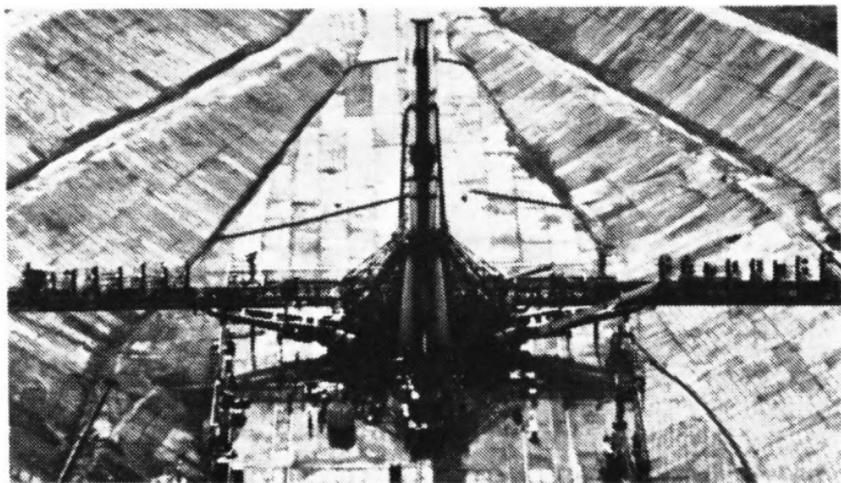
The economically backward republics were able to hasten their development by calling not only on their own resources, but also on those of the whole country and on reserves latent in the joint efforts of all the peoples. Thus in 1924-1925 Tajikistan's own revenues amounted only to 7.7 per cent of its total budget expenditure; in the case of Turkmenistan the figure was just over 10 per cent and in the Ukraine under 40 per cent. In 1928-1930 the subsidies to Tajikistan from the central government budget amounted to 73, 78.5 and 87.8 per cent of its total expenditure.

Another achievement of socialism was that it enabled the peoples in the space of 30-40 years to make a leap from backwardness to progress, from alienation and mistrust to truly fraternal relations.

More than 100 nations, nationalities and national groups inhabit the Soviet Union. In addition to big nations, such as the Russians (140 million), the Ukrainians (42 million) and the Uzbeks (over 12 million), there are small nationalities and national groups, such as the Shortzy in the northern foothills of the Altai Mountains, who number only 16,000.

Today on the principle of voluntary association the USSR unites 15 Union, 20 Autonomous Republics, eight Autonomous Regions and 10 Autonomous Areas. All nations and peoples—big and small—have exercised their right to self-determination.

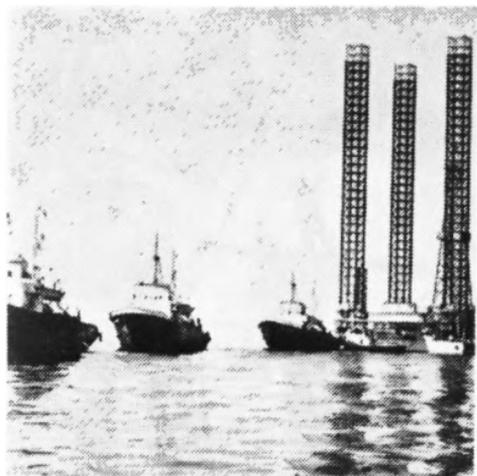
Before the revolution the peoples inhabiting the country formed what was called "single and indivisible" Russia. Even the slightest attempts to show independence were cut short. Many languages and



A launching rocket with a *Soyuz* spaceship before blast-off from the Baikonur cosmodrome. Russians, Ukrainians, Kazakhs, Turkmen, Georgians and Armenians—many of the Soviet Union's hundred nations and nationalities—are involved in the space programme



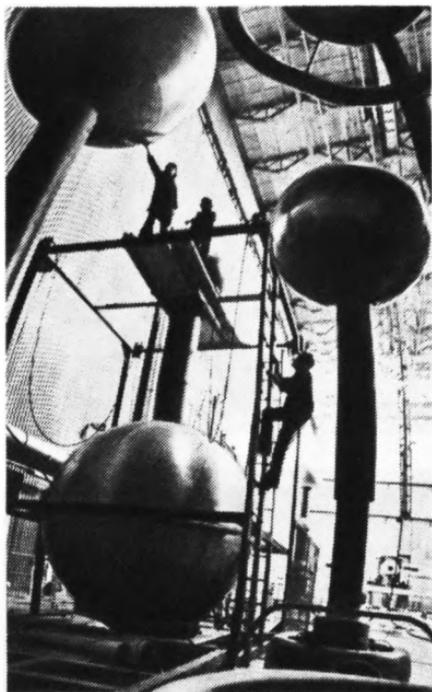
Russian Federation: the Sayan - Shushenskaya hydropower station by night



Azerbaijan: a floating oil rig of the Baku type is towed into position in the Caspian



Russian Federation:
in a super-high vol-
tage laboratory in
Sverdlovsk ball dis-
chargers are prepar-
ed for an experiment

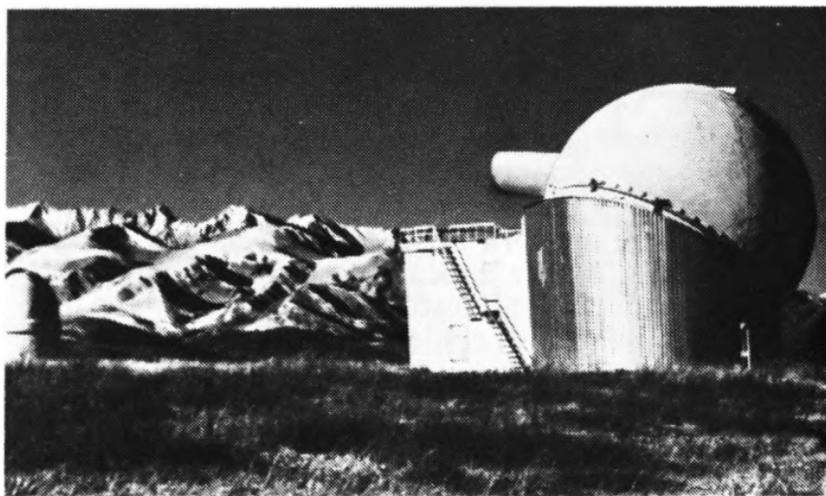


national cultures were banned. Barely two dozen peoples had more or less developed written languages. The majority of the population were illiterate. The 1979 census revealed that only 0.2 per cent of the people from nine to 49 years of age could not read or write. Social and economic progress was accompanied by a far-reaching cultural revolution which brought the achievements of modern civilization within reach of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR. This brought about a social and national resurgence of peoples who, for the first time in their history, were given an opportunity to organize their national life as they saw fit and to develop culture in the national forms they were accustomed to.

Striking Contrast

Take the people of Daghestan, for instance. In his day Gamzat Tsadasa, People's Poet of Daghestan, said that, though his countrymen had always been highlanders, it was Soviet rule that enabled them to climb to the mountain summit. A comparison of present-day Daghestan with that of the pre-revolutionary period will reveal a striking contrast. A semi-feudal region in the past, it is now an Autonomous Republic with sound socialist relations of production. In the past its industry amounted to only a few small-scale semi-handicraft enterprises with primitive equipment. Today it has large developed industries possessing the latest equipment. In the past Daghestan was a region with tiny peasant households, the wooden plough and hoe being the main farm implements. Today it is a republic of large-scale highly mechanized farming. In the past the region was marked by ignorance: almost 100 per cent of the population were illiterate. Today Daghestan is a republic with a fully literate population, a large network of schools, specialized secondary schools, higher education establishments, and research and cultural institutions. In the past the region was plagued by epidemics that took thousands of lives. Today it is a republic with a well-developed public health service for all.

The fortunes of the small nationalities of the Far North and Soviet Far East are equally instructive. Late in the 19th century Professor Yakobi, of Kazan University, and Professor Polyakov, of St. Petersburg University, reported to Tsar Alexander III that on the lower reaches of the Ob, in the North, life was withering away. The climate there was severe, the merchants and officials were committing outrages and the population was dying out. After reading the



Russian Federation: control room of the Bilibino atomic power station in the Chukchi Autonomous Area

Russian Federation: the Sayan solar observatory of the Siberian Institute of Earth Magnetism of the Ionosphere and Radio Wave Propagation in the Buryat ASSR

report, the Tsar wrote in the margin: "So be it!"

The 1917 Revolution, however, saved these peoples.

The Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Area lies on the middle reaches of the Ob in Western Siberia. Primitive tents and huts have been replaced by modern housing with all conveniences, TV and radios. Films are shown everywhere and the local people have become avid readers. The development of education was an outstanding event in the history of these peoples. Already in the early years of Soviet rule linguists in Moscow, Leningrad and other cultural centres studied the languages of the peoples of the North to develop alphabets for them on the basis of the Russian alphabet. Some 40 peoples had no written languages. In 1923 there was not a single literate Khanty or Mansi. By contrast 600 in every 1,000 inhabitants today have a secondary or higher education. Not only Soviet readers, but readers in other countries too have come to appreciate the splendid writings of Nanai author Grigori Khodzher, Mansi poet Yuvan Shestalov, Nivkh author Vladimir Sangi, Chukchi authors Yuri Rytkeu and Antonina Kymytval and Yukagir writer Semyon Kurilov.

New life is seething in the vast expanses of the Far North. Towns and settlements are appearing there together with nuclear power stations and ports. The oil and gas extraction, chemical engineering and mining industries are developing there.

What about the traditional occupations of the inhabitants, such as reindeer-breeding, fishing and hunting? These are being developed too, but on collective principles with the use of modern equipment. The reindeer herders and huntsmen are living in settlements with modern conveniences.



Ukraine: Victor Kosyakov, young miner from Donetsk, is interviewed after his first day down a mine

What Has Been Achieved and Remains to Be Achieved

The effectiveness and viability of Soviet nationalities policy consist in the skilful combination of the national and international interests of peoples, in creating favourable conditions for building up the material and cultural potentials of each republic and, at the same time, using them to the full for the development of the whole country.

In the tenth five-year plan period (1976-1980) alone the industrial output of Byelorussia increased by 42 per cent, that of Uzbekistan—by 27 per cent, Georgia—by 41 per cent, Azerbaijan—by 47 per cent, Lithuania—by 17 per cent, Moldavia—by 32 per cent, Tajikistan—by 29 per cent, Armenia—by 46 per cent and Estonia—by 24 per cent. This growth ensured a steady upsurge of the entire Soviet economy and the further, even more intensive, expansion of economic ties between the Union Republics.

At the same time the Communist Party is aware of problems that have yet to be solved. It has been concentrating the efforts of all the republics on accomplishing the economic tasks facing the whole country and particular economic regions—the West Siberian and Far Eastern regions and the Non-Black Soil Zone of Russia, on rational employment of the labour resources in the republics and particular regions in the interests of the whole state.

The building of an advanced socialist society has marked a new stage in national relations. How is this manifested?

In the *economic* sphere it is manifested in the creation of a single economic complex which includes the economies of all the Union Republics and is developing according to a single state plan.

In the *social* sphere it is manifested in a uniform



Russian Federation: a shop at the *Electrovypryamitel* plant in Saransk in the Mordovian ASSR

Byelorussia: a 75-ton BelAZ-549 dump truck from the Byelorussian truck and tractor plant

social structure of all the nations and nationalities in the USSR, composed of the working class, collective farmers and people's intelligentsia, and also in the moulding of a socialist way of life.

In the *state* sphere it is manifested in the harmonious unity of the federal and national statehood of peoples.

In the *cultural* sphere it is manifested in the establishment of a culture that is single in socialist content but varied in national forms.

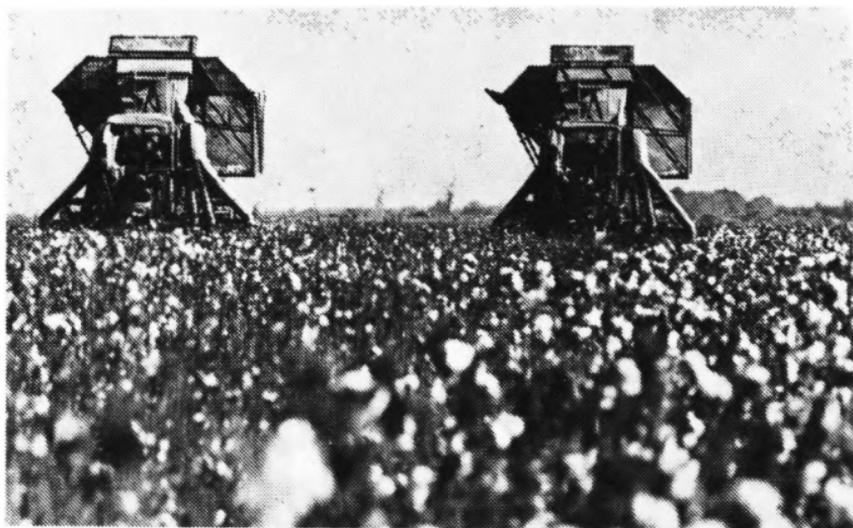
In the sphere of *ideology* it is manifested in the supremacy of the ideas of socialist internationalism, friendship and fraternity of peoples.

Take the economic sphere, for instance. In the early period it was important to overcome the economic and cultural backwardness of many nations and nationalities living in the outlying regions. In those days the republics and regions of the country were subdivided into agrarian and industrial, into raw material and processing areas. Such economic inequality of peoples has now really been abolished. At present the levels of economic and cultural development of the various peoples are being brought closer.

At present there is no great disparity in the regional levels of average per capita national income in terms of industrial output. But the republics still differ with respect to certain economic indicators, such as rates of growth of industrial and agricultural production, labour productivity and living standards. Thus, with respect to labour productivity in industry some republics deviate up to 30 per cent from the average for the USSR as a whole. A set of special measures, such as bringing closer together the levels of the mechanization and automation of production, the levels of education and the professional training of personnel, and the pursuit of a purposeful policy in capital investments will help decrease the disparity



Kazakhstan: harvest time at the 40th Anniversary of the October Revolution collective farm; reclamation of virgin and fallow lands has given the republic an extra 25,500,000 hectares of arable land



Uzbekistan: cotton fields in the Dzhizak steppe

between particular indicators for the various republics.

It follows that the problem of eliminating the differences between the economic levels of the various republics and regions still remains.

Furthermore, today every republic is in a position to make a sizable contribution to the expansion of the whole national economy. A division of labour within the framework of the USSR has taken shape and is functioning effectively on the basis of the specialization and comprehensive economic development of each republic.

Thus, the Russian Federation is engaged in steel-making, the extraction of oil and coal, electricity generation, the manufacture of metal-cutting lathes, motor vehicles and chemical engineering equipment and the production of cotton textiles.

The Ukraine is producing iron and steel, electrical engineering equipment, and tractors and is extracting coal and iron ore.



Russian Federation: collective farmer Fatil Timirshin has won first prize—a live sheep—in a wrestling competition during a *Sabantui* national holiday in the village of Verkhni Yarkei in the Bashkir ASSR

Uzbekistan grows 70 per cent of the USSR's cotton and nearly 94 per cent of its kenaf; it produces 50 per cent of the silk cocoons and 35 per cent of the Karakul hides. It leads in the manufacture of cotton-processing machines and holds second place in the output of cotton textiles.

It should be borne in mind that specialization of production is very closely combined with industrial co-operation. This helps improve the quality of the products and reduce production costs. It is fully in



In Turkmenia very sweet grapes are grown in former desert now irrigated by the waters of the Kara-Kum Canal; the area of irrigated land in the USSR has more than doubled from 1940 to 1980

keeping with the interests of the whole country and of each individual republic.

Today the peoples have achieved actual equality. So the primary task in economic policy is to secure the maximum performance of the entire national economy and, on this basis, meet the interests of the entire people and of each individual nation and nationality. The recent five-year plans were geared to this task. A major portion of capital investment is being channelled into the Eastern regions of the country, namely Siberia, the Soviet Far East, Central Asia and Kazakhstan. These regions have unique natural wealth as well as cheap sources of electric power. This opens up splendid opportunities for the accelerated development of the most promising industries.

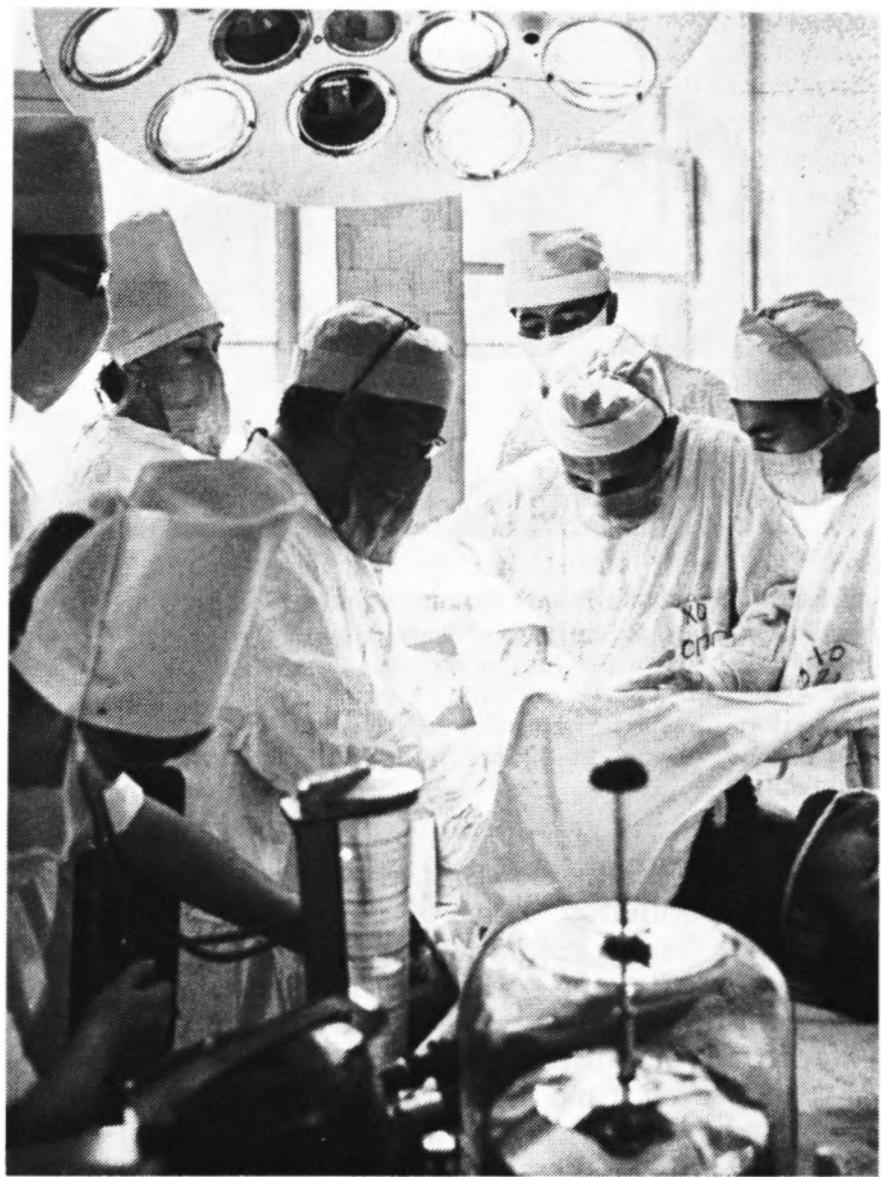
In recent years special attention has been paid to the development of farming in the Non-Black Soil Zone of Russia. As a result of a set of historical circumstances farming in the central zone was in a state of neglect. Both the inflow of qualified personnel and capital investment were inadequate.

Development of farming in this zone is now not only the task of particular regions or the Russian Federation. In fact it is now a national task and many republics are helping to fulfil it.

The Demographic Factor

To cope with the economic tasks facing the whole of the USSR at the current stage of development, it is necessary to make effective use not only of the material, but also of the manpower resources.

The USSR's natural wealth and labour resources are distributed unevenly over its territory. The bulk of the established mineral, power, water and forest



Professor Oraz Babayev operates in the regional hospital in Mary, Turkmenia; there are 37 doctors per ten thousand population in the Soviet Union



Tajikistan: midwife Aisulo Bokirova and pediatricist Irina Budnichenko examine a new-born baby in the central hospital of the Murgab district in the Pamirs; Tajikistan has the highest birth rate of all the Union Republics—37 per thousand population

resources lies in the East and North, which are sparsely populated. Thus, 87 per cent of the USSR's potential energy resources, including 89 per cent of its coal reserves, 66 per cent of its natural gas and 70 per cent of its hydraulic resources are concentrated in the East, which forms the bulk of the country's area. At the same time only one-quarter of the total population live in Siberia and the Soviet Far East.

The USSR bodies which plan economic development and the territorial distribution of productive forces on a national scale must take into account the effect of the unfavourable demographic factor, which is one of the long-term consequences of the war. In the 1980s there will be a major decrease in the

number of able-bodied young people starting work. The effect of war consequences is particularly marked in the Western and central regions. Furthermore, people, especially young men and women, are migrating from these regions to the East. Moreover, in these regions a portion of the rural population is moving to towns.

The 1979 USSR census showed that as compared with 1970 the population had increased by nine per cent. As far as the Union Republics are concerned these indicators differ noticeably. Thus, as compared with 1970 the population of the Russian Federation in 1979 had increased by 6 per cent, that of the Ukraine—by 6 per cent, Byelorussia—by 6 per cent, Uzbekistan—by 30 per cent, Kazakhstan—by 13 per cent, Georgia—by 7 per cent, Azerbaijan—by 18 per cent, Lithuania—by 9 per cent, Moldavia—by 11 per cent, Latvia—by 7 per cent, Kirghizia—by 20 per cent, Tajikistan—by 31 per cent, Armenia—by 22 per cent, Turkmenia—by 28 per cent and Estonia—by 8 per cent.

This disparity is above all due to the varying rate of natural increase of the population among the different peoples. The need for the speedier expansion of certain new industries in some of the republics in the interests of the whole of the USSR contributed to this in some degree, for it led to an influx of specialists from other parts of the country. Another factor here is the varying ratio of the urban population to the rural population, which also influences the birth rate.

In the period from 1940 to 1972 the birth rate in the USSR dropped by 42.1 per cent. In the Russian Federation it fell by more than half, in the Ukraine and Armenia—by nearly half, in Georgia—by one-third and in Lithuania by a quarter. In Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kirghizia and Turkmenia the birth rate

showed no major changes and in Tajikistan it even slightly increased.

To fill all the job vacancies women had actively to be brought into social production. This also resulted in a drop in the birth rate. So the growth of the population has been affected by a whole set of factors—economic, cultural and national. Such measures as the stabilization of the size of the rural population, especially in the central and Western regions, the checking of the growth of big cities, more rapid housing construction, the expansion of the

Turkmenia: folk craftsman Yusunbai Khaitmuradov with his son Kadambai



network of pre-school children's establishments and the gradual creation of conditions enabling woman to combine a job with the bringing up of children will promote a more balanced growth of the population in all parts of the USSR. The impact of these measures will, however, become noticeable only in time.

To attract labour to newly developed regions or large-scale construction projects of country-wide importance the state resorts to economic incentives. This policy has greatly influenced the migration of population. People of various nationalities are

Uzbekistan: embroideresses at the Bokhara gold embroidery factory



Lithuania: a song and dance festival in Vilnius, capital of the republic



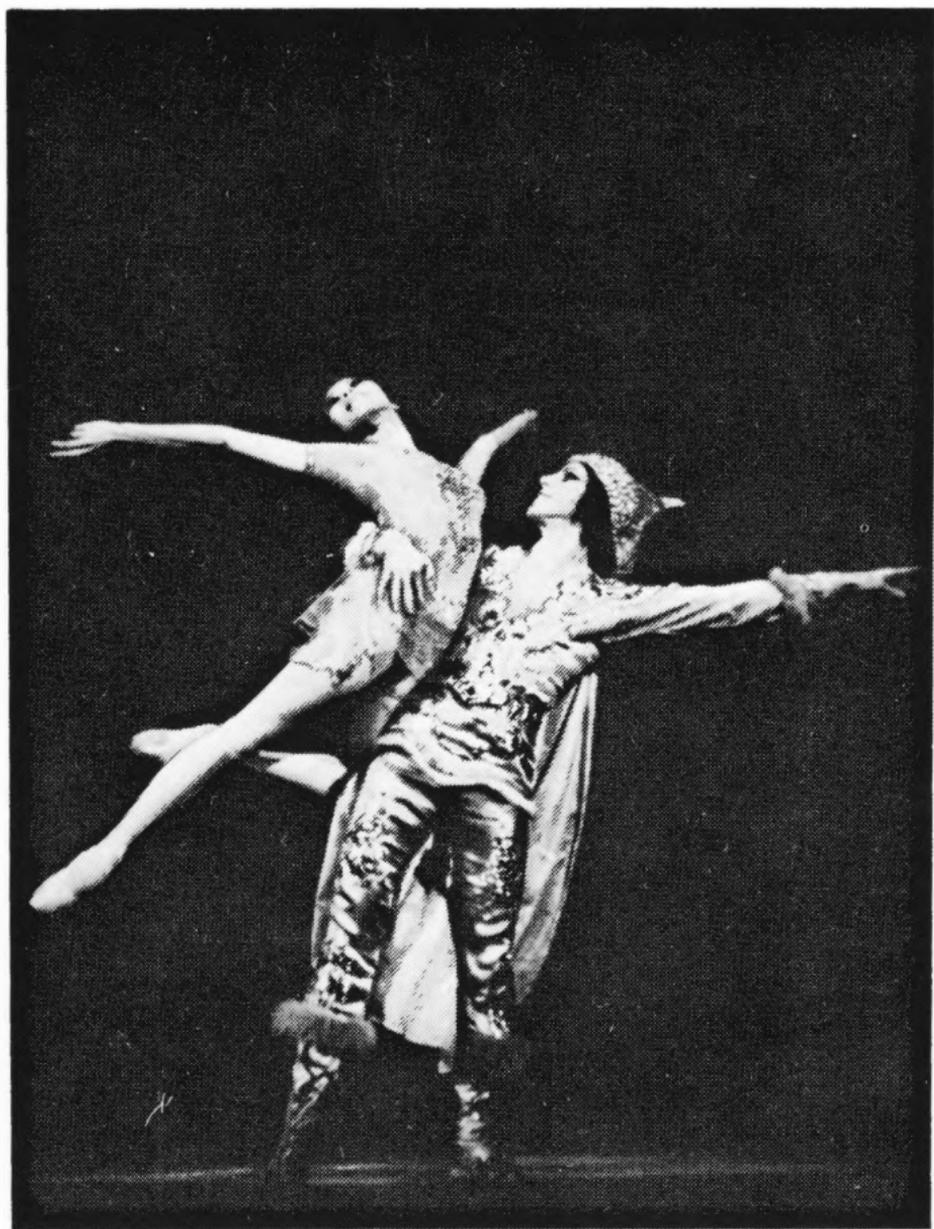
Georgia: national dances at a *Tbilisoba* festival

moving to new economic regions and big construction projects to settle there. Hero of Socialist Labour V. Dityuk, team leader of the Kolutonski state farm near Tselinograd, writes: "Joint labour cemented and expanded our international ties and fraternal relations. Let us recall those who opened up the virgin lands. There were envoys from every Union Republic. Multi-national labour collectives arose and grew strong here. This applies to every sector of production—whether it is a factory department, farm field, oil derrick or the 'thread' of the Baikal-Amur Railway."

In Kazakhstan and Kirghizia the indigenous peoples account for less than half the total population of these republics. The influx of other nationals has been due to objective circumstances which conditioned their rapid economic growth. But this has not changed their status as Union Republics or affected the care the state takes for the cultural advance of the Kazakhs or Kirghizes.

It appears that extensive economic development of certain regions will lead to the further large-scale migration of people from some republics and regions. Of course, if the local authorities display due solicitude for the living conditions of the newcomers, the latter will tend to settle permanently at the construction sites and the influx of outside labour will be more stable. To promote the harmonious development of the national economy it is vital to ensure the migration of people from the more densely populated areas, such as Central Asia and Azerbaijan, to sparsely populated regions, such as the North, the Soviet Far East and Siberia.

Western commentators on Soviet affairs have tried to provide their own explanation of the demographic processes occurring in the Union Republics. On the one hand, they claim that the Soviet state is



Buryat ASSR: a scene from the *Beautiful Angara* ballet at the Buryat State Opera and Ballet Theatre; there are 611 professional theatres in the Soviet Union

“Russifying” the national republics in order to keep them under the influence of the Russian Federation and to counter alleged tendencies towards political and economic separatism. On the other hand, they pose as persons who wish the Soviet multi-national state well and want to “warn” it against the “rising Muslim threat”. By this they mean the migration of people from the Soviet Central Asian republics to other parts of the country. But their “theoretical propositions” are obviously absurd. However, it is clear that they are keen to drive ideological and political wedges between the Soviet peoples, to disrupt their fraternal relations and to undermine the Union of Republics.

But these commentators tend to ignore the unity of international and national elements in the way of life of the Soviet people. Their cohesion is conditioned by the socialist social relations, the internationalist policy and common interests of all classes and social groups, all nations and nationalities. So far as the Soviet people are concerned, nationality is not the determining factor. National distinctions do not grow over into conflicts between people. In their forecasts bourgeois sociologists clearly overlook the feelings of internationalist fraternity which have become an inherent part of the socialist nations, feelings which have replaced those of national and religious segregation.

In an interview granted to a correspondent of the French paper *Le Monde* in June, 1977, Leonid Brezhnev said: “As to the population growth in one or another republic of our country, this doesn’t worry us. On the contrary, it gladdens us, for it reflects, first of all, the sharp rise in our republics’ economic level, including a tremendous growth of the well-being of the population in the former borderlands of tsarist Russia, and the great progress they



Tajikistan: just married are Timur Saliev, a Tajik, and Svetlana Sobko, an Ukrainian; over 13 per cent of the families in Tajikistan are between people of different nationalities



have achieved along the road of socialist transformations. In the long run, all this consolidates the single amalgam which we call a new historical community—the Soviet people.”

III. A NEW HISTORICAL COMMUNITY

The building of a new society in the multi-national Soviet state has resulted in the appearance of a new social international community—*the Soviet people*.

From the social and economic, political and cultural points of view what in fact are the Soviet people? How do they differ from multi-national formations in capitalist states? Does it mean that with the moulding of this international community the national communities will disappear?

Types and Forms of Communities

In their works on national relations in the USSR Western Sovietologists have put forward the view that Soviet people are a myth invented to camouflage the policy of forceful Russification and the knocking together of a single nation of the "Soviet Russian type" to replace the numerous nationalities. But this is merely an attempt to project into socialist society the relations of domination and subordination inherent in capitalism.

That socialism has given rise to new communities is a natural development. In the early years of Soviet rule, that is to say, during the Civil War and the

period of foreign military intervention, the need to defend the achievements of the socialist revolution welded the working class and peasants together and helped rally all the nations and nationalities of Russia into a single family.

There have been various types of communities in history. They can be divided into several groups. There have been natural historical communities linked by a common origin and marked by external features and tokens passed down from one generation to another. There have been social historical communities, such as the clan, tribe, nationality and nation. In antagonistic societies there are social classes and groups which differ considerably and even oppose one another, such as the class of proletarians and the class of capitalists in bourgeois nations. Finally, there have been unions of various peoples within the framework of a single state. There were many such instances even in ancient times. But the earlier forms of exploiting states and the modern imperialist states with their colonial or semi-colonial possessions and dependencies represent conglomerates of peoples who have been forcefully united.

In antagonistic class formations there have never been strong and stable voluntary associations of peoples or socially welded nations. As a rule, in antagonistic formations inter-ethnic associations have always been weak and shortlived and disintegrated when put to a serious test. This is shown by many examples, from the despotic Oriental empires to the capitalist "patchwork" of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy.

Tsarist Russia united dozens of peoples within its state. But they could hardly have been referred to as a "Russian people", because they were disunited and the small peoples were subjected to social and national oppression. Lenin wrote with anguish about

the masses of toilers of various nationalities being alienated from one another, because such alienation hampered the struggle against the tsarist autocracy. Nor is there any "peace between nationalities" under capitalism today. Eloquent proof of this are the unending conflicts which stem from national antagonism in Northern Ireland, Canada, Belgium and Spain.

Under capitalism the division of nations into antagonistic classes and the disunity of nations and nationalities and of social groups and individuals they are made up of stem from the very nature of the system.

The Soviet Union is a fundamentally different state. There has not yet been in history such a strong and stable association of all classes, social groups, nations and nationalities as the Soviet people. The *political basis* of this unity is the Soviet system, the united multi-national socialist state. Its *economic basis* is the unified national economy founded on socialist ownership and planned management which help make the most rational use of natural resources and achieve the most advantageous division of labour between the republics in the interests of all the peoples. Marxist-Leninist ideology forms the *ideological basis* of the inviolable unity of the socialist nations.

The new 1977 Constitution of the USSR consistently strengthens the federal elements of the Soviet state. Article 13 of the 1936 Constitution defined the USSR as a federal state based on the voluntary association of equal Soviet Socialist Republics. Article 70 of the new Constitution refers to the USSR as an *integral*, federal, multi-national state formed on the principle of socialist federalism, of the voluntary association of equal socialist republics, which embodies the *state unity of the Soviet*

people. This graphically reflects the further strengthening of the internationalist elements, it emphasizes the Leninist principle of the self-determination of nations, which played an outstanding role in building up the multi-national Soviet state.

The principle of internationalism, which forms the foundation of the USSR's national-state system, is manifested not only in its consistent policy of strengthening the federal elements. As the nations and nationalities are drawn closer and closer together this process gives a new internationalist content to national statehood. The internationalism of the federal state, regardless of form, has consisted and continues to consist in the fact that this state expresses the interests of all the nations, of the working people of all the nationalities dwelling in the country.

Political and Theoretical Importance of the Notion "Soviet People"

The concept of Soviet people, as a social and international community, reflects, above all, a definite result of natural processes in socialist development. The notion "Soviet people" is of political and theoretical importance. The political aspect is manifested in that this notion enables Soviet citizens of various nationalities to find a country-wide approach to their problems and tasks, to realize more deeply their involvement in the efforts and plans of the whole people, to gain a deeper understanding of the laws that govern the development of the single Soviet culture which has a socialist common content, but varied national forms.

The emergence and development of the Soviet people as a new historical community make it possible to explain theoretically and gain a clearer

idea of the inter-penetrating processes in national and international development for a long time ahead, when other national communities shall grow into international communities on a broader scale. The notion of "Soviet people" has actually filled a gap in Marxist literature. In the past it failed to deal with the question of how mankind, having achieved the flourishing of separate socialist nations, will proceed to a merger of nations, with national distinctions gradually withering away.

Otto Bauer, ideologist of "Austro-Marxism", thought that nations would differentiate more and more as progress was made in building socialism, that national distinctions would become increasingly marked. This was, beyond doubt, a nationalist interpretation.

But the reader may ask: "If Soviet Marxists reject this standpoint, why do they advocate the flowering of socialist nations?" Flowering does, after all, imply the strengthening of national features and the development of national elements. But this is only a seeming contradiction. It is important to realize that the term "national" does not mean solely the specific features of a nation. It also includes the common elements the nations produce in their fight for common ideals. It is inseparably linked with international elements, in this case elements that are characteristic of the Soviet people in general.

Features which do not depend on social and national distinctions have become more pronounced in the life of the Soviet people, in their behaviour, character and attitude towards their public duty. In addition to their national feelings they have acquired a sense of pride for the whole of the Soviet people, a sense of pride in their contribution to the efforts of the entire Soviet people, which is becoming increasingly manifest in their thinking and behaviour. These

features are common to all Soviet people—the members of the new historical community. Of course, the emergence and development of this community does not mean that the national distinctions will wither away at the present stage. The Soviet state is opposed to accelerating these processes. Yet, it is equally opposed to the perpetuation of national partitions. The flowering of nations and their gradual drawing closer together constitute the two leading interlinked trends in the development of national relations, *two aspects of a dialectical process leading to further multi-nationalization of social life.*

A corollary of this will be a new understanding of such notions as “Soviet character” and “national character”. In the past national character was defined as a sum total of the features distinguishing one nation from another. National character does indeed include features that distinguish a given nation from another nation. But these distinctive features are acquiring more and more common traits. If you determine the specific and the general features in the culture of any Soviet nation, you will see the rich culture of Soviet people as a whole who are foremost champions of the progress of all mankind.

The notion of “Soviet people” conveys an idea of the direction of further development of nations and nationalities. Marxists, of course, have in mind the ultimate aim of the development of mankind, namely, the merging of all nations into a single family embracing the whole of mankind. The emergence and development of the Soviet people have shown that multi-nationalization of public life at a definite, though prolonged stage, does not at all obliterate national distinctions. They are retained, but the nations and nationalities develop not only on their own, but also as component parts of an integral whole—in this particular case, the Soviet people. It

looks as though social homogeneity will gradually be achieved within the integral national communities, such as the Soviet people, that will appear and develop in various parts of the world and then the nations will ever more rapidly draw closer together. Marxist-Leninists believe that, when this time comes, all these nations will be socialist nations.

It is vital to point out that we have witnessed from the very beginning the emergence of a whole community of sovereign socialist states, which is paving the way for the strengthening of ties between the nations and the removal of the partitions between them.

It is believed that communities of this kind will appear later in other parts of the world, too. After a long period of development of such multi-national communities in the context of communist relations, when the new system has been established on a world-wide scale, nations will begin to merge in the full sense of the word, as Lenin foresaw. Proceeding from a strictly scientific approach in its nationalities policy, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union has not proclaimed the slogan of a merger of nations as a slogan that has to be implemented in practical politics. The decisions of CPSU congresses and the Party Programme speak of the flowering of socialist nations and their subsequent drawing closer together. The drawing closer together of nations in the period of advanced socialism endows them with an increasing number of common features, thereby increasing their similarity and strengthening the socialist way of life. This process is combined with the development of progressive national traditions and specific national features. The Report of the Central Committee to the 26th Party Congress reads in part:

“Experience shows that the intensive economic and social development of each of our republics speeds up

the process of their coming closer together in every field. National cultures are thriving and enriching one another, and we are witnessing the moulding of the culture of the whole Soviet people—a new social and international community.”

Dialectics of National and International Elements

The rise of this new Soviet community helps one thoroughly to understand the dialectics of the national and the international elements under socialism. Life has proved the bourgeois Sovietologists wrong. They hoped that the consolidation of the Soviet nations as a result of the building of socialist society would give rise to centrifugal tendencies, thereby increasing the alienation of these nations. This has not happened, however, because both the objective preconditions (namely, multinationalization of public life and, above all, the development of an integral economic complex) and subjective preconditions (embodied in the consistent policy of the CPSU on the nationalities question) cemented the community of peoples inhabiting the USSR.

During the nation-wide discussion of the Draft Constitution of the USSR several people made ill-considered proposals to abandon the structure of the Soviet multi-national state, which had taken shape, and to proclaim a new Soviet nation. But these proposals were totally unjustified.

To identify the Soviet people with a “new nation” would be tantamount to reducing the new historical community to the level of communities that appeared at earlier historical stages of social development, that is to say, to bringing it down to the level of a “lower order”.

On the other hand, this would be tantamount to ignoring the existence of over 100 socialist nations, nationalities and national groups which are developing within the framework of the new historical community in the USSR. And this is quite impermissible. Leonid Brezhnev said:

“A new historical community—the Soviet people—has, as we know, taken shape in the USSR. Some comrades—it is true that they are not many—have drawn incorrect conclusions from this. They propose introducing in the Constitution the concept of an integral Soviet *nation*, eliminating the Union and Autonomous Republics or drastically curtailing the sovereignty of the Union Republics, depriving them of the right to secede from the USSR and of the right to maintain external relations.

“The proposals to do away with the Soviet of Nationalities and to set up a unicameral Supreme Soviet are along the same lines. I think that the erroneousness of these proposals is quite clear. The Soviet people’s social and political unity does not at all imply the disappearance of national distinctions. Thanks to the consistent pursuance of the Leninist nationalities policy we have, simultaneously with the building of socialism, successfully solved the nationalities question, for the first time in history. The friendship of the Soviet peoples is indissoluble, and in the process of building communism they are steadily drawing ever closer together and their spiritual life is being mutually enriched. But we would be taking a dangerous path if we were artificially to step up this objective process of national integration. That is something Lenin persistently warned against, and we shall not depart from his precepts.”

This truth is not to the taste of Western Sovietologists. They have been trying in every way to

prove it wrong. Some refer to the development of common features in the life of Soviet peoples in order to accuse the CPSU of attempting to "dissolve" them by force in a sort of supra-national formation.

Thus, in his article "Religion, Modern Nationalism and Political Power in Soviet Central Asia", published in *Canadian Slavonic Papers* American professor Michael Rywkin claimed that the "Soviet nationality policy promulgates the idea of 'one Soviet nation' gradually emerging all over the USSR and forming around the Russian national core".

There are authors who assert that the USSR is not at all a family of prospering peoples, but a colonial empire which is continuing the policy of Russian tsarism.

To claim that the internationalist aims and methods of Soviet policy are no different from those of the policy pursued by the tsarist autocratic empire is an outrage against the truth. The purpose of this line of argument is at all costs to arouse mistrust of the CPSU's internationalist policy and to present the concept of internationalism as the antipode of the concept of "national freedom".

These authors reason that, as soon as the union of nations and their co-operation have promoted economic and industrial progress in the republics, one must question the expediency of radical changes in the former, though backward, ways of life. They claim that the old patriarchal structure was more in line with national traditions. Western Sovietologists also maintain that, if the drawing closer and mutual enrichment of cultures help raise the culture of each nation to a higher level, it is essential to sound the alarm to save the "imperishable values" which might be lost as a result of "alien influence". It does not worry them at all that these "imperishable values" are feudal customs and barbarous superstitions that

are rooted in the past. Their purpose here is to make it look as if somebody is encroaching on the "holy of holies" of the national spirit.

There are reasons to believe that no socialist achievement has aroused such anxiety and alarm among the opponents of socialism as the growing multi-national cohesion and fraternity of the Soviet peoples. This is, above all, because of the response which Soviet achievements in the solution of the nationalities question have evoked among the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, who are now defending their right to free national existence and genuine progress. The aggravation of the nationalities question in many Western countries has played no small part in the circulation of such insinuations. Based on antagonistic classes, bourgeois society is incapable of establishing peace between people of different races, nationalities and religious faiths or of ensuring the free development of national minorities.

Soviet experience in state development, in the free self-determination of nations, in the establishment of fraternal co-operation between large and small peoples who were divided by deep religious and cultural differences in the past and in the carrying out of a cultural revolution that has brought the boons of advanced civilization to national and ethnic groups that had been doomed to gradual extinction are achievements of socialism of epoch-making importance.

In a letter to Academician Nikolai I. Konrad, of the USSR Academy of Sciences, eminent English historian Arnold Toynbee wrote that the USSR consisted of such a multitude of peoples speaking widely differing languages, who had inherited widely varying cultures, that it was in fact a model for the entire world. By combining these cultural and language varieties in an economic and political entity on a

federal basis the Soviet Union had shown how this could be realized in the whole world and how, Arnold Toynbee hoped, it would be realized in the future.

Now that an advanced socialist society has been built in the USSR many bourgeois theoreticians are beginning to realize that development of socialism and communism is an irreversible process. In this connection the accents in Western propaganda have changed. In the past the emphasis was on attempts to oppose socialism to the national future of one republic or another. Today some authors are trying to persuade Soviet republics to develop separately from the Union. To this end they have been circulating the old tales about Russification in an effort to discredit the internationalist nature of the Communist Party's nationalities policy, to raise obstacles to the development of co-operation between the nations and nationalities and to cultivate nationalist trends in the USSR.

Western political experts have tried to create the impression that antagonism between nations and nationalities is a "natural" objective law of social development, one that does not depend on the will of the people or on the efforts of political parties, including the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. By claiming that the nationalities question is "eternal" and "insoluble" and that it is a feature of all social systems, they are alleging that there is no difference between the racial problem in the West and nationalities problem in the Soviet Union. No wonder the West has advanced the thesis about the inevitable disintegration of multi-national states. Western political experts assert that the USSR too will share the same fate. Perhaps, this is precisely why the Western critics of the USSR's nationalities policy have recently started increasingly to complain that

none of the Union Republics are seceding from the Union, though the right of secession is granted under the Constitution of the USSR. These authors are, however, well aware of the fact that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is strong precisely because every nation knows that its freedom and progress are reliably guaranteed only within the framework of this Union.

National and International Elements in Culture

The question of combining the national element with the international one is also important, because national distinctions, as an objective factor, will continue to play a big role in the foreseeable future. This is particularly true in the cultural sphere.

No other system has done as much as socialism to help develop an attitude of respect for national values. At the same time it has created an atmosphere that has prevented the cultivation of outdated, savage customs and superstitions which in the past were considered a manifestation of the "national spirit". The cultural revolution, enlightenment and education of broad masses of people and social, scientific and technological progress have, naturally, changed people's way of life. As a result, traditions which are in contradiction with the new way of life and with the new moral principles have been discarded and forgotten. But this does not at all mean, as Western theoreticians have tried to claim, that national culture has degenerated.

The point is that what is "national" was sometimes erroneously identified with something primitive or patriarchal. But the notion of the "national" should include not only what has been inherited from the

past, but also elements that have been transformed in new conditions and those that have appeared and developed under socialism. In displaying concern for preserving the historical monuments of a nation, in caring for the cultural values it produced thousands of years ago the socialist state at the same time promotes mutual cultural enrichment of peoples, their resurgence and flowering in the process of creative co-operation.

In the opinion of Marxists the "flowering" of a nation's culture means a development of all the progressive aspects of cultural life, including the advancement of national traditions, the removal of obsolete forms and the enrichment of culture through the creative assimilation of the treasures created by other peoples. In accordance with this concept, the "national" element in the USSR is inseparable from the notion of "Soviet". Hence it follows that the national element no longer opposes the international element, but is, on the contrary, enriched by the latter.

Soviet multi-national culture is not merely an arithmetical sum of separate cultures but a creative synthesis of all the best that has been developed by the peoples.

Marxists oppose national narrowness and isolation which, as historical experience has shown, tend to impoverish the cultural life of a nation and lead to creative stagnation. They believe that "one nation can and should learn from others" (Marx). The policy of promoting the flourishing and mutual enrichment of national cultures has opened a new stage in the co-operation of peoples that have achieved a high level of economic and cultural development. It is not merely a question of cultural exchange or unilateral cultural influence (such as marked the early period, when many Soviet national cultures were estab-

lished), but a question of profound creative mutual influence and the mutual enrichment of cultures developing on a common social basis and common ideological and theoretical principles.

For instance, it is a fact that before the revolution many peoples of tsarist Russia did not know such forms of art as opera, drama, ballet and orchestral music. As they joined in the building of socialism the emancipated peoples within a brief period created their own works of art in these fields. They made marked progress in cultural development. As peoples advanced their own national cultures they were able to exercise an influence on other cultures in turn. This fruitful interaction is typical of the stage of advanced socialism which the USSR has entered.

Regardless of their nationality Soviet people love Russia's Pushkin, Tolstoi, Tchaikovsky, Repin, Gorky and Mayakovsky, just as they love and cherish Azerbaijan's Nizami, Georgia's Rustaveli, the Ukraine's Shevchenko and Uzbekistan's Navoi for their works. Russian culture is also enriched with other cultures. It assimilates all the best in the cultural development of other peoples.

In this light it is obvious that the efforts of Western ill-wishers to oppose the drawing together of socialist nations and to prove that here there is some incompatibility of interests are despicable and ineffectual.

Commenting on this subject in his book *Fidelity to Talent* Rasul Gamzatov, the distinguished poet of Daghestan, writes that, according to the broadcasts of some foreign radio stations, Caucasian writers, including Rasul Gamzatov himself, are fighting to preserve their national features and national distinctiveness. He comments: "But the point is that both the writers of Soviet Caucasian republics and myself are well aware that in the USSR there is no need to fight for the preservation of national distinc-

tive features and there is nobody who opposes this. The fact is that the Great October Socialist Revolution itself and Lenin's teachings affirm the national distinctiveness of art, literature and Soviet culture in general. So against whom should we fight, and what for?"

Bourgeois sociology has its own notion of the national and the international elements. It maintains that the national element is something conservative and immutable in nature. Bourgeois sociology regards the international element, the element typical of all mankind, as something alien and hostile to the national element. Proceeding from this false premise bourgeois sociologists come forward with two notions of the interaction between the national and the international elements. They advocate either the abandonment of the national element in the name of what the whole of mankind has achieved (national nihilism, cosmopolitanism), or the preservation in inviolable form of national cultures which, they say, should reject the mutual influence of cultures (nationalism). In both cases they metaphysically divorce the national element from what the whole of mankind has achieved.

Marxist analysis rejects this artificial "either—or" alternative. Marxism sees the national element as a specific form of what has been achieved by the whole of mankind. On the other hand, features common to the whole of mankind inevitably find their expression in national form, depending on the conditions in which a particular nation exists.

The development of Soviet culture is a two-in-one process which, on the one hand, is marked by the progress of national cultures which are its components, and, on the other, by the strengthening of their unity through mutual enrichment and mutual exchange. It should be mentioned that the latter

process has evoked the most frenzied attacks from the theorists of anti-communism. They claim that this process will lead to the standardization and unification of cultures.

Thus socialism promotes the development of national cultures. At the same time it encourages equal participation in the creation of an advanced international culture. It removes the barriers separating one nation from another, it gives them access to the riches of world culture, an opportunity to assimilate these riches through the national means and forms available to them. At the same time socialism advances the development of means of international communication. This, among other things, includes languages.

Western ideologists continue to believe that the existence of many languages has been and is a source of social conflict. When I attended the VII World Sociological Congress held in Varna in Bulgaria in 1970 I heard such an opinion expressed by a bourgeois sociologist. Yes, such conflicts were possible in countries which granted national and language privileges, where the national interests of peoples clashed.

About 130 languages are spoken in the USSR. Their equality has been legislatively affirmed in all spheres of life. The fact that the majority of the Soviet people (over 80 per cent) speak Russian in addition to their own native language is not due to the privileged status of Russian or compulsory study of it. From 90 to 99 per cent of the indigenous population in the Union Republics regard their own languages as their mother tongue and actively use it.

The last census showed that 61.3 million non-Russians in the USSR had a good command of Russian as their second language. The reason for this is not only that Russian has become the common language for communication between the nations and

nationalities of the Soviet Union, but also that it has become a language for international intercourse, an official language at world forums.

This situation has taken shape historically. The need for communication between the peoples of the country, arising from objective economic causes, stimulated the non-Russian population of Russia to learn the Russian language. Russian is the language of the majority of the country's population. It is, therefore, the most widespread language in the country. The fact that Russian is the language of a people who has made a distinguished contribution to the world culture, that has given the world such writers as Pushkin, Tolstoi, Turgenev, Dostoyevsky, Gorky, Chekhov, Sholokhov and Mayakovsky, is of great importance, too. Therefore, the deliberate efforts of Western Sovietologists to confuse the question of the function of the Russian language with the question of its "privileged status" are a propaganda trick designed to mislead uninformed people.

The Western propaganda machine has engaged in other unseemly dealings. Thus, defying the facts, world Zionist centres have for many years been claiming that the Jews in the USSR do not enjoy equal rights with other nationalities in the sphere of culture, that they are being subjected to persecution and discrimination. This is, of course, a gross misrepresentation of the truth.

According to the 1979 census, there were 1,811,000 Jews in the USSR, that is to say, they accounted for less than one per cent of the country's population (then 267 million). It is worth noting that in the 1970s the number of Jewish students at Soviet higher education establishments was double that in Israel, which then had a population of 3,880,000. In the 1974/75 academic year there were 350 Jewish students of higher education establishments per 10,000

Jewish citizens. It would be fair to mention that the proportion of students for the whole population of the USSR is 188 students per 10,000. Among scientists Jews account for 6.1 per cent, among those working in the arts, 5.2 per cent and in literature and the press, 6.5 per cent, among medical workers, 3.4 per cent and among lawyers, 6.7 per cent.

In Birobidzhan, the centre of the Jewish Autonomous Region, there is a Jewish Chamber Music Theatre, a Philharmonic Society and a Jewish People's Theatre. There is a newspaper *Birobidzhaner Stern* which is published in Yiddish and Russian. The local station broadcasts radio and TV programmes. In Moscow a Yiddish-language literary magazine *Sovetish Heimland* (Soviet Homeland) has a large circulation.

Addressing a conference of clergy and representatives of religious societies in the USSR, Chief Rabbi of the Moscow Choral Synagogue Levin voiced his indignation at Zionist propaganda.

"Why have the Zionists attacked the Soviet Union with such hatred and malice?" he asked. "Why do they cast aspersions on the country that saved the Jews of the whole world from complete extermination by nazi monsters? It was precisely the Soviet Republic that was the first state in world history to outlaw anti-Semitism. It was precisely in the Soviet Union that Jews were granted actual, and not formal, equality with all other peoples."

Soviet people are internationalists, and it is against their principles to set one people against another, or even one individual against another because of some national trait. The Constitution of the USSR does not recognize any national privileges. Nationality cannot serve as a yardstick of human dignity or merits. Nor can it be used to set one group of people against another.

IV. UNIQUE ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIALISM

If circumstances mould human beings, it is necessary to make the circumstances human. This plain truth, formulated by Marxism, has become the motive behind all the great changes in the Soviet Republic, which established a new socialist way of life, a new climate in relations between people.

Perhaps, the most convincing evidence of fraternal human relations between Soviet people of various nationalities is precisely their natural, everyday character. They have become innate in the majority of the population. They are taken for granted, as the only possible form of relations. Relations between people of different nationalities are marked by the same spirit of comradeship, mutual assistance, humanism and respect, which is typical of socialist society in general. Of course, anything may happen in a work collective. There may be disputes and differences. While some people are commended, others are reprimanded. If such disputes occur in a multinational collective, they are usually free from national motives. People are judged by their labour merits and personal qualities.

One of the principal achievements of advanced socialist society in the USSR is the realization of the cherished ideal of Communists, namely, to turn

friendship between peoples into a profound conviction, into a standard of behaviour of the working people of all nations and nationalities. Describing it as a genuine revolution in social consciousness Leonid Brezhnev said: "The arrogant idea of one nation being superior to another, let alone the madness of the notion of national or racial exclusiveness, is alien and odious to Soviet people. Soviet people are internationalists. That is how they have been educated by the Party and by our entire reality."

The unity and cohesion of Soviet society is a unique asset of socialism, its priceless indomitable strength. This has been proved to the whole world.

Friendship That Has Stood the Test of War

The internationalist unity of Soviet peoples has never manifested itself so powerfully as during the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people against Nazi Germany (1941-1945). It was not merely a clash between the armed forces of two states belonging to opposite systems. It was a struggle of unprecedented scale and ferocity between the forces of civilization and progress and the forces of barbarism and obscurantism. The Nazi reactionaries chose as their banner the "theory" of the "superiority" of the Aryan race. In the minds of Nazi invaders it produced a complex of ideas about the "great mission" to be performed by the founders of the "thousand-year Reich" and the "invincibility" of German weapons. Intoxicated by these ideas the German hordes invaded the USSR.

Hitler's strategy was based on the notion of a "blitzkrieg", lightning warfare. The German General Staff did not believe the Red Army could put up any resistance. Nor did they believe that the rear of the

Red Army was sound. But in seeking to carry out their "mission" the Hitlerites were not to be satisfied with military victory alone. With the pedantry of maniacs they produced a long-term programme for the physical extermination of Slavs and other peoples to safeguard the Reich against any possible danger in the future.

One of these plans, originated by Dr. Abel, a nazi expert on racial problems, laid down the following "theoretical" postulates:

"The purpose is not only to rout a state with a centre in Moscow. The achievement of this historic goal would not mean that the problem had been finally solved. The purpose is rather to defeat the Russians as a people, to disunite them. Only if this particular problem is viewed from a biological and, especially, racial-biological point of view, and if German policy is pursued in the Eastern regions in keeping with this requirement, will it become possible to remove the danger presented to us by the Russian people."

As early as in 1941 Goering cynically declared that in the Ukraine it would be preferable to kill off all the males over 15 years of age and "send SS stallions there". The fate of other peoples was to have been no better. A portion of them (both males and females) was to be ruthlessly exterminated and the remainder enslaved.

"What I need is lebensraum," Hitler said. "I cannot grant the Eastern peoples any sovereign or independent rights or create a national Russia in place of Soviet Russia. In politics you can proceed only from stern reality, and not from an illusion."

What did Hitler's strategists count on? In the minds of peoples attacked by nazi hordes armed to the teeth they hoped to instill a sense of "inferiority" and helplessness in the face of the "master race". The

nazi ringleaders did not suspect that socialism had cultivated friendship between the peoples. They hoped that dissension would facilitate their plans. They could not imagine that in a multi-national country they would confront a unity nurtured by the Soviet system, that their attack would kindle feelings of Soviet patriotism which would inspire burning hatred for the invaders in the hearts of the peoples.

The war against nazi Germany was a war for the survival of the world's first socialist state, the bulwark of the working people of the whole world in their fight for socialism and progress. At the same time this was a war for the freedom and honour of all the peoples of the USSR. The fate and future of European and world civilization, of progress and democracy was being decided in that war. So class, liberation, humanist and internationalist missions merged into one in the efforts of the Soviet people to defeat the enemy.

The cohesion and friendship of all Soviet peoples were manifested along the entire Soviet-German front, in all the battles fought throughout the war. In the autumn of 1941 the Union and Autonomous Republics began to form national regiments, brigades and divisions. These units and formations made their contribution to the defeat of the enemy. Thus in the Battle of Moscow, during the period of defence and the subsequent counter-offensive, four infantry divisions from Kazakhstan, one infantry and two cavalry divisions from Uzbekistan, one infantry division and one infantry brigade from Kirghizia and a Lettish infantry division fought side by side with other Red Army units. The formations formed in national republics took part in the battles for liberation of the Union Republics and regions overrun by the enemy. A broad partisan movement spread in Byelorussia, the Ukraine, in the occupied regions of the Russian

Federation, Moldavia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

It is worth noting that among the fighters honoured with the title of Hero of the Soviet Union for feats of valour in combat there were 8,160 Russians, 2,069 Ukrainians, 309 Byelorussians, 161 Tatars, 117 Jews, 96 Kazakhs, 90 Armenians, 90 Georgians, 69 Uzbeks, 61 Mordvinians, 44 Chuvash, 43 Azerbaijanis, 39 Bashkirs, 32 Ossetians, 18 Maris, 18 Turkmen, 15 Lithuanians, 14 Tajiks, 13 Letts, 12 Kirghizes, 10 Komis, 10 Udmurts, 9 Estonians, 9 Karelians, 8 Kalmyks, 7 Kabardinians, 6 Adighes, 5 Abkhazians, 3 Yakuts and several other nationals.

All the peoples of the USSR made their contribution to the victory over fascism. In their fight they rallied round the Russian people. It is generally acknowledged that it was the Russian people who bore the brunt of the war, displayed outstanding feats of heroism, self-denial, self-sacrifice and internationalism.

Feeling the Pulse of All Nations

The historical experience of the multi-national Soviet Republic revealed the tremendous importance of the purposeful Leninist nationalities policy based on a strict scientific analysis. At all stages of development of the Soviet state its aim was to consolidate socialist society, to pool the efforts of all the peoples in building socialism and communism. To give effective guidance in the sphere of national relations it was vital to feel the pulse not only of the whole country, but also of every constituent republic.

At present the peoples of the USSR are engaged in the complex task of translating into reality the eleventh five-year plan in the vast expanses of the

country. Taking into account the enormous scope of the undertaking, especially in the Eastern regions, one may easily understand the highly important role of the exchange of personnel between the republics, of the broad participation of Soviet people, above all young men and women of various nations and nationalities, in work on the new projects of the current five-year plan period.

The local authorities in the territories and regions being developed face particularly responsible tasks. They not only have to create suitable living and working conditions for the newcomers, but also have to help these people to become acclimatized to the new zone and to feel at home in the shortest possible time. People who have come to develop the oil-rich Tyumen region, to build the Baikal-Amur Railway or the Nurek hydropower station not only find themselves in unfamiliar natural conditions, but also encounter new customs and traditions, and join large multi-national work teams. The healthy internationalist climate that normally characterizes pioneer teams helps them to join hands in concerted efforts to accomplish a common task. This climate does not, of course, establish itself spontaneously. It is a result of the well-thought-out work of state and public organizations. National elements have long ceased to divide the Soviet people. A certain part of the population is, however, still sensitive to them.

It would be fair to say that the sphere of material production, which is internationalist in essence, is normally "indifferent" to national distinctions. But this does not apply to the field of culture and domestic and family life. Here various traditions, customs and tastes passed on from one generation to another play a big part.

Though Marxists are not inclined to hasten the

obliteration of national distinctions, at the same time they do not seek to perpetuate them. In advanced socialist society an intensive exchange of personnel among the republics is taking place. This has stepped up migration, causing the intermingling of different nationals. These processes are manifested in such developments as the mounting "multi-nationality" of the Union Republics. The share of non-indigenous nationals in their population is increasing. As a result, the Russian language has come to play an ever greater role as a means of bringing the various nations closer together. The Constitution of the USSR guarantees equal rights and broad participation in all spheres of life to all nationals living in any republic.

Fraternal co-operation between the peoples of the USSR, which is becoming deeper and broader, and their increasing internationalization and unity, which form the keynote of development of national relations under mature socialism, rest on a sound foundation—the integral economic complex of the USSR, the real equality of all Soviet peoples, which has established itself in the whole of Soviet society, and the objective process of internationalization which marks the whole life of the USSR.



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