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MAXIM KIM

**The Soviet People—  
A New Historical  
Community**

The Soviet people is a new historical community, a basically new social phenomenon which has entered history and the consciousness of mankind as a great revolutionary force, the builder of communism.

But the community which builds the new world itself became formed in the course of the establishment and development of this world. The Soviet people is the offspring of socialism.

This is the first book in Soviet historical and sociological literature dedicated to the Soviet people as a new historical community.

The author, Maxim Kim, a prominent Soviet scholar and a Corresponding Member of the USSR Academy of Sciences, makes a thorough historical and theoretical examination of this subject. Regarding the formation of the new socio-class and international community of peoples as a regularity of the development of socialist society, he traces the most important stages in the history of the Soviet community of working people and defines the leading role played by the working class and the Communist Party in the formation of this community. The book describes the distinctive features of the way of life and the spiritual make-up of the Soviet people and its role in the building of communism.



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# The Soviet People— A New Historical Community



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Translated from the Russian  
by David Fidlon

М. П. КИМ

СОВЕТСКИЙ НАРОД—НОВАЯ ИСТОРИЧЕСКАЯ ОБЩНОСТЬ

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## INTRODUCTION

Probably the broadest and the most important concept in history and sociology is the concept of "a people".

The deepest processes of social progress, all its sharp turns and key developments in world history are connected with the people, and the decisive role played by the masses in shaping mankind's historical destiny is best expressed in the Marxist formula: "The people are the makers of history."

The soundness of this classic premise is corroborated most convincingly by the modern epoch. To an enormous degree this is due to the emergence of the Soviet people with its revolutionary, reorganising and creative activity on the historical scene. Having sundered the shackles of exploitation, the Soviet people within a short historical period transformed backward Russia into a powerful advanced country, leaped from the realm of necessity into a realm of freedom and paved the highroad to socialism for all the peoples of

the world. By its practical achievements it showed that genuine social progress is the cause of the people, that "living, creative socialism is the product of the masses themselves".<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet people, a great revolutionary force and builder of a new world, is at the same time the *offspring* of socialism. It emerged and matured in the course of the socialist transformation of social life and took shape together with the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union.

The emergence of the Soviet people is a notable fact of the contemporary epoch, the epoch of mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism. In its documents the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union describes the Soviet people as a new historical community. Delivering the Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 24th Party Congress, its General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev said: "*A new historical community of people, the Soviet people, took shape in our country during the years of socialist construction. New, harmonious relations, relations of friendship and co-operation, were formed between the classes and social groups, nations and nationalities in joint labour, in the struggle for socialism and in the battles fought in defence of socialism.*"<sup>2</sup>

This book constitutes an attempt to present a scientific study of the history of the Soviet people as a new historical community and a searching analysis of its socialist nature, spiritual make-up and way of life, which are matters of very considerable importance today.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 288.

<sup>2</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1971, p. 92

# I. THE FORMATION OF THE PEOPLE AS A NEW HISTORICAL COMMUNITY IS A FEATURE OF SOCIALISM

## 1. THE CONCEPT OF "A PEOPLE": ITS ASPECTS

The Soviet people is a historical *phenomenon*. It constitutes a human community unprecedented in history, fundamentally unlike the communities which existed in the past and which exist today in the capitalist world, including communities to which the term "a people" is applied.

A contemporary society is a complex system of human communities each with its specific principles and ethos. But, since this book is about the people, we shall examine only those communities which are designated by the term "a people".

At first glance the concept of "a people" seems simple enough and requires no special explanation. Actually, however, it is very complex and has a number of aspects.

Depending on the context, the term "a people" covers communities differing in descent, character and historical development.



"Among the people", "The people flocked to the square" (Pushkin)—in these and similar combinations "people" simply means mass of people irrespective of its qualitative characteristics. "The people in these parts were rugged—hunters and foresters" (Alexei Tolstoy); "Young people are inquisitive"; "The partisans are a courageous people"; "Machine-builders are skilled people"—here the word "people" means human beings with common physical, moral and psychological, occupational and other features. In either meaning the term "a people" is widely used in everyday language and in literature.

In its scientific sense, a people is a *historically* formed specific community of persons whose common basis consists of either political and legal or ethnic, or socio-economic and moral-political ties. Therefore, scientifically, the term "a people" covers three types of human communities: *state*, *ethnic* and *social*.

A people as a *state* community is a totality of individuals belonging to one and the same state; they are the citizens of the given state, its population. But, since a state can consist of one or many nations, the people as a state community can be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. For example, we say "the Belgian people", "the people of India", "the Canadian people". But, although each of these peoples embraces different ethnic and national groups, it comprises a single people—a state community.

"People" as an *ethnic* category means the same as "tribe", "nationality" or "nation". (The science which deals with this type of community of people is called ethnography, meaning "description of peoples".) In the expressions "the great migration of peoples in the 4th-9th centuries", "the peoples of Africa are taking the road of independent development", "the USSR is a fraternal family of peoples" the word "peoples" is synonymous with "tribes", "nationalities" and "nations".

Marxist historical science treats people primarily as a *socio-historical* category.

As a socio-historical community its composition changes as the social structure changes. In an exploiting society, the people is the entire mass of the working population as opposed to the parasitical part of society living at the expense

of the labour of others by exploiting the working people. Lenin understood the term "people" as "*the masses, i.e., the entire body of toilers and the exploited*" [My italics—M.K.].<sup>1</sup> The people in a class-antagonistic society is opposed to the ruling exploiter classes and is the decisive force in the struggle against the reactionary order and for its revolutionary change. Under socialism the people embraces all members of society, the entire population; it is the sole and absolute ruler of future social development.

In Marxist history and sociology and in historical materialism the concept "a people" is understood first and foremost in the sense of a socio-historical (socio-class in a class society) community. This stems from the Marxist-Leninist proposition about the decisive significance of a class community in the system of social groups (communities).

The concept "social group" is many-faceted and in the past its interpretation did not rest on a strictly scientific basis. "In itself," Lenin wrote, "this concept is still too indefinite and arbitrary: religious, ethnographical, political, juridical and other phenomena may also be considered as criteria distinguishing 'groups'."<sup>2</sup> It was only Marxism-Leninism that approached this concept from a strictly scientific position and offered the only correct interpretation of it. Materialistically defining the concept of a social group (community of people), Marxism-Leninism distinguishes the class community as the dominating one in the system of social groups.

It is this main, socio-historical sense which is implied when the people is referred to as the subject of history, as its motive force. And this is the sense in which the word "people" is used in the classic formula "The people are the makers of history" and also in Lenin's well-known precept, which became a call to launch the October 1917 uprising: "We have the following of the *majority* of the people, ... *Our victory is assured*."<sup>3</sup> Maxim Gorky used the word "people" in its basic sense as a historical community of working people when he made the following profound historico-philosophical observation: "The people is not only the force which creates

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 410.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 24.

all the material values, it is the sole and inexhaustible well-spring of spiritual values, a philosopher and poet, the first in history, beauty and imagination, who created all the great poems...."

The concept of "a people" as a socio-historical category has been preserved in Marxist historical literature in both its specific and concomitant senses, one of which is associated with the revolutionary period in the history of the bourgeoisie, when jointly with the entire third estate it fought against the medieval-feudal system and together with the toiling masses made up the people. But the socio-political community which included both the working classes and the bourgeoisie was only an episode in the history of the people.

## 2. THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF OLD COMMUNITIES AND THE CREATION OF NEW ONES

The historically formed communities which exist in the contemporary social world are heterogeneous, differing from each other both in origin, nature, ethos and role in social life. An ethnic community is distinct from a state community and both of them differ from a class community, while all three of them differ from a religious community, and so forth.

But communities of people, as its dissimilar typological groups, differ from each other not only when they are classified "horizontally", i.e., within the space of one and the same historical epoch. The distinctions between them are even more pronounced if they are classified "vertically", or according to historical epochs. Human communities, including ethnic, state and social, change substantially in the course of history and have a different ethos in various historical epochs. They always bear the imprint of their time and mirror the specific features of their parent social system.

Naturally, the collapse of capitalism and the establishment of socialism result in the disappearance of those communities which took shape and existed on the basis of bourgeois social relations and their replacement by new communities whose character and ethos are determined by the

nature of the socialist system. The socialist economy, the socialist state and political system and Marxist-Leninist ideology are the three pillars of the new communities. Socialism's economic, political and ideological rise and development necessarily lead to the transformation of the old communities and the appearance of new ones.

*The rise and development of new communities of people is a law of social progress in the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism.*

In one case new socialist communities arise on the basis of the complete liquidation by revolutionary means of the bourgeois community of people, in another, as a result of a gradual transformation of the old community, and in a third case, they emerge with the formation of new relations between individuals and social groups united by new political and legal, socio-economic, cultural, ideological and ethnic ties.

Thus, the proletarian revolution immediately wrecks the bourgeois state community and creates a new, *socialist state community* of people. Lacking internal unity, the bourgeois state community with its exploiter, anti-popular essence and ethos is shattered by the first blow of the revolution. It has neither the quality of an organic and viable community nor the quality of collectivity and freedom of the individual for the simple reason that there can be no collectivity and harmonious relations between the individuals and social groups making up a community in which the exploiters and the exploited are forcibly integrated and in which the interests of the majority are subordinated to the interests of the minority. Where collectivity and harmonious relations do not exist, there can be no freedom for every individual.

Marx and Engels called the bourgeois state and other similar bourgeois structures *substitutes* for community, where personal freedom exists only for individuals developing within the ruling class, and only insofar as they are representatives of this class. Since this "alleged community" promotes the interests of one class to the detriment of another, then "...it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Moscow, 1964, p. 91.

Naturally, the socialist revolution which destroys the socio-economic and political and legal foundations of bourgeois domination also cuts through the fetters of this collectivity, which is illusory for the working people, and creates genuine collectivity, a state community of working people. Anticipating the advent of socialism and the actual freedom of the individual in it, Marx and Engels wrote: "In the real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association."<sup>1</sup> The state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, which gradually develops into a socialist state of the whole people, is precisely the association of working people that ensures freedom for each individual and opens before him every opportunity for all-round development.

The socialist state community of people is a political alliance of the working people headed by the working class. It takes shape as a weapon in their struggle for socialist changes. In contrast to the bourgeois state community of peoples, it is organically durable and viable and is an inviolable entity of the interests and aspirations of all its individuals and social groups. In contrast to bourgeois political structures, which, irrespective of their official names, are anti-popular both as regards their class content and ethos, socialist political structures are genuinely popular, for they are established and function for the sake of the complete liberation of the working people from exploitation and oppression, for the people and their unhindered creative activity. In contrast to the bourgeois state, where the people is a stepchild, in the person of the socialist state the people has its own homeland, which it serves faithfully and which serves it faithfully. The concepts "socialist" and "people's" are indissolubly linked. Consequently, many contemporary socialist states are called people's republics.

In the course of socialist construction fundamental changes take place in the ethnic community of people—nationalities and bourgeois nations turn into socialist nationalities and nations, and a new, *socialist type* of ethnic community, a *socialist type* of nation appears.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, pp. 91-92.

A nation is a historically formed, stable community of people. Its stability rests on the cohesion of people in such vital spheres as language, territory, economic activity, culture and way of life.

Despite its durable character, however, a bourgeois national community lacks internal unity. The various social groups, including antagonistic classes, comprising it are involved in perpetual contradictions with each other, in a state of economic, political and ideological struggle. These conflicts take place in the bourgeois nations at all stages of their development. Honoré de Balzac, from whose works Marx, as he himself admitted, learned more about France's economic life of that period than from books by learned economists, wrote that the French society of the 1830s was split into "two separate, antagonistic camps". What he had in mind was the nobility and the bourgeoisie, which were then locked in a mortal struggle for power. Obviously, at the time the division of bourgeois society and a bourgeois nation into two other nations—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie—was even more striking. Engels proved this in one of his earlier works, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England*. Exhaustively analysing the condition of these antagonistic classes, their way of life and thinking, he drew the conclusion that the bourgeoisie and the working class "are two radically dissimilar nations, as unlike as difference of race could make them".<sup>1</sup>

Characteristically, this class division of the bourgeois nation was so manifest and of such great significance for the future of the "national whole" that it even attracted the attention of some representatives of the nation's exploiter upper crust. In a footnote to one of the later editions of this work, Engels noted that Benjamin Disraeli expressed the thought that industry divided the English people into two different nations almost at the same time as he did. Indeed, this prominent English politician and writer, who criticised the capitalist system from the standpoint of "romantic feudalism" asserted through the lips of one of the heroes of his novel *Sybil or: The Two Nations* that England was not just

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain*, Moscow, 1962, p. 157.



one great nation, but two—the rich and the poor, and that her queen “reigns over two” nations “between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy; who are as ignorant of each other’s habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers in different zones or inhabitants of different planets; who are formed by a different breeding, are fed by a different food, are ordered by different manners, and are not governed by the same laws”.

As the antagonism between labour and capital heightened, the more pronounced and striking became the class division within the bourgeois nation. Recognition of the decisive significance of this fact is one of the points of departure of the Marxist-Leninist theory of nations.

In the course of polemics against ideologists of narodism<sup>1</sup> at the beginning of his revolutionary career Lenin wrote that the concept “nation” could not be construed without taking into consideration the “antagonisms between the classes which constitute this ‘nation’”.<sup>2</sup> Later, when developing the theory of nations, he formulated the classic precept of “two nations in every modern nation”, and “two cultures in every national culture”.<sup>3</sup>

*The two nations in every bourgeois nation* are the dominant exploiter upper sections on the one hand, and the working exploited lower sections which comprise 90 per cent of the nation, on the other. Clearly, a community in which one person exploits nine others, dooming them to poverty and depriving them of all rights, cannot be free of internal antagonisms or enjoy internal peace. Such a community is always sitting on a powder keg.

*The two cultures in every national culture* are the dominant bourgeois culture with its exploiter and nationalistic ideology on the one hand, and elements of the democratic and socialist culture of the proletariat and the working people, on the other. Here it is, above all, a question of two ideologies, the dominant bourgeois ideology and the opposing social-

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<sup>1</sup> Narodism—a petty-bourgeois trend in the Russian revolutionary movement which appeared at the end of the 1860s and beginning of 1870s.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 227.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 20, p. 32.

ist ideology. But the existence of two cultures in the culture of every bourgeois nation can and should be considered from another point of view, that of the "two-storeyed" nature of cultural life: the top storey, where the propertied upper sections monopolise all the benefits of culture, and the bottom storey, where the masses have to be content with its paltry crumbs. Apart from everything else, this situation is a source of irreconcilable hostility within the bourgeois nation and intensifies its urge to tear itself apart.

It is easy to see why there is no peace and accord in the life of bourgeois nations, and can never be.

It goes without saying that, as capitalism declines, bourgeois nations are replaced by new, socialist nations. In the course of socialist transformations nations undergo substantial changes. They acquire new content and features: common language, territory and economic life and specifics of culture and way of life. They turn into more effective unifying factors and at the same time express the growing unity of the national community. Thus, the community of economic life as a feature of the bourgeois nation means first and foremost the existence of close internal economic ties maintained by means of national markets, and reciprocal economic services rendered by separate sections of the nation. As for the socialist nation, the community of economic life likewise means a common economic position for all classes and social groups forming the national whole, the community of their fundamental economic interests, common objectives of economic development, and so forth. This community of economic life in a socialist nation rests on the public ownership of the means of production and the development of production for the benefit of man, for the maximum satisfaction of his requirements.

The community of cultural traits as a feature of a bourgeois nation has never meant the existence of a single national culture equally essential to the propertied upper sections of the nation and to its working lower sections. The socialist national culture does not have two cultures. It is a single culture and is equally accessible to all: it promotes the cultural development of the entire nation. Its achievements are the concern and the property of the entire nation. Socialist national culture is, therefore, a factor of strength of the

national community. The role of the language as a medium of communication between the people of a given nation and a factor in its increasing cohesion also changes, albeit less substantially. As the culture of a nation advances, all the survivals of dialectal distinctions in its language gradually disappear and the literary language becomes the property of the entire nation.

A new aspect also appears in the role played by the territorial community owing, for example, to the conversion of the territory into the property of the whole people.

In the course of socialist transformation a nation sheds the exploiter elements chiefly responsible for intra-national inequalities and antagonisms. A socialist nation consists only of working people—workers, peasants and the intelligentsia—who are homogeneous in their social origin and united in their basic interests.

The working class is the nucleus and the guiding force of the socialist national community. As the class with the highest degree of consciousness and organisation and which has fewer survivals of petty-bourgeois and individualistic psychology than other sections of the nation, it is a consistent spokesman of the nation's common interests, the force which welds it together and which is capable of uniting and leading the working people, and instilling the spirit of organisation and socialist discipline into the life of the nation.

The leadership of the socialist nations and nationalities by the Marxist-Leninist party, a party to which national nihilism and national fetishism are organically alien, plays an inestimable role in the formation and development of such communities. The Marxist-Leninist party educates the nations and nationalities in the spirit of loyalty to the Communist cause, progressive national traditions and progressive trends, and in the spirit of patriotism and socialist internationalism.

Besides ushering in the epoch of the peoples' national revival and the transformation of the old ethnic communities into new burgeoning nations and nationalities, socialism inaugurates the epoch of the rise and development of *international and inter-nation communities*.

Socialist inter-nation communities are absolutely new, formerly unknown communities, wholly unlike the "common-

wealths of nations" which were forcibly created by the imperialist colonial powers under their own aegis and which easily disintegrated at the first opportunity.

The socialist inter-nation community is a new phenomenon in the history of ethnic communities, one through which lies the way toward the future communist merger of nations and a social structure in which there will be no traces of nationalities. It has embodied and given further development to all the progressive trends in the life of the nations and in their relations. These trends are becoming increasingly manifest as the whole of mankind continues its progress, but they cannot develop to the full in a class-antagonistic society.

Human history is a record of fragmentation and unification, differentiation and integration of ethnic communities, of their positive and negative reciprocal influences. In this complex and contradictory process the prevailing trend is the mutual enrichment of individual peoples and their drawing closer together, the integration of ethnic groups. Mankind is moving from a multitude of diverse communities, ethnic above all, to their reduction and integration in the communist future. Historically, this process is progressive and inevitable.

A multiplicity of small ethnic formations and their secluded existence were characteristic of the early periods of world history and mirrored the low level of productive forces and the weak economic ties between the separate ecumenes (permanently inhabited portions of the earth). The isolated, secluded existence of peoples at a certain stage of human progress seriously impeded its development. Realising this, the progressive people of the time tried their best to prove that it was irrational to preserve this "isolationism". The forerunner of the French Enlighteners Fénelon wrote: "I love my family more than myself, my country more than my family, and humanity more than my country." It is not at all difficult to criticise the author of this florid phrase, all the more so, as his world outlook did not rest on scientific positions. But taken contextually the historical meaning of these words speaks of Fénelon's opposition to feudal seclusion and his desire to see the peoples extend communication and establish mutual contacts.

Of course, it was not the people's subjective aspirations, but the objective historical necessity that made them draw closer to each other. Underlying this necessity are those *common features* in the life of each social "unit" which make it an organic part of the whole, of the entire human race. As they developed peoples with the most diverse historical destinies passed through basically similar stages. Raising his voice against the "Teutonomania" of the reactionary German historians who asserted that the Germans had always been a tribe whose mental and moral qualities and social development placed it far above all the other tribes, Nikolai Chernyshevsky wrote: "The tribal system and communal ownership had once existed among the Germans as they did among the Slavs; ...the difference here lies not in the national character, but only in the epoch of historical development."<sup>1</sup>

All ethnic communities have common features that link them together and make mutual assimilation of achievements and repetition of each other's development not only possible but even inevitable. However unique the specific features of the life of individual peoples, their historical growth is based on absolutely definite, lasting and repetitive common conditions. That was why Marx said: "One nation can and should learn from others."<sup>2</sup>

Peoples removed from each other in time and space have always followed and still are following a common road in what is most essential in their historical life. This is the objective historical basis of the natural gravitation of ethnic communities towards each other, the necessity of their drawing closer together. This necessity clearly manifested itself in the capitalist epoch which became a major landmark in the breakdown of national barriers and the establishment of close ties between countries and peoples, in the drawing together and internationalisation of their life. It was the nature of capitalist economy and the economic interests of the bourgeois class that made capitalism take this progressive step.

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<sup>1</sup> N. G. Chernyshevsky, *Complete Works*, Vol. II, Moscow, 1949, pp. 736, 738 (in Russian).

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. I, Moscow, 1972, p. 20.

Lenin noted the incontrovertible fact that under capitalism "all economic, political and spiritual life is becoming more and more international. Socialism will make it completely international".<sup>1</sup> Under capitalism international economic ties develop and a modern world economy is created whose advance is governed by general economic laws and in whose system individual national economies are merely links of a single chain.

Capitalism tends to promote the internationalisation of all spheres of social life and not only of economic activity.

In science there has been a tremendous acceleration of general progress, and also of the process of mutual influence and enrichment. Scientific discoveries made in one country quickly became the property of others (with the exception, of course, of those cases where the monopolies did not want to divulge them).

Considerable headway was made in overcoming language barriers. The study of foreign languages stimulates human communication.

Capitalism creates conditions for a relatively intensive assimilation by one people of the culture of other peoples, which is one of the most extensive sources of cultural progress in the contemporary epoch. It is most important to emphasise that this has led to the internationalisation of the cultural life of the masses and the formation on this basis of a common advanced culture of the international proletariat. In 1913 Lenin noted: "The workers of the whole world are building up their own internationalist culture, which the champions of freedom and the enemies of oppression have long been preparing."<sup>2</sup>

Capitalism internationalises all spheres of social life to an ever greater degree, but due to its antagonistic nature and exploiter substance it is unable to give this progressive process full scope and align it with another, opposite process, which in itself is also progressive. Lenin wrote in this connection: "Developing capitalism knows two historical tendencies in the national question. The first is the awakening of national life and national movements, the struggle against

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92.



all national oppression, and the creation of national states. The second is the development and growing frequency of international intercourse in every form, the breakdown of national barriers, the creation of the international unity of capital, of economic life in general, of politics, science, etc."<sup>1</sup> Capitalism is unable to resolve the contradiction between these two tendencies. It cannot combine them harmoniously because, as it "regulates" national relations, it subjugates everything to the interests of the exploitation of the weak by the strong, and the extraction of the maximum profit out of this.

Capitalism inevitably augments the links between nations and brings them closer together, but it is incapable of binding them in lasting unity because of the selfish class interests of the bourgeoisie of each nation. In 1845 in one of his earlier statements on the national question Engels ridiculed the idea of creating a European republic under capitalism and the domination of the bourgeoisie as a sentimental fantasy. "The fantasies about a European Republic," he wrote, "perpetual peace under political organisation, have become just as ridiculous as the phrases about uniting the nations under the aegis of universal Free Trade...."<sup>2</sup>

Anticipating the course of the historical development of national relations and emphasising that their destiny depended on the proletarian movement, Engels formulated the following conclusion: "Only the proletarians can destroy nationality, only the awakening proletariat can bring about fraternisation between the different nations."<sup>3</sup> This cardinal premise of Marxist theory on the national question was fully developed in Lenin's works.

The problem of drawing nations closer together and creating conditions for their eventual merger occupy a prominent place in Lenin's theoretical legacy on the national question. Leninism calls for the obliteration and not for the preservation and the intensification of national distinctions, for drawing the nations closer together. While solving this historical question, the proletariat must resolutely cast aside

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 2, Berlin, 1969, S. 614.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

everything that is reactionary and bourgeois-nationalistic and draw on the progressive results achieved by capitalism in this sphere, cleansing them of the consequences of the imperialist methods with which they were attained. Lenin set out the programme propositions in this field in his "Critical Remarks on the National Question". "In place of all forms of nationalism Marxism advances internationalism, the amalgamation of all nations in the higher unity, a unity that is growing before our eyes with every mile of railway line that is built, with every international trust, and every workers' association that is formed (an association that is international in its economic activities as well as in its ideas and aims)." "The development of nationality in general", he continued, "is the principle of bourgeois nationalism; ...The proletariat, however, far from undertaking to uphold the national development of every nation, on the contrary, warns the masses against such illusions, stands for the fullest freedom of capitalist intercourse and welcomes every kind of assimilation of nations, except that which is founded on force or privilege ... it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinctions and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin regarded the assimilation of nations which is inevitable in the course of capitalist development as a progressive fact. But he viewed the forcible method used by imperialists with regard to colonial and generally weak peoples as intolerable. Socialism destroys the system of imperialist coercion in the relations between nations, including coercion in the matter of bringing nations together. In this way it makes this process a genuinely progressive one, since it takes place as a result of the free will of the peoples, their mutual "sympathies", natural requirements and in the interests of attaining a brighter future and a faster and more reliable transition to a higher form of social organisation. "The masses of working people, as they liberate themselves from the bourgeois yoke," Lenin wrote in 1916, "will *gravitate* irresistibly towards union and integration with the great, advanced socialist nations."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 34, 35.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 22, p. 339.

However great the tendency of the nations to draw closer together might be, it cannot develop to the full under capitalism. Private ownership of the means of production divides peoples and nations. Only public ownership of the means of production creates a firm foundation for the evolution of this progressive tendency into a *law* of the development of national relations. Only socialism creates the social conditions in which the free and all-round development of nations and national statehood harmoniously combines with the steady drawing together of nations, the complete internationalisation of their material and spiritual life and close state and political co-operation.

- The drawing together of ethnic communities and the rise and growth of inter-nation communities is a law of social progress in the epoch of socialism.

Lenin called proletarian socialism *international* socialism. This means that socialism is the cause of all peoples and is the property of all peoples, it is built by the efforts of all peoples and for the benefit of all peoples. Naturally, as socialism becomes established, the formation and the burgeoning of the socialist nations is accompanied by the development of the fraternal co-operation of the nations and by their intensive drawing together. An inter-nation community of working peoples takes shape.

The *voluntary* union of free and equal nations dictated by common interests and mutual sympathy constitutes the unshakeable foundation of socialist inter-nation communities. A basic feature of these communities is that they have made fraternal and creative co-operation in all fields their vital principle. Capitalism enslaves and plunders the backward and the weak. Socialism helps the backward and the weak to become advanced and powerful. The abolition of inequality (both legal and actual) of the peoples, the levelling up of their political, economic and cultural development are a law of the socialist friendship of nations, a law of the development of socialist inter-nation communities.

It follows, therefore, that with the victory of the proletarian revolution and socialism, state and ethnic communities of people undergo radical changes. The rise of socialist ethnic communities is accompanied by the emergence of new, inter-

national and inter-nation communities, formerly unknown in history.

But it is the *changes taking place in the people as a social and class community* that are of decisive significance for the entire social development. In a socialist system this community develops to the full, acquires a new quality and attains the stage of the inviolable unity of the entire mass of working people who have become free, socially homogeneous and friendly.

At all times, in all historical epochs, the people comprised the majority of the population, the strength arising from quantity, from numerical superiority being always on their side. What is most important, however, is that material production, the foundation of human life, is in the hands of the popular masses. The working people hold key positions in this crucial sphere of social life. Hence the decisive role played by the masses in historical progress. And if in the past it was not so intensive and swift, this was mainly due to the fact that the relations of exploitation in society greatly restricted the opportunity of the masses to participate in it by alienating some sections of the people from the ranks of the active promoters of progress.

Contrary to the truth, the apologists for the exploiter classes either wholly repudiate the creative role played by the masses in history, or attribute the failure of revolutions to the interest displayed by the masses and their involvement in historical affairs, including revolutions. Bruno Bauer, one of the Young Hegelians, asserted in his time: "All great actions of previous history were failures *from the start* and had no effective success because the mass became *interested* in and enthusiastic over them." Actually, as Marx and Engels convincingly proved, if a revolution was a failure it was not because the mass was interested in it, but because it "did not have its real interest in the principle of *its own*".<sup>1</sup>

The tragedy of the masses in the past lay not in that they were interested in revolutions and carried them through, but that they made them for others' sake and not their own.

All the revolutionary turns in world history occurred with the participation of the popular masses. Without them bour-

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1956, pp. 109, 110.

geois revolutions could not have taken place either and it was only with the help of the masses that the bourgeoisie was able to come to power. That was why, when the bourgeoisie was still revolutionary-minded, it sought to enlighten the people politically, inspire them to public activity and make them interested in the anti-feudal struggle. It was not accidental that the armies of the French revolution made the slogan: "War to the palaces, peace to the huts" their battle-cry. Determined to overthrow feudal domination and debunk the old views on history, which reduced it to the history of "great men", the bourgeoisie called upon the masses to rise up against medieval ways and prejudices.

The motto of the newspaper *La Révolution de Paris*, the mouthpiece of the French Revolution of 1789, was: "The great seem great to us only because we ourselves are standing on our knees. Let us rise!"

And the mass of the French people, which was standing on its knees, rose to carry through the revolution. Of course, it did not imagine that the fruits of its revolutionary efforts would be reaped by the bourgeoisie alone. It turned out, however, that the bourgeoisie called on the people to rebel in order that they should pull the chestnuts out of the fire for it.

For a long time the people were the unskilled labourers of the revolution, unscrupulously underpaid by the bourgeoisie. This was possible mainly because they lacked the necessary social and class awareness and organisation. The people in fact had not yet become an independent political community. Things changed radically, however, with the emergence of the proletariat onto the political scene, the only revolutionary class consistent to the end and which, according to Lenin, could bring about the regeneration of mankind.

As soon as the bourgeoisie came to realise that the proletariat was a class capable really to lead an effective struggle against everything backward, inhuman and reactionary, it ceased to be a progressive force and turned into a conservative and reactionary one. The proletariat would no longer remain an obedient tool in its hands.

The bourgeoisie revealed its reactionary nature most strikingly during the general crisis of capitalism. In 1913, shortly before the outbreak of the First World War, Lenin

wrote in an article headed *Backward Europe and Advanced Asia*: "The bourgeoisie is living out its last days, and is joining with all obsolete and obsolescent forces in an attempt to preserve tottering wage-slavery...."

The Europe of our day is advanced not *thanks to*, but *in spite of*, the bourgeoisie, for it is only the proletariat that is adding to the million-strong army of fighters for a better future. It alone preserves and spreads implacable enmity towards backwardness, savagery, privilege, slavery and the humiliation of man by man."<sup>1</sup>

*The replacement of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat in the role of the guiding force of social progress is the most outstanding fact in social history in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution and also in the history of the people.* The people began to act, to take part in shaping history under the guidance of its *true* leader. It no longer had to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for someone else, but made use of them as it thought fit.

One of the basic features of the proletariat's historic mission is that, while liberating itself from capitalist slavery, it also liberates the whole of working humanity from it: it cannot liberate itself if it does not liberate the whole of working humanity. Therefore, the proletariat, which is the main force of the liberation movement, is also the guiding force of the whole people.

The rise of the proletariat as an independent political force changed the socio-class community of working people and exploited people. The people themselves changed.

In capitalist society the people is a socially heterogeneous inter-class community. It consists of the proletariat, the peasantry, the urban middle classes which earn their living and a section of the intelligentsia. These components make up the two contrasting parts of the people: the proletarian and the non-proletarian. The proletarian part is its strong side, the other its weak side. The dual economic nature of the peasantry and all the middle sections, their vacillation between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie seriously hamper their alliance with the proletariat and organised joint actions.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 99.



There is, however, an objective foundation underlying the political community of the proletariat and the working people in capitalist society. It is their economic and political position and their common basic interests arising therefrom. Of course, the economic position of the peasantry as a small holder differs from the position of the proletariat, which has no property. But apart from the present the peasantry has a future which spells ruin (for its overwhelming majority), pauperisation and transition into the ranks of the proletariat. And inasmuch as the peasants realising what the future has in store adopt a definite attitude to the other classes, they choose to enter into an alliance with the proletariat and strengthen the political community with it.

It is this fact that gives the proletariat incomparably greater strength—out of all proportion to its numbers in any capitalist country. The proletariat's strength and genuine revolutionary spirit directly stem from its role as leader of the people in the liberation movement. Lenin wrote that the proletariat "must be the leader in the struggle of the whole people for a fully democratic revolution, in the struggle of *all* the working and exploited people against the oppressors and exploiters. The proletariat is revolutionary only insofar as it is conscious of and gives effect to this idea of the hegemony of the proletariat. The proletarian who is conscious of this task is a slave who has revolted against slavery. The proletarian who is not conscious of the idea that his class must be the leader, or who renounces this idea, is a slave who does not realise his position as a slave; at best he is a slave who fights to improve his condition as a slave, *but not* one who fights to overthrow slavery."<sup>1</sup>

It is the good fortune of all working humanity that the proletariat acquires an increasing awareness of the idea of the hegemony of its class and the need to fight against slavery. Therefore, the growth of the working class is a fact of inestimable historic importance.

During the Paris Commune, the first proletarian revolution, glorious and heroic, though unsuccessful, the numerical strength of the world's working class did not exceed 15 mil-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 17, p. 232.

lion, and at the beginning of the 20th century it was nearly 30 million. At the end of the 60s and the beginning of the 70s of this century the international proletariat numbered more than 540 million people, of whom about 220 million lived in the industrially developed capitalist countries, 150 million in socialist countries and 170 million in the developing countries.

The Marxist-Leninist party, which not only expresses proletarian and popular interests but takes them into account in its policy, is the principal organising and cementing force of the people. In 1917 Lenin said in this connection: "It is we, and we alone, who 'take into account' the change in the mood of the masses, as well as something besides, something far more important and more profound than moods and changes in moods, namely, the fundamental interests of the masses."<sup>1</sup> Later, when Soviet power had been established, he wrote in his famous work "*Left-Wing*" Communism—an Infantile Disorder that the Communist Party should be able to "link up, maintain the closest contact, and—if you wish—merge, in certain measure, with the broadest masses of the working people—primarily with the proletariat, but also with the non-proletarian masses of working people."<sup>2</sup>

Obviously, these propositions do not mean that the party should blindly follow the masses and merely express their sentiments. Lenin used to say that by virtue of its mission the party is a force which educates, organises and raises the masses and leads them towards the attainment of lofty goals and not one which follows the changes or the fall in the mood of the masses. A striking indication of the growing cohesion of the people, its growing political maturity and the Party's rising prestige is the growth in the number of Communists throughout the world. When the Communist movement emerged in the 1840's it embraced not more than 300-400 people. At the time of the October Revolution of 1917 there were more than 400,000 Communists in the world; in 1970 there were 89 Communist Parties whose membership in the socialist countries totalled over 40 million and 3.6 million in capitalist and non-socialist countries.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, pp. 24-25.

But alongside the forces uniting and rallying the people in the capitalist world, there are various forces which disorganise it. They include the small-proprietor and anti-collectivist mentality of the peasantry and other middle sections, the division of the proletariat into the skilled, highly-paid and the low-paid sections, and the yellow trade unions and reformist parties actively opposed to the unity of the working class and the people. Speculation with the concept "a people" which the imperialist bourgeoisie is now indulging in, occupies far from the last place among the forces disorganising the unity of the working people. The bourgeoisie makes wide use of the name of the people to cover up its anti-popular policy. With undisguised cynicism the ideologists of the monopoly bourgeoisie "prove" that capitalism today is a "people's" capitalism and therefore the struggle of the working and exploited masses against "their own" capitalism is meaningless and unreasonable.

Yet, despite the manoeuvres of the bourgeoisie, the people are aware of the true content and purpose of capitalism. They are becoming increasingly confident, organised and resolute in the struggle for progress and socialism. But under capitalism they are burdened by historical narrow-mindedness and weakness which they will be able to discard only under socialism.

A new people, a new community of working people, takes shape as society moves from capitalism to socialism. The people of the socialist epoch are a new social and class community in which firm bonds of friendship unite two friendly socialist classes—the working class and the peasantry and the socialist intelligentsia.

At the same time the socio-class community of working people is international in character.

Thus, as a result of the proletarian revolution and the socialist renovation of society, the old communities of people give way to new, socialist communities. The integral expression of this transformative and creative process is the emergence of the people as a new historical community.

The USSR, the founder of socialism, gave the world the first socialist community of working people—the Soviet people.

### 3. THE SOVIET PEOPLE— HISTORY'S FIRST FREE UNION OF FREE WORKERS

Labour which created man, made him a social being, a member of a collective. Working people have always experienced a feeling of mutual dependence and have striven for mutual support and union. But with the rise of private ownership of the means of production and the division of society into exploiters and exploited, the working people were deprived of the opportunity to unite freely on the basis of free labour.

Besides subjecting the proletarians, the working masses, to brutal exploitation, capitalist private property continuously corrupts their psychology, engendering all sorts of negative phenomena (anti-collectivist included) which can only be fully overcome with the liquidation of bourgeois social relations.

In Lenin's opinion, the parties of the Second International deceived the workers by entertaining the thought that the majority of the working and exploited people could in the midst of capitalist slavery develop in themselves absolute clarity of socialist consciousness and firmness of socialist convictions and character. Speaking about the social conditions under which the masses would be able to develop these moral and political qualities, Lenin noted in the *Theses on Comintern Fundamental Tasks* (1920) that this could come about only as a result of the overthrow of bourgeois domination, when the proletariat crushes the resistance of the exploiters and delivers the exploited from slavery.

"...It is only after this," Lenin wrote, "and only in the actual process of an acute class struggle, that the masses of the toilers and exploited can be educated, trained and organised around the proletariat, under whose influence and guidance they can get rid of the selfishness, disunity, vices and weaknesses engendered by private property; only then will they be converted into a free union of free workers."<sup>1</sup>

*The Soviet people is history's first free union of free workers, the first socialist collectivity of people. The rise and develop-*

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 187.

ment of this union was a natural outcome of the October Revolution and the establishment of the socialist system in the USSR.

Let us briefly examine the general features of the Soviet people as a new historical community. These features are at the same time typical of a socialist community in general.

1. The Soviet people is an *all-embracing* community. Since only public ownership of the means of production exists in the USSR, there are no exploiter elements among the population, which consists only of working people, and the people embraces all members of society; people and society coincide in terms of their human composition.

2. As a social community, the Soviet people unites the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia. Insofar as there is still a class distinction between the workers and the peasants, it is an *inter-class* community. *The guiding force* of the Soviet people is the *working class* which is employed in the decisive sphere of material life, i.e., industrial production. It is the most highly organised and conscious class with deep-rooted revolutionary traditions. The working class in the USSR is the backbone of the Soviet people, the initiator and the main executor of all its creative undertakings and achievements.

3. The working class and the peasantry in the USSR are representative of a *single socialist* ownership of the means of production in its two forms (state property, i.e., property belonging to the whole people, and co-operative property, i.e., collective farm and co-operative property), and the class distinction between them is not fundamental: they are friendly classes of one and the same type, with common basic economic and socio-political objectives. As regards the Soviet intelligentsia, it is, both by virtue of its origin and the role it plays in public life, closely associated with the two socialist classes and is utterly loyal to the people of which it is an organic part. Thus, the Soviet people is distinguished by a *high degree of socio-economic homogeneity*. In Soviet society there is no social or political inequality between classes and groups which, moreover, possess common aspirations and objectives. As a result, the *socio-political unity* of the Soviet people is *monolithic and indestructible*.

4. The Soviet community of working people rests firmly on their *free labour*. For the first time in many millennia, people are working for themselves, for their own welfare. Labour, emancipated from the law of private ownership, under which its results are appropriated by those who do not work, by the parasitic classes, gives full play to its general attributes, including the propensity to unite, and rally the working people and promote their co-operation. It was in the labour of the Soviet people that the humanist principle of "one for all and all for one" became firmly asserted. For the workers and all working people in the Soviet Union labour ceased to be an onerous necessity and became a matter of their conscious duty, a matter of glory. For the Soviet people labour is the foundation and inexhaustible wellspring of their collectivism and creative endeavour. Labour gave birth to socialist emulation, a mighty factor of Soviet society's progress. Having created man, labour, in socialist conditions, is moulding a new man by freeing him of all the evil, anti-humanist, anti-collectivist traits which had been fostered in him by the past system of private property and exploitation. The Soviet people established the cult of labour, and labour has become its ruler.

5. An effective factor of the stability of the Soviet community of working people is the political organisation of society, which at first existed in the form of the dictatorship of the working class but which in conditions of developed socialism and the gradual transition from developed socialism to communism has turned into the *state of the whole people*, likewise in the form of Soviets. Soviet statehood guarantees the working people full political freedom, broad democracy and active participation in managing government, economic and cultural affairs.

6. *The Marxist-Leninist world outlook and socialist ideology*, which have become dominant in the spiritual life of the Soviet people, are the ideological foundation of the Soviet community. On the ideological foundation of Marxism-Leninism the Soviet people built a new, socialist culture and made outstanding headway in intellectual, moral and aesthetic development. The Soviet people acquired new socialist, spiritual principles strengthening its community: fidelity to the ideals of communism, collectivism, a sense of comrade-

ship, patriotism, internationalism, awareness of public duty, a feeling of the new, and the desire to improve social life to a still greater degree. The cultural and scientific achievements, which have become the property of all the working people, bind them with spiritual bonds and make the Soviet people *spiritually united* and unconquerable. In a word, the Soviet people acquired a new, socialist *spiritual make-up*.

7. The Soviet community owes its vitality also to the fact that internal antagonism and hostility are alien to it and that it rests on *peace* and *harmony* between all its social groups and individuals. Socialism and peace are indivisible, since socialism is the creation of the new and peace is the most essential condition for it. Besides being an immutable principle of the Soviet people's internal life, peace is also a principle of its international relations. Displaying his inherent far-sightedness, Marx wrote in 1870: "... in contrast to old society, with its economical miseries and its political delirium, a new society is springing up, whose International rule will be *peace*, because its national ruler will be everywhere the same—*Labour!*"<sup>1</sup>

Although the Soviet people champion peace, they do not champion pacifism and have invariably inflicted a crushing defeat on all those who started a war against them.

8. The *Communist Party of the Soviet Union* is the organising and guiding force of Soviet society, the *vanguard* of the Soviet people. It is a party of creative Marxism-Leninism with a revolutionary programme and policy. Leadership by a Marxist-Leninist party is a general feature of the establishment and development of the socialist system, and therefore, of the establishment and development of the new community of people.

The CPSU uses the whole power of its prestige to strengthen the unity of the Soviet people, develop its creative forces and multiply its achievements in communist construction. The ideology and policy of the Communist Party, which have become the ideology and policy of the Soviet people, are an everlasting source of the tremendous vitality of the Soviet community of working people and its incomparable solidity.

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works*, in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, pp. 193-94.

These are the most important features of the Soviet people as a new socio-class community which took shape as a result of the October Revolution and the establishment of socialism in the USSR.

But, since the USSR is a multinational state, the Soviet people is a community which unites working people of more than a hundred nations and nationalities of the USSR and so it is a multinational inter-nation community.

*The Soviet people is the world's first inter-nation socialist community*, and its appearance marked the beginning of a new era in the history of ethnic communities and national relations. It is an example of a socialist community of nations and nationalities which rests on their common economic, political, ideological and cultural interests.

The Soviet inter-nation community is a classic example of a socialist international union of people which is subject to, and strikingly confirms the inevitability of, the general laws of development of socialist national relations. This community emerged and developed in the general mainstream of the socialist renovation of social life. At the same time, owing to certain aspects of the national question in the USSR, the formation and development of the Soviet inter-nation community had its specific character.

Let us take a look at some of its essential features (both general and specific).

1. It took shape and developed on the solid foundation of the socialist system. The socialist economy, policy and ideology merge the lives of all Soviet nations and nationalities into a single whole. The development of public ownership of the means of production is accompanied by the expansion and strengthening of the economic unity of the peoples. The consolidation of Soviet statehood and the development of socialist democracy have politically welded the nations and nationalities into a single political community. Marxist-Leninist ideology, with its inherent socialist internationalism ideologically and morally solidifies the union of the Soviet peoples and determines their common Soviet spiritual make-up.



2. The formation of the Soviet multinational community was an example of a truly socialist method of uniting peoples. Its immutable principle was Lenin's demand for a "*voluntary drawing together and merger of nations*". (My italics—*M. K.*) Inasmuch as the drawing of nations closer together and the formation of an inter-nation community is essentially an objective necessity, it is a matter of the free will of nations to an even greater extent than the formation of individual nations. A voluntary union is possible only if the nations concerned are guaranteed the right to secede and to be independent. For that reason the Soviet government's unifying policy in the field of national relations rested on the principle of the right to secede in the name of freedom to unite.

The freedom of independent development and national revival granted by Soviet government to all the peoples of the Soviet Union gave rise to the freedom of their drawing together and the establishment of a voluntary union. The voluntary union of free nations and nationalities is the source of the internal cohesion and viability of the Soviet inter-nation community.

3. The *Soviet working class* led by Lenin and the Communist Party was the initiator of the union of the peoples of the USSR into an international community and the guiding force that brought it into existence.

Russia's proletariat, which operated in a multinational country and fought shoulder to shoulder with the toilers of all the oppressed peoples against the common enemy, acquired immutable internationalist traditions even before the October Revolution. And when it became the ruling class, the working class of the Soviet Union manifested its internationalist and humanistic qualities still more forcefully and fully. Keenly aware of the vital role played by the international unity of working people in the building of a new life, it helped all peoples to root out the survivals of national narrow-mindedness and to act in close co-operation. At first, when the national contingents of the Soviet working class were still in the process of formation, it was the efforts of the Russian workers that enabled it to play the leading role in the establishment of the international union of peoples. But as the Soviet working class continued to grow, it

came to play an increasing role in strengthening the unity of nations and nationalities and achieving their even greater drawing together.

4. The Soviet community unites nations and nationalities which formerly stood at various stages of social development (from feudal to capitalist) and had dissimilar historical destinies (some were oppressors, others oppressed, some were restricted in their rights, others lacked all rights, some were downtrodden and benighted, others doomed to extinction, and so forth). It is by no means a simple matter to bring together different nationalities into a single community. But it was especially difficult to solve this task when it involved peoples who differed greatly from each other as regards their level of economic development, culture, mode of life and so forth. All this created problems which had never been tackled in the past: *abolition of inequality* (legal and factual) and the *levelling up of the economic and cultural standards of the peoples*, the transition of the formerly backward peoples to socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage of development, organisation of assistance to the backward peoples by the advanced peoples, determining ways and rational methods of co-operation and mutual enrichment of the peoples, etc.

The Soviet socialist system had the necessary objective and subjective prerequisites for solving these and other problems of the joint struggle and the movement of all peoples towards socialism and communism. A special role in this great historical cause devolved on the Russian people, which, as the most numerous and advanced of all the peoples of the USSR, fulfilled its fraternal duty by extending broad assistance to the formerly backward peoples in promoting their national revival and socialist progress.

5. The Soviet community unites two types of ethnic communities: *nations* and *nationalities*. Both have features common to a socialist community. The difference between them is largely artificial and is connected primarily with the numerical size of a nationality, the degree of its economic consolidation, compactness of its ethnic territory, the development of culture and science in the native language and its political and administrative autonomy. Soviet government granted all small nationalities, as well as nations. every

opportunity to develop freely and draw closer to other nationalities and nations.

6. The harmonious combination of two processes—the *burgeoning and drawing together of all nations*—is a feature of the development of the Soviet inter-nation community. The burgeoning of Soviet, socialist nations makes for their drawing together and vice versa. As it develops its creative abilities and multiplies its national achievements, each nation increases its contribution to the common, inter-nation wealth which stimulates the material and spiritual growth and mutual enrichment of all Soviet nations and nationalities. The development of the Soviet people as a community embracing many nations is the synthesised expression of the florescence of nations and their drawing ever closer together. All the progressive and positive achievements of each nation accumulate in this community, thus creating the basis for the formation and the continued improvement of the common, international features of the Soviet people and its common progressive traditions.

In the sphere of spiritual culture the unity of the common and the specific is expressed in the harmonious development of a single international culture of the Soviet people and the flourishing of the national cultures of all nations and nationalities. The pre-eminence of the common over the specific in cultural progress is expressed in the formula: "The culture of the peoples of the USSR is socialist in content and national in form." The combination of the common and the specific is coming to play an ever greater role in the field of language. National languages have attained a high level of development in the USSR. At the same time, the Russian language as a means of communication between Soviet nations and nationalities is acquiring ever greater importance as their second native language.

Every national community has its own territory. But the Soviet inter-nation community also has a common territory—the territory of the USSR. National territorial borders in the USSR do not in the least influence migratory processes, or the movement of people of all nationalities, which has become free and unrestricted. There are borders in the USSR, but no border problems. This notable fact manifests

the decisive significance, the pre-eminence that is common to the entire Soviet Union, to all its nations and nationalities over the national and the specific.

7. *The socialist statehood in the form of Soviets*, which is international by virtue of its very nature is the political foundation of the inter-nation community of the peoples of the USSR. As a political union of peoples, the Soviet state is a federation of national states. A federal union in all its forms is the most suitable type of state in the period of the socialist stage of the development of state co-operation of nations.

The Soviet multinational state is a voluntary union of equal and free peoples. Its Constitution recognises the right of all its Union republics to secede from it. The system of its legislative and administrative organs is built in such a way as to ensure that in their activity they unfailingly combine the interests of the union state and all nationalities and their states. In keeping with fixed norms all these national states are represented in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, which has a special chamber, the Soviet of Nationalities, that ensures the observance of the national interests of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

8. The Soviet international community took shape and is developing *on the basis of the consistent pursuance of the Leninist nationalities policy by the Communist Party*. After the October Revolution, when the Communist Party became the ruling party, the motto of the Communists "Workers of all countries, unite!", began to define its practical policy in *asserting socialist national relations in the USSR*. The chief aim of this policy was the complete internationalisation of all economic and cultural life for the benefit of socialism and communism. And, of course, it resulted in the comprehensive drawing together of the Soviet peoples and the formation of their international community. The eradication of nationalism and the rout of its supporters in ideology and politics played a tremendous role in ensuring the success of the Leninist nationalities policy. Reared by the Party in the spirit of socialist internationalism and humanism, the peoples of the USSR established ties of lasting unity, setting the world an example of internationalism in action.

Such are some of the most important aspects of the Soviet people as an inter-nation socialist community.

Thus, during the years of socialist construction that followed the October Revolution a new historical community, the Soviet people, appeared in the USSR, a community embodying all the progressive changes which took place in the social and ethnic communities in the course of the rise and development of socialist relations.

Let us examine the historical stages of the formation of the Soviet people.

## II. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND THE FORMATION OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

### 1. PREHISTORY: THE CLASS AND INTERNATIONAL TRADITIONS OF THE LIBERATION MOVEMENT

The history of the Soviet people dates back to the Great October Socialist Revolution in whose flames it was born. But of course the Soviet people did not spring into the world as Athene did from the head of Zeus, without any links with preceding history. It has its prehistory and its main features are the *class and international traditions* of the liberation struggle of all the peoples of Russia.

These traditions are rooted in Russia's remote feudal past, when the serfs and the urban poor supported each other in the fight against the despotism of the landowners and the tsars, when the Bashkir Salavat Yulaev came to the assistance of Yemelyan Pugachev, the leader of one of the biggest peasant uprisings in Russia. But the class and international traditions attained maturity and yielded fruit in the epoch of capitalism, particularly in its imperialist stage.

The beginning of the 20th century marked the turning point in the history of the people of Russia. Of decisive significance for their historical destiny and the destiny of

the whole of Russia was the *complete political demarcation between the bourgeoisie and the people, the abandonment by the bourgeoisie of the people and of revolutionary positions and the passing of the political leadership of the people and the entire democratic and revolutionary movement into the hands of the proletariat.*

The proletariat came to realise that it was the leader of the revolutionary movement of the people following the appearance in Russia of the Marxist-Leninist party—the highest form of the class organisation of the proletariat. The Party has always centred its theoretical and practical activity on educating the working class, preparing it to assume the role of leader of the revolution and on rallying all the working people under its leadership.

*The socio-class self-determination of the people and the consolidation within its ranks of toilers of all the nationalities of Russia and the assertion of the proletariat as the guiding force of the people were one of the greatest merits of the Bolshevik Party and its leader Lenin, one of the most decisive victories that paved the way for the socialist revolution in Russia.*

The Party achieved this victory at the cost of tremendous efforts and thanks to Lenin's theoretical and strategic genius. It surmounted enormous difficulties which were connected with the social and class heterogeneity of the people, with all sorts of ideological and political trends opposing society's socio-class demarcation and with the formation of the people as a political community of workers and exploited masses. The Bolshevik Party had to debunk the Cadet and Monarchist<sup>1</sup> idea of a "single and indivisible Russia", the liberal-bourgeois idea of the "unity of Russian democracy", and the anti-proletarian Narodnik views and to remove them from the minds of the masses, and unmask the splitting tactics of the petty-bourgeois conciliatory parties and bourgeois-nationalist parties, and so forth.

Many political organisations and parties in Russia called for the consolidation of all those who desired political freedom in Russia. In 1905 one of these organisations, the

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<sup>1</sup> Cadets—members of the Constitutional Democratic Party, the leading party of the imperialist bourgeoisie in tsarist Russia.

Russian Liberation Union, which proclaimed its aim to divest the autocracy of its power and transfer it to the people, issued an appeal to "Russian democracy" which said among other things: "Let us abandon party arguments and differences on questions of principle for a while..., let us unite into a single mighty whole, into the Russian Liberation Union and give our strength, means and knowledge to the people, in their great struggle against the common enemy, autocracy."

In the opinion of the ideologists of this notorious union, the bourgeoisie and the people, struggling against the "common enemy, autocracy", had common interests.

Lenin wrote in connection with this appeal: "...The people struggling against the autocracy consists of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat.... Yet is there a person so naive who does not understand that the bourgeoisie will never give up private ownership of the land and of capital, but, on the contrary, will fight to last ditch to retain it against the encroachment of the workers? For the worker to abandon differences on questions of principle with the bourgeoisie, alongside which he is fighting the autocracy, is tantamount to *abandoning socialism*..., abandoning the idea of his economic emancipation, the emancipation of the working people from poverty and oppression.... Therefore, the appeal to sink differences is a *bourgeois appeal*."<sup>1</sup>

By exposing these ideas and trends, the Bolsheviks and Lenin sought to enlighten the people politically, to develop in them an awareness of their political independence and the need to unite. Lenin taught the proletariat that it was revolutionary insofar as it translated the idea of its leadership into practice. And the working class of Russia lived up to its historic mission.

Things were much more difficult with the peasantry. Its political unification under the leadership of the working class required particularly strenuous efforts because the peasants were disunited and were not a strongly welded community.

In order to politically unite the peasantry under the leadership of Russia's working class, it was necessary to

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 8, p. 503.



overcome the reactionary views of the liberal Narodniks who, as Lenin wrote, were carried away by their desire to hold up the breakdown of the age-old principles of Russia's life and declared that capitalism was a retrogression, a mistake, a deviation from the way allegedly prescribed by the entire historical development of the Russian nation.

Oblivious of historical reality, they ignored the proletariat and did not regard it as a revolutionary force.

The petty-bourgeois romanticism of the Narodniks prevented them from seeing the force which was capable of raising the people and leading it in the struggle for liberation. That force was the proletariat. The Narodniks blurred the class contradictions in the countryside and the enslavement of the poor by the exploiter sections calling them "defects" which a "people-loving" administration was quite capable of eliminating. It followed, therefore, that there was neither the need for a revolution nor for overthrowing tsarism, which they portrayed as a force that was above class and was capable of serving the people too.

Yet it was obviously not only and not so much a matter of Narodnik and similar ideological views concerning the peasantry, but the peasantry itself, of its dual nature, its small-proprietor and individualistic psychology and habits.

In his work "The Heritage We Renounce" Lenin, referring to "Letters from the Countryside" by Engelhardt, a Narodnik journalist, noted: "Engelhardt is absolutely relentless in exposing the amazing *individualism* of the small farmer."<sup>1</sup>

It was extremely hard to make the peasants, whose commandment was "each for himself, and God for all" and who were incapable of "inner-class collectivity", realise that they had to act jointly with the proletariat and other sections of the people.

But the socio-economic and political conditions of the peasantry also contained the causes which inevitably pushed it towards an alliance and joint struggle with the proletariat. The sameness and the likeness of these two classes as regards their economic, political and cultural life and living conditions connected them and brought them closer to each other.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 2, p. 508.

Russia's proletariat made up a numerically small proportion of the population. At the end of the 19th century, according to Lenin's estimates, there were only 10 million hired workers in the country. Their conditions were the worst in Europe. The working day in Russia was 12 or 13 hours and in the textile industry it was as long as 15-16 hours. The workers' wages were barely enough to sustain them and most of them lived in factory barracks in tiny rooms shared by three and even four families.

The peasants were no better off. They were exploited by the landowners, who owned the lion's share of the land, and the capitalists. The tsar, Russia's biggest landowner, had seven million *dessiatines*, or more than the combined holdings of half a million peasant families. Doomed to a half-starved existence, the peasants went to the towns in search of earnings. Ruin and proletarianisation—such was the lot of the bulk of the peasant masses in Russia. The workers and the peasants and with them other working sections of society were united by their discontent with the existing order, which was becoming more and more unbearable. They became increasingly aware of the need to join forces in the struggle against autocracy.

At the beginning of the 20th century Lenin, referring to the broad sphere of action for revolutionary-minded Social-Democracy among the various sections of the people, wrote:

"There is a mass of people, because the working class and increasingly varied social strata, year after year, produce from their ranks an increasing number of discontented people who desire to protest, who are ready to render all the assistance they can in the struggle against absolutism, the intolerableness of which, though not yet recognised by all, is more and more acutely sensed by increasing masses of the people."<sup>1</sup>

The workers and peasants were united by their hatred of the exploiters and the oppressors. Hatred alone, however, was not enough to change the situation. Only an uprising which would overthrow their enemies could do this. But it took time before the masses realised that. In the 1905-1907 revolution the peasants did not support the proletariat.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 468.

That was the basic weakness of that particular popular revolution and the main cause of its defeat.

The lessons of the first Russian revolution taught the workers and the peasants a great deal. They were particularly instructive for the peasants, who realised that, without a revolutionary alliance with the proletariat and without a revolutionary front uniting the whole people, it would be impossible to defeat the enemy.

During the first Russian revolution the proletariat showed that it was capable of heading the revolutionary people, and this frightened tsarism and its cultural lackeys from among the reactionary intellectuals.

Lenin wrote with indignation about these "cultural lackeys" among the intelligentsia, who because of their "sincere stupidity" elevated their inter-class position into a *principle* of non-class parties and non-class policy, and said that this bourgeois intelligentsia exerted a dangerous influence on the people.

The working class never came out in favour of a union of all, including the oppressors and the oppressed, i.e., in favour of abstract humanism. This social and class feeling became particularly strong during the first Russian revolution which proved to be a severe test for the working class and in which it became really tempered. Guided by the Bolshevik Party, the proletariat more and more resolutely divorced itself from bourgeois-liberal illusions concerning "non-class policy" and a "programme of all mankind". The Bolsheviks' firm class proletarian stand and their consistent struggle for a strict class and party-political demarcation yielded the desired results. In Russia this demarcation was more definite and clear-cut than in any other country.

It was with good reason that the Vekhist<sup>1</sup> S. Bulgakov lamented "the spiritual discords tearing Russia apart" and "her division into irreconcilably divorced halves, the right and left blocs".

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<sup>1</sup> *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*) was a collection of articles published in 1909 by a group of prominent reactionary writers in Russia, members of the Constitutional Democratic Party. *Vekhi* openly praised and defended reaction and endeavoured to defame the entire Russian liberation movement.

Elucidating this point, he wrote: "The division into parties based on the differences in political views, social standing, and property interests is common to all countries with popular representation and in a certain sense is an inevitable evil, but *nowhere else is this division so deep and so greatly disrupts the spiritual and cultural unity of the nation as in Russia.*"<sup>1</sup> (My italics—*M.K.*)

There is no denying that Bulgakov objectively assessed the depth of the division in "the unity of the nation in Russia". Yet it was not an evil for the whole of Russia but only for the Russia of the landowners and capitalists. For Russia of the proletariat and the people as a whole it was a great historical achievement, a boon, which opened prospects for the country's renovation along revolutionary lines.

The joint liberation struggle of the working and exploited masses led by the proletariat under the guidance of the Leninist party created the tradition of *class* solidarity among the people.

But the tradition of the liberation movement of the people also has another, *international* aspect. The international tradition of the popular masses in Russia has a great history and has passed through many stages, each marking a step towards its further development and consolidation.

The Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee on the Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics says:

"The peoples of our country jointly fought over the centuries against tsarism and social and national oppression. This liberatory, revolutionary struggle acquired even greater proportions, class consciousness and a purposeful and organized nature with the emergence of the working-class movement and especially with the setting up of the Bolshevik Party by Lenin. The ideas of Marxism-Leninism and the principles of proletarian internationalism developed into a mighty factor for the mobilisation and organisation of the nations of Russia in the struggle against tsarism and capitalism."

When Russia became a multinational empire, the liberation movement of her working and exploited masses was

<sup>1</sup> *Vekhi*, Moscow, 1909, p. 65.

always characterised by social and national currents which frequently merged into a single, common flow. This was only natural, for the masses of the people of all nationalities in Russia had one and the same enemy—tsarism.

The liberation struggle of the peoples enslaved by tsarism was particularly bitter and uncompromising. This, as Lenin explained, was due to a number of historical reasons: (1) the exceptional brutality of national oppression which was bound to stir up the national sentiments of the peoples and make them strive for an independent national existence; (2) the development of capitalism and the general level of culture were higher in some of the subjugated peoples; (3) "Russia's international position: next to it is Austria (with an unfinished bourgeois revolution in respect of the national question) and an awakened Asia.... Tsarism is the most reactionary state system. Hence the particular inevitability of the national movement...."<sup>1</sup> Lenin attached tremendous significance to the fact that in the imperialist epoch the peoples were fighting for national equality in the country where the world's most revolutionary proletariat led by the Marxist party was in action and that the example set by the Russian proletariat inevitably augmented the "liberatory energy" of the non-Russian peoples.

In this connection it should be emphasised that the Leninist revolutionary party, which emerged and fought under the motto, "Workers of all countries, unite!", from the very start intensified the national liberation struggle of all the peoples of Russia against tsarism in every way and reared the working people of all nationalities in the spirit of proletarian internationalism and class solidarity. Being a genuinely internationalist party, it built not only its programme but also the entire system of organisation on the basis of the organic unity of all its national links. The party emerges, Lenin wrote in 1913, "as a party of all Russia, that is, a party of the proletariat of all the nationalities of Russia",<sup>2</sup> i.e., a party of all Russia, but not a Russian party.

The emergence on the political scene in the beginning of the 20th century of the Leninist party, whose internal

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 41, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 19, p. 249.

structure was truly internationalist both intrinsically and organisationally marked a new stage in the growth of internationalist consciousness of the workers and the other working masses of Russia and the strengthening of the common front of the socio-class and national liberation movement.

The Leninist party had to solve complex problems and overcome the most diverse obstacles in its efforts to build an inter-class and inter-nation union of the people. In an article entitled "The National Question in Our Programme", written in 1903, Lenin noted the following bitter fact: "The accursed history of autocracy has left us a legacy of tremendous estrangement between the working classes of the various nationalities oppressed by that autocracy."<sup>1</sup>

It was necessary to help the non-Russian peoples to shed their mistrust of the Russian people, to erase the estrangement between them which to a certain degree was inevitable because of the brutal oppression to which tsarism and Russian landowners and capitalists subjected the working masses in the colonial outskirts. This oppression which made the non-Russian peoples hate Russian tsarism also engendered a dislike for all Russians and to an extent even for the working people of the Great-Russian nation. The unprecedentedly brutal and senseless national oppression under tsarism, Lenin wrote, accumulated a hatred of monarchs among the underprivileged nationalities. "It was not surprising," he wrote, "that all Russians had been included in their hatred for those who went to the extent of prohibiting the use of the mother tongue, and doomed masses of people to illiteracy. It was assumed that the privileged Russians would try to retain the advantages which had been so assiduously preserved for them by Nicholas II and Kerensky."<sup>2</sup>

The Party had its hands full to make the working people of non-Russian nationalities understand the essence of tsarism, which exercised its power according to the notorious "divide and rule" principle. It skilfully fanned hostility between the peoples, incited national discord and bloody

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 6, p. 462.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. 26, pp. 343-44.

conflicts. The bourgeoisie also tried to divert the attention of the workers from their real enemy. Meanwhile, as Lenin wrote in 1913, "the powers that be live splendidly, together as shareholders in profitable concerns involving millions (such as the Lena Gold fields); Orthodox Christians and Jews, Russians and Germans, Poles and Ukrainians, everyone who possesses *capital* exploit the workers of all nations in company."<sup>1</sup>

But the Russian proletariat guided by the Communist Party steadfastly worked for the international cohesion of the masses of all the nationalities of Russia.

The first Russian revolution demonstrated the insuperable strength of internationalist ideology and policy of the proletariat and its party and their practical successes. In October 1905, when the revolution was on the upsurge, Lenin wrote in an article entitled "The First Victory of the Revolution": "The revolution won its first victory when the proletariat of all the nations of Russia rose as one man and made the tsar's throne tremble, the throne that had caused such incalculable distress to all the nations, and most of all to the toiling classes of all the nations."<sup>2</sup>

International unity of action made a still more forceful and striking impact on the course of the second, February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917, in which the proletariat and the working masses of the oppressed peoples of Russia under the leadership of the Russian proletariat overthrew tsarism and ushered in a new, socialist stage of the revolution in Russia.

The peoples of Russia not only established the international traditions of the liberation movement which expressed their ideological and political community as *subjects of historical development*, but even in the period prior to the revolution began to show signs of their economic and cultural rapprochement as *ethnic communities*. The expansion of these ties created conditions for the formation of the international community of the peoples of the USSR.

One of the features of tsarist Russia as a colonial power was that her possessions did not lie in distant lands, but

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 150.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 433.

were in direct proximity to the parent country, forming an extension of her territory. This, of course, enabled tsarism to plunder the enslaved peoples with considerable ease. But there was also a positive aspect to this circumstance: in view of the proximity of these territories, the non-Russian peoples could associate and establish extensive ties with the Russians, and adopt all that was progressive in their economy, culture and way of life. Without any serious geographical barriers separating them from Russia, the peoples of her colonial outskirts always felt the economic and cultural influence of the working sections of the Russian population. This was definitely a progressive factor.

Capitalism's rapid development in Russia was accompanied by a gradual consolidation of the economic ties between her peoples and their drawing together. The economic and cultural history of the peoples of the USSR provides ample proof of this. The expansion of economic links was greatly facilitated by the historically developing division of labour between individual national-economic regions. The north sent textiles to the southern and eastern regions while the latter supplied the north with cotton, fuel and other products.

Russia's economic growth caused an increase in the migration of the population, which became particularly intensive at the turn of the century primarily as a result of the development of the railways. Hundreds of thousands of people moved from one end of Russia to the other, where they intermingled with people of other nationalities.

The breakdown of national barriers and the overcoming of national isolation made for the drawing together and assimilation of nations. Leaving aside the coercive method of assimilation which was employed to further the policy of Russification, assimilation was in itself a progressive process. "No one unobsessed by nationalist prejudices," Lenin wrote, "can fail to perceive that this process of assimilation of nations by capitalism means the greatest historical progress, the breakdown of hidebound national conservatism in the various backwoods, especially in backward countries like Russia."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 20, p. 30.



The Ukraine's rapid development, for example, attracted hundreds of thousands of peasants and workers from Great Russia, who came to work in Ukrainian mines, cities and capitalist enterprises. The assimilation of the Great-Russian and Ukrainian proletariat was an unquestionable fact. And this fact, Lenin underlined, was definitely progressive. "Capitalism is replacing the ignorant, conservative, settled muzhik of the Great-Russian or Ukrainian backwoods with a mobile proletariat whose conditions of life break down specifically national narrow-mindedness both Great-Russian and Ukrainian."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, communism's basic policy requirement is not for the preservation of national distinctions, not for the estrangement of nations, but for their drawing together and ultimate merger. Under capitalism, however, where some nations oppress other nations, particularly in a country like tsarist Russia, where the national oppression of the enslaved peoples was especially brutal, the nations could not unite and draw really close to each other unless they were granted the right to secession and free independent development.

The demand for the *right* to secede, therefore, should never be confused with the demand for the *secession* of peoples. The first is progressive, the other is not. Lenin repeatedly took up this complex problem which required a dialectical approach. This was all the more necessary since even some Party functionaries lacked a clear understanding of the matter.

Dealing with some questions of the Bolshevik Party's nationalities policy, Lenin wrote in a letter to S. Shahu-myan: "...We are in favour of the *right* to secession (and not in favour of everyone's *seceding!*)."<sup>2</sup> Why were the Bolsheviks for the right to secede? Lenin replied that secession was not what the Party planned, but that the Party stood for the *right* to secede owing to reactionary Great-Russian nationalism which had so besmirched the idea of national coexistence that sometimes *closer* ties will be established after free secession.

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<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 31.

In this letter Lenin substantiated some very important theoretical and political premises. "The right to self-determination is an *exception* to our general premise of centralisation. This exception is absolutely essential in view of reactionary Great-Russian nationalism; and any rejection of this exception is opportunism.... But exceptions *must not* be too broadly interpreted. In this case there is *not*, and *must not* be anything more than the *right to secede*."<sup>1</sup>

The joint socio-political, economic and cultural development of the peoples, and not secession was Leninism's fundamental demand. This stimulated the progressive process in the life of the peoples of Russia and in their relations. "We are convinced," Lenin wrote, "that the development of capitalism in Russia, and the whole course of social life in general, are tending to bring all nations closer together."<sup>2</sup>

National relations in pre-revolutionary Russia confirmed this conclusion.

In their joint struggle against common enemies the peoples of Russia created international revolutionary traditions and, owing to objective historical necessity, moved towards drawing the nations closer together, internationalisation of economic, cultural and socio-political life and fraternal co-operation in the post-revolutionary future. In its Resolution on Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the CPSU Central Committee highly praised the gains of the internationalist policy of Russia's revolutionary proletariat and its Leninist party, which led the working Russia towards a new, socialist life with the utmost determination and courage.

"The class-conscious proletarians," it stated, "worked consistently to achieve the closest cohesion of the workers and the poorest peasantry in the struggle against reaction, sweeping away all forms of bourgeois-nationalist ideology, whether it took the form of great-power chauvinism or local nationalism, national arrogance or national nihilism, anti-

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 19, p. 501.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. 20, pp. 72-73.

semitism or Zionism. The Communist Party and the working class confronted the old world of class and national oppression, national strife and isolation with the new world of the unity of the working people, in which there is no room for the slightest oppression of man by man or of one nation by another, or for any sort of national privilege."

So, the prehistory of the Soviet people left it as a legacy the first gains in the formation of a socio-class and internationalist unity of the working classes and peoples of Russia, and class and internationalist traditions of their liberation struggle.

This magnificent legacy was the starting point of the achievements of the October Revolution and the subsequent socialist accomplishments of the working class and of the whole multinational Soviet people.

## 2. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION— A PROLETARIAN PEOPLE'S REVOLUTION

In February 1917 Russia's workers and peasants accomplished the second Russian revolution. It was the last act of the people's age-old struggle against the autocracy. The Romanov monarchy which tyrannised the country for 300 years collapsed.

Once again the bourgeoisie tried to reap the benefits of the people's efforts. (But history repeated itself with a substantial amendment which was introduced into the course of events by the people, led by the working class.) Alongside the bourgeois Provisional Government which represented official state power there were also Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The result was dual power. The balance of forces between these two powers was fairly accurately described by the Chairman of the Provisional Government, Prince Lvov, who acknowledged that his government "was power without strength, while the Soviets of Workers' Deputies was strength without power". Formally, power was indeed in the hands of the bourgeoisie, while real power was to a greater extent in the hands of the workers and peasants through the Soviets.

But the Soviets in which command positions had been seized by petty-bourgeois conciliatory parties did not grasp

the opportunity to concentrate all power in the country in their hands. They voluntarily surrendered it to the bourgeois government and supported it with their authority. The situation boded a fresh tragedy for the people, who had already suffered years of the most vicious reaction as a result of its fatal mistake in the Revolution of 1905-1907.

This time, however, the people altered the course of history. The Great October Socialist Revolution ended in victory. It was *genuinely* a people's revolution. "The most essential and paramount expression of the popular nature of the October Revolution was the alliance between the working class and the peasants, and the joint struggle and fraternal co-operation of the working people of all the nations of Russia against the oppressors."<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the proletariat of Russia was the decisive and guiding force of the October Revolution, which it accomplished in alliance with the poorest sections of the peasantry and with the broad support of other sections of the multinational people.

The Leninist Party, a party which was genuinely *proletarian*, was the organiser, inspirer and leader of the October Revolution.

After the February revolution the Bolshevik Party emerged from the underground and acquired freedom of action. This was the biggest and most important achievement attained by the proletariat and the whole people in the political freedom which set in following the overthrow of tsarism. Bolshevik Party functionaries returned to the centre of the revolutionary movement from prisons and the remote Siberian villages where they had been living in exile, and from emigration. Lenin, the Party's leader, returned to Russia after spending ten years in forced emigration.

Now, for the first time in their history, the Bolsheviks could speak freely to the people, explain their ideas and policy demands, openly fight for the interests of the proletarian and working masses and organise them. This was an essential condition for elevating the revolution to a new, socialist stage.

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<sup>1</sup> *50th Anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution*, Moscow, 1967, p. 7.

When the Bolshevik Party emerged from the underground it had about 24,000 members—not many, of course, but more than there were in other parties. Its membership increased rapidly, however, and it had 80,000 members when it held its April Conference and nearly 240,000 when it gathered for its Sixth Congress in August 1917. On the eve of the October uprising in 1917 the Bolshevik Party numbered 350,000 members, or 15 times as many as immediately after the February revolution.

Though the Leninist party's ideological and political influence on the proletariat and the working masses increased incomparably faster than its membership, if, indeed, it is possible to make such a comparison, it took the Bolsheviks some time and a great deal of effort to achieve their objectives. The political situation in the country was extremely complicated when they launched their struggle to elevate the revolution from the bourgeois-democratic to the socialist stage, build up a political army of the revolution and rally the working people round the proletarian banner.

With the overthrow of tsarism Russia became the freest of all the belligerent powers. The February victory over the autocracy caused widespread jubilation among the democratic sections of society and it was universally believed that real freedom had come to Russia.

Actually, however, the political situation in Russia was not as favourable as it seemed, and it was still too early for the champions of freedom to rest on their laurels. Lenin quickly realised this, assessed the situation and charted a new destiny for Russia. Lenin wrote on the day following his arrival from Switzerland: "What is specific in Russia is the extremely rapid transition from savage violence to the most subtle deception."<sup>1</sup>

In its efforts to sow "subtle deception" among the people, the bourgeois Constitutional Democratic Party was assisted by conciliatory parties and other "educated hangers-on". The SRs<sup>2</sup> relinquished their slogan "In struggle you will

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> The SRs were members of the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary Party which appeared in Russia in 1901-1902. They glossed over the class contradictions within the peasantry and rejected the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the course of the revolution they became a counter-revolutionary party.

acquire your right", believing that struggle had become a thing of the past and that everything could be adjusted peacefully. The Mensheviks<sup>1</sup> tried to persuade the working class and the people to concentrate on consolidating "political gains". Other political parties and organisations and even individual functionaries sought to impress upon the people that all the desired objectives had been attained and that there was no sense in continuing the struggle against a "revolutionary Russia".

They were fairly successful at first, for not only the non-proletarian masses, but even a considerable part of the working class, whose composition during the war years was largely replenished by peasants who came to the cities and by the urban petty bourgeoisie, succumbed to the general atmosphere, unconsciously trusted the bourgeoisie and its "revolutionary assurances", and lived in "post-February hopes".

Lenin complained at the time that "even our Bolsheviks show some trust in the government. This can be explained only by the intoxication of the revolution".<sup>2</sup>

The Bolsheviks quickly rid themselves of this intoxication, but not the broad masses, and the Leninist party had to put in a great deal of work to help them do so. Its immediate task was to make the proletariat and the masses realise that it was necessary to bring the revolution to a new, socialist stage and to work out new strategic positions in their revolutionary activity.

The correlation of class forces changed after the February revolution, when the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, the two main classes of capitalist society, confronted each other as the main protagonists in the forthcoming fight for power.

Russia's working class was relatively small at the time, numbering less than 3,500,000 workers at the beginning of

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<sup>1</sup> Menshevism—a petty-bourgeois opportunist trend which appeared in the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) in 1903 at its Second Congress; when during the elections of the Party's central bodies the revolutionary Marxists rallied around Lenin and won the majority of the votes. They were called Bolsheviks, from the Russian word *bolshinstvo* meaning "majority". The opportunist delegates were in the minority (*meshinstvo*) and were called Mensheviks. In 1912 at the Sixth (Prague) Conference of the RSDLP the opportunists were expelled from the Party.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 437.

1917. But Lenin's words that "the strength of the proletariat in any capitalist country is far greater than the proportion it represents of the total population"<sup>1</sup> was especially true of the working class of Russia during the preparations for and the accomplishment of the socialist revolution. It was a class that was hardened in the long struggle against tsarist autocracy and which in less than two decades of the 20th century led two revolutions and moved into the forefront of the world revolutionary movement.

The proletariat's true ally in the socialist revolution was the poorest section of the peasantry. But the other masses of the working peasantry were not indifferent to social battles, for at issue was the crucial question of peace and the age-old dispute over land between the peasants and landowners which had not been resolved even after the overthrow of the tsar, Russia's biggest landowner.

On the day after his return to Russia Lenin told a Bolshevik meeting: "What is the peasantry? We don't know, there are no statistics, but *we do know that it is a force.*"<sup>2</sup> (My italics—*M.K.*)

Though Lenin had no reliable figures describing the peasants, this did not prevent him from fully assessing the strength of the peasantry as a class and its role in the future of the revolution in Russia, predominantly a peasant country at the time.

In 1913 the working peasants and self-employed artisans made up 66.7 per cent of the population. Of course, the peasants comprised the bulk of this category of the population. In 1917 about 80 per cent of the peasants in the European part of Russia were either proletarians or semi-proletarians. The February revolution did not alter the position of the peasantry. In addition to the problem of land, there was the burning problem of peace, and this naturally greatly heightened the political activity of the peasants in the post-February period. Alongside the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies there were also Soviets of Peasants' Deputies in the country. Gradually the peasants shed the influence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, who had been

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 274.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 36, p. 441.

deceiving them, and stopped trusting in the promises of the Provisional Government.

The Bolshevik Party's agrarian policy and the explanatory work conducted by Bolsheviks and revolutionary-minded workers among the peasants had a decisive impact on the revolutionary upsurge in the countryside.

At the First All-Russia Congress of Peasants' Deputies in May 1917 Lenin made a speech on the agrarian question which deeply impressed the representatives of the working peasantry. "The basic difference between ourselves and our opponents," he said, "is in our respective understanding of what order is and what law is. *Up to now law and order have been regarded as things that suited the landowners and bureaucrats, but we maintain that law and order are things that suit the majority of the peasantry....* We say: 'Let a decision be taken by the majority; we want the peasants to obtain landed estates now, without losing a single month, a single week or even a single day.'"<sup>1</sup> (My italics—M.K.)

Rapidly growing in scale, the peasant movement had by the autumn of 1917 overflowed into peasant uprisings which covered over a half of the European part of Russia. With increasing determination the peasant masses supported the Bolshevik agrarian programme and their movement for the possession of land merged with the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poorest sections of the peasantry. This was of the greatest importance for the success of the proletarian, people's revolution which took place in October 1917.

In his "Letters from Afar" sent to Russia from abroad in the days following the February Revolution, Lenin taught the proletariat to combine their revolutionary energy with the energy of the whole people. "*Workers, you have performed miracles of proletarian heroism, the heroism of the people, in the civil war against tsarism,*" he wrote in one of them. "*You must perform miracles of organisation, organisation of the proletariat and of the whole people, to prepare the way for your victory in the second stage of the revolution.*"<sup>2</sup>

After the February revolution the proletariat's prestige greatly increased among the masses. In contrast to their

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., Vol. 24, pp. 491-92.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. 23, pp. 303-07.



mood in the period of the first Russian revolution, the masses displayed greater determination to enter into a political alliance with it and accepted its leadership. The proletariat initiated the establishment of democratic organs of revolutionary activity in which the Bolsheviks and class-conscious proletarians could politically educate and organise the masses of workers, soldiers and peasants. In his famous work "Tasks of Proletariat in Our Revolution" Lenin emphasised a most important historical fact: "Much is given to the Russian proletariat; nowhere in the world has the working class yet succeeded in developing so much revolutionary energy as in Russia. But to whom much is given, of him much is required."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, Lenin not only highly assessed the revolutionary activity of the Russian proletariat, but also strategically orientated it. Henceforth the tremendous revolutionary energy of the working class would have to be channelled into the accomplishment of its own, socialist revolution and organising itself and the masses for the fulfilment of this new strategic task.

In the October Revolution, Russia's proletariat, guided by the Bolsheviks with Lenin at their head, fully lived up to its position as leader of the socialist, people's revolution. This was deeply reflected in the fact that, while preparing the October uprising, it visualised the split of the country's class forces into two irreconcilably hostile classes, and, being aware of its strength, realised the need to join forces with all the exploited masses to rout the camp of the bourgeoisie and the landowners. Lenin vividly portrayed this mood of the proletarians in his famous work "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" written on the eve of the revolution. "This member of the oppressed class, however, even though one of the well-paid and quite intelligent workers," he wrote, "takes the bull by the horns with that astonishing simplicity and straightforwardness, with that firm determination and amazing clarity of outlook from which we intellectuals are as remote as the stars in the sky. The whole world is divided into two camps: 'us', the working people, and 'them', the exploiters.... We squeezed 'them'

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 82.

a bit; 'they' won't dare to lord it over us as they did before. We'll squeeze again—and chuck them out altogether—that's how the worker thinks and feels."<sup>1</sup>

The struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie was the principal confrontation between all the class forces of Russia. A tremendous preponderance of forces was built up at the proletarian revolutionary pole and this decided the outcome of the October insurrection and the socialist revolution in Russia.

In his historic letters to the Central, Petrograd and Moscow Committees of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) written in the middle of September 1917 Lenin formulated his conviction of the inevitability of the insurrection and set forth the essential conditions for its successful outcome. "To be successful," he wrote, "insurrection must rely not upon conspiracy and not upon a party, but upon the advanced class. That is the first point. Insurrection must rely upon a *revolutionary upsurge of the people*. That is the second point. Insurrection must rely upon the *turning-point* in the history of the growing revolution when the activity of the advanced ranks of the people is at its height, and when the *vacillations* in the ranks of the enemy and *in the ranks of the weak half-hearted and irresolute friends of the revolution* are strongest. That is the third point."<sup>2</sup>

Further Lenin summed up his brilliant conclusion:

"We have the following of the majority of a *class*, the vanguard of the revolution, the vanguard of the people, which is capable of carrying the masses with it.

"We have the following of the *majority* of the people....

"*Our victory is assured*, for the people are close to desperation, and we are showing the entire people a sure way out; we demonstrated to the entire people the significance of our leadership...."<sup>3</sup>

The October Revolution was a profoundly popular revolution both as regards its motive forces and historical mission. It was accomplished by the proletariat in alliance with the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 120.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

poorest section of the peasantry with the friendly assistance of other sections of the people.

The genuinely popular character of the October Revolution was most forcefully emphasised in the very first document of the victorious revolution—the appeal of the Petrograd Revolutionary Military Committee “To the Citizens of Russia!” written by Lenin and published at 10 a.m. on October 25.

“The cause for which the people have fought, namely, the immediate offer of a democratic peace, the abolition of landed proprietorship, workers’ control over production, and the establishment of Soviet power—this cause has been secured.

“Long live the revolution of workers, soldiers and peasants!”<sup>1</sup>

The historic Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets which opened in the evening of October 25 proclaimed the victory of the revolution on behalf of the working class and all working people in the country and elected the first Soviet Government, headed by Lenin.

The Congress of the victorious socialist revolution was genuinely representative of the people. It adopted Lenin’s decrees on peace and land, in which it expressed the deepest aspirations and vital interests of the whole people. The Decree on Land abolished private ownership of land, proclaimed it the property of the whole people and turned it over to the peasants. Needless to say, they welcomed the long-awaited decree with great enthusiasm.

A point stipulating that land tenure would rest on an equality basis was included into the decree at the insistence of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the peasants themselves. When voices were raised at the Congress saying that this was not a Bolshevik idea and that the Decree and the Mandate had been drawn up by the Socialist-Revolutionaries, Lenin replied: “What of it? Does it matter who drew them up? As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 236.

will themselves realise where the truth lies.... We trust that the peasants themselves will be able to solve the problem correctly, properly, better than we could do it."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin's Decree on Land and its implementation played an inestimable role in the further consolidation of the peasantry under the leadership of the working class. In November and December 1917 the Soviets of Peasants' Deputies merged with the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies.

In January 1918 the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted the Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People. This notable document of the October Revolution mirrored the country-wide liberation mission of the proletarian revolution. It confirmed not only the rights of the proletariat, the main and guiding force of the revolution, but also the rights of all working and exploited people. This was convincing proof of the fact that, as it liberated itself, the proletariat liberated the whole people from feudal and capitalist slavery.

The Declaration was an outstanding document of world history. Its first article stated: "Russia is hereby proclaimed a Republic of Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies. All power centrally and locally is vested in these Soviets."

One cannot help comparing it with another historic document, the Declaration of the Rights of the Man and the Citizen of the French Revolution of the 18th century which was a model of the bourgeois revolution and which, according to Lenin, left an imprint on the entire 19th century that gave mankind civilisation and culture. The very names of these two historic documents disclose the chasm dividing two worlds: the world towards which the French bourgeois revolution led society and the world which the October Socialist Revolution opened for mankind. In the first case it was a question of the rights of the man and the citizen, in the second the rights of the working and exploited people.

The principle "People are born and remain free and equal in rights", proclaimed in the Declaration of the French

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 260-61.

revolution at a time when there were still millions of peasant serfs in the world and slave trade flourished in British colonies and the USA, was undoubtedly a brave challenge flung at the world of inhuman brutality and whose great progressive significance should not be underestimated. At the same time, however, the Declaration proclaimed another inviolable right—the right of property and freedom of exploitation. This right was directed against the poor and working sections of the population, for whom one form of exploitation was merely replaced by another. Having seized power, the big French bourgeoisie promptly began to trample upon the rights of the citizens which had been proclaimed by the Declaration insofar as they concerned the poor sections of society. Within five days of the adoption of the Declaration, the Constituent Assembly passed an election law under which all citizens lacking the necessary property qualifications were declared passive and were deprived of the right to elect or be elected. The masses acquired neither liberty, nor equality, nor fraternity.

The Declaration of the October Revolution for the first time in history expressed the will of the proletarians and all working people, asserted their political domination, posed the task of completely abolishing the exploitation of man by man and the division of people into classes and set the aim of building socialism. It proclaimed: "There can be no place for exploiters in any government today. Power must be vested wholly and entirely in the working masses and their authorised representatives—the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies." It also proclaimed that "the Russian Soviet Republic is established on the principle of a free union of free nations". The history of social progress and revolutions had never before known a document which so deeply and consistently expressed the hopes, interests and aspirations of the masses. The Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People is a document of a genuinely proletarian, people's revolution.

Besides the militant alliance of the working class and the peasantry, another factor reflected the popular nature of the October Revolution, namely, the *joint struggle of the*

*working people of all nations.* By merging with the struggle of the socialist proletariat for the dictatorship of the proletariat, the national liberation current of the revolutionary movement of the working masses of the oppressed peoples of Russia added strength to this people's revolution.

Analysing the situation in the country, comparing the forces of the revolution and assessing its factors, Lenin wrote in September 1917: "At the present time the national and agrarian questions are fundamental questions for the petty-bourgeois sections of the population of Russia. This is indisputable."<sup>1</sup>

There were several reasons for the important role played by the national movement as a reserve and ally of the proletarian revolution. Besides the reasons mentioned above (the brutality of national oppression, the high cultural level of some peoples, etc.), Lenin noted two essential features of pre-revolutionary Russia. The first was that Russia was a multinational state in which the Russians, who were the great-power nation, made up less than half (43 per cent) of the population. Lenin also pointed to another important feature which he described in the following way: "The 'fatherland' is historically not *yet* quite a dead letter there."<sup>2</sup>

He explained this thesis. In the Western countries the national movement was a thing of the distant past. In England, France, Germany and other countries the "fatherland" had already fulfilled its historical role and become a "dead letter", i.e., the national movement there could no longer produce anything progressive that could inspire fresh masses of people to change their economic and political life. Everything was different in Russia, as in other East European multinational states. "As far as the Ukrainians and Byelorussians, for instance, are concerned," Lenin wrote, "only a Martian dreamer could deny that the national movement has not yet been consummated there, that the awakening of the masses to the full use of their mother tongue and literature ... is *still* going on there." He went on to say: "There the 'defence of the fatherland' can *still* be defence of democracy, of one's native language, of political liberty

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, p. 39.

against oppressor nations, against medievalism, whereas the English, French, Germans and Italians lie when they speak of defending their fatherland in the present war (First World War—*M.K.*), because actually what they are defending is *not* their native language, *not* their right to national development, but their rights as slave-holders, their colonies....”<sup>1</sup>

What Lenin said about the Ukrainians and Byelorussians applied to an even greater extent to all the backward and benighted nationalities of Russia for whom the liberation movement against tsarism and the imperialist bourgeoisie, for their national fatherland, culture, language, and so forth was of tremendous progressive significance, all the more so because it was also directed against the medieval barbarity and backwardness of every people.

Lenin’s conclusion that peoples would be unable to attain national equality and free development either under tsarism or under the rule of the bourgeoisie was shown to be correct in practice. After the February revolution the situation of the oppressed peoples of Russia remained virtually unchanged.

During the transition to the socialist stage of the revolution the Party proceeded from the idea that the victory of the socialist revolution depended largely on whether the proletariat would succeed in securing the leadership of the working masses of the oppressed peoples.

The Seventh (April) All-Russia Conference of the Bolshevik Party condemned the “national cultural autonomy” proposed by the Mensheviks and the Bundists,<sup>2</sup> and agreed that the interests of the working class and the revolution demanded the unification of workers of all nationalities in single proletarian organisations: political, trade union, co-operative and educational. The Conference discussed Lenin’s “Resolution on the National Question” and endorsed the line of working for the freedom of all nations to secede,

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, pp. 39-40.

<sup>2</sup> The Bund—the Jewish General Workers’ Union which was formed at the end of the 19th century in Russia’s Western *gubernias*. It was a closed nationalist organisation reflecting petty-bourgeois trends in the working-class movement: ideologically it was connected with the Mensheviks and alien and hostile to Marxism-Leninism.

which alone "can ensure complete solidarity among the workers of the various nations and help to bring the nations closer together on truly democratic lines."<sup>1</sup>

The Bolshevik Party's firm adherence to the nationalities programme and policy in the course of the preparations for, and the accomplishment of, the October Revolution yielded results: the national liberation movement in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, the Baltic countries, Turkestan, the Transcaucasus, the Steppe Territory, the Northern Caucasus and Siberia, merged with the class struggle of the Russian proletariat and became a component part of the socialist revolution.

A specific feature of the national liberation movement of the peoples of Russia in the period of the October Revolution was that in the course of its development it underwent class demarcation, and the working masses, as a rule, struggled simultaneously against alien and "their own" bourgeoisie for the power of the Soviets and the internationalist power of the workers and peasants.

Naturally, the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution marked a radical turning-point in the destinies of all the peoples of Russia and their national relations.

The Declaration of Rights of the Working and Exploited People preceded the Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, which was proclaimed on November 2 (15), 1917, a week after the victory of the October Revolution.

This outstanding historical document opens with these words: "The October Revolution of workers and peasants began under the common banner of emancipation." Further the Declaration appealed for the immediate emancipation of the people of Russia, for their resolute and irreversible liberation. Condemning tsarism's policy of inciting the peoples against each other and forcibly uniting them, the Declaration proclaimed: "There shall be no return to this shameful policy of incitement. Henceforth it shall be replaced by a policy of establishing a voluntary and honest union of the peoples of Russia."

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 302.



The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia stated that in its activity in the field of national relations the Soviet Government will be guided by the following immutable principles:

“1. *Equality and sovereignty of the peoples of Russia.*

2. *The right of the peoples of Russia to free self-determination right up to secession and the formation of independent states.*

3. *Abolition of all national or national-religious privileges and restrictions.*

4. *Free development of the national minorities and ethnographic groups inhabiting the territory of Russia.”*<sup>1</sup>

This is a unique document in the history of national relations.

At the beginning of the 20th century the Russian people had not yet attained the degree of political maturity necessary to prevent tsarism from subjecting the oppressed peoples to arbitrary colonial rule. In 1901 Lenin, in his first work on the national question, made the following bitter observation concerning the violation of the Constitution of Finland by the tsarist government: “We are still slaves to such an extent that we are employed to reduce other peoples to slavery.”<sup>2</sup>

But some 15 years later, a month after the October Revolution, he said with a sense of deep pride and conviction: “We have to wipe out that old bloodstained and dirty past when the Russia of the capitalist oppressors acted as the executioner of other peoples. *We are determined to wipe out that past, and leave no trace of it.*”<sup>3</sup> (My italics—M.K.)

Having cast off the shackles of slavery, the Russian people went on to liberate all the other peoples from slavery.

Lenin and the Bolshevik Party succeeded in uniting the various revolutionary movements which developed in Russia in 1917—the countrywide movement for peace, the

<sup>1</sup> “Sovietskoye sodruzhestvo narodov, 1917-1922”. *Sbornik dokumentov* (Soviet Community of Peoples, 1917-1922. A Collection of Documents), Moscow, 1972, pp. 12, 14.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 310.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 26, p. 344.

peasants' struggle for land, the national liberation movement of the peoples of Russia and the struggle of the proletariat, the leading force of the revolution, for socialism—and in directing them towards the attainment of a single goal, the overthrow of imperialism and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The fulfilment of this difficult task resulted in the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, *a proletarian, people's revolution*.

The October Revolution confirmed the words of Marx and Engels that "with the thoroughness of the historical action the size of the mass whose action it is will therefore increase".<sup>1</sup> Unfolding as it was under the banner of the general emancipation of the exploited and oppressed peoples and the liberation of all working people from capitalist slavery, the October Revolution naturally involved the vast, overwhelming majority of the people.

*The common front of the struggle of the workers and peasants of different nationalities of Russia, which had attained historical maturity by October 1917, was an ideological and political expression of the social and inter-nation community of the working people of the pre-revolutionary epoch—the epoch of the prehistory of the Soviet community of people.*

The October Revolution was a great turning-point in the history of Russia's working classes, the border between the prehistory and the history of the Soviet people.

### 3. CHANGES IN THE SOCIO-CLASS STRUCTURE OF THE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

In one of his dispatches to America from revolutionary Petrograd John Reed wrote that he had witnessed the birth of a new world.

This was a great truth. Indeed, a new socialist world was emerging from the upheavals of October 1917. The October Revolution brought about a change of historical epochs in Russia. It marked the appearance of an absolutely new

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Holy Family*, p. 110.

social system and inaugurated the formation of a new historical community of people.

The enemies of the revolution and of the people expressed their protest and indignation in a variety of ways. A fortnight after the October insurrection the bourgeois newspaper *Utro Rossii* announced that "Russia no longer exists as an organic whole. Her disintegration is so profound that even the railway system seems to be 'cracking up': railway tracks are being dismantled first on one route and then on the other, and presently the supplying of towns will come to a complete stop, and hungry crowds will dot the face of the Russian land. The Bolsheviks have called forth such demons as they will never succeed in exorcising." The *Russkiye Vedomosti* screamed: "Fear for the very existence of our culture looms in all its horror," and the Constitutional Democrats lamented: "Russia is no more."

Everything was mixed up and confused in these heart-rending wails emitted by the former masters of the "Russian land". The "single and indivisible Russia", the old Russia of landowners and the bourgeoisie had indeed ceased to exist as an organic whole. But the Russia of the working and the exploited, the Russia of the people was awakened to a new life by the revolution. She had not passed away but was acquiring firm ground for her subsequent burgeoning. Not the whole culture of Russia was threatened, but only the reactionary culture of the exploiter minority, the instrument of the spiritual enslavement and impoverishment of the masses. The broadest prospects were now open for the development of the democratic and socialist elements of culture, for all the best achievements of human culture.

All these verbal and ideological battles evidenced the division of Russia into the victorious people, headed by the working class, and the vanquished exploiters, and the opposite destinies of these two social camps which had exchanged their roles in society could now be clearly seen. The camp of the exploiters was destined to vanish while the camp of the working people was destined to acquire greater strength, become united and all-embracing and representative of the whole society, a society consisting of different nationalities, but only of working people.

The history of the Soviet people as a new historical community comprises two major stages: (1) *the period of the transition from capitalism to socialism* and (2) *the period of socialism*, each with its specific socio-economic and material and technical basis, socio-class structure and the degree of its homogeneity, the nature of national relations and co-operation of peoples, intensity of mutual enrichment and the drawing together of nations and the strength of the economic, political and ideological unity of the Soviet people.

An important factor in the formation of the Soviet people in the transitional period was that it was accompanied by a struggle against external opposing forces, the left-overs of the exploiter classes with their ideology and anti-socialist and anti-internationalist platforms. On top of that the social and ethnic subjects who themselves were forming a new socio-class and inter-nation community were still seriously handicapped by their own shortcomings and weaknesses inherited from the past. At first these circumstances greatly hampered the formation and development of the Soviet community of working people.

In the post-revolutionary period the country's economy was a medley of economic sectors. In 1918 Lenin listed five: (1) patriarchal (i.e., largely natural, peasant economy); (2) small-commodity production (most of the peasant households connected with the market); (3) private capitalism; (4) state capitalism and (5) socialism. The latter held command positions and played a most significant role in the economy because it embraced large-scale industry, the main sphere of material production. But it was opposed by the private capitalist sector (non-nationalised industrial enterprises), kulak farms, private trade and small-commodity farm production. The struggle between these structures was the main economic contradiction of the transitional period and the fate of socialism depended on how it would be resolved. Yet the outcome of the struggle depended not so much on putting an end to the private capitalist sector as on the socialist transformation of small-commodity production, mainly agriculture, which was quantitatively predominant in the country. Hence the problem of creating a common socio-economic basis for the Soviet socio-class

community of people was that of transforming the countryside, i.e., agriculture, along socialist lines. This was the central problem of the socio-economic development of Soviet society in the transitional period.

What made things even more difficult was that most of the formerly oppressed peoples had inherited not merely backwardness from the past, but also a multiform socio-economic backwardness. Intermediate stages and a system of additional, transitional and preliminary measures were required in order to close the gap between the different levels of the people's historical development and abolish the multiplicity of economic sectors in the national areas.

From the Russia of the bourgeoisie and the landowners the Soviet state inherited an extremely weak material and technical basis and the technical level of its industry was 5-10 times lower than that in the developed capitalist countries. The situation in agriculture was even worse, for it inherited from old Russia only several hundred tractors and 30 million wooden ploughs and harrows. Such equipment was not at all conducive to the development of collectivism and the socialisation of agricultural production among the peasants. Lenin had every reason for telling the Eighth Congress of the RCP(B) in 1918 the following words: "If tomorrow we could supply one hundred thousand first-class tractors, provide them with fuel, provide them with drivers—you know very well that this at present is sheer *fantasy*—the middle peasant would say, 'I am for the *communia*' (i.e., for communism)."<sup>1</sup> (My italics—*M.K.*) Primitive implements, scattered farms and villages, lack of roads, etc.—such was the material and technical basis in the countryside in the first few years after the October Revolution.

The multisectoral economy produced a corresponding socio-class structure of society. Let us take a look at the class composition of Russia after the October Revolution and when the new historical community of working people began to take shape.

The following figures describe Russia's class composition in 1913: of her total population of 159,200,000 workers

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 214.

comprised 14 per cent, office workers 3 per cent, the petty bourgeoisie in villages (working peasants, self-employed handicraftsmen and artisans) 65 per cent, landowners, big and petty urban bourgeoisie, kulaks and traders 15.7 per cent and other sections 2.3 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

With the exception of a slight increase in the number of factory workers (up to 3.2 million) no substantial changes were registered in Russia's class composition in 1917. The kulaks (over two million farms) were the biggest exploiter class. Landowners, the urban bourgeoisie, merchants and the upper sections of the intelligentsia totalled approximately five million, with landowners making up the smallest class. The 1917 agrarian census covering 26 *gubernias* registered about 42,500 privately owned estates.<sup>2</sup> On the whole, however, there is no precise data about the landowners and the big industrial bourgeoisie.

Naturally, the victory of the socialist revolution brought about radical changes in the positions of the different classes and the socio-class structure of society. Banks, transport, foreign trade and a considerable proportion of large-scale industry were nationalised in the very first months of Soviet power. By mid-1918 the whole of large-scale industry was announced to be nationalised. But, owing to the outbreak of the Civil War, it was impossible to complete the nationalisation and the bourgeoisie continued partly to exist as a class. The class of landowners ceased to exist by the end of 1918, when the bulk of them were deprived of their land. For a certain period of time the small and middle landowners were mostly not subjected to full expropriation. But the Seventh All-Russia Congress of Soviets (December 1919) noted that "out of the 23 million *dessiatines* of arable land which had been confiscated from the landowners in 31 Soviet *gubernias*, 20 million were turned over to the peasants and three million to state-run farms and other public economic enterprises."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Sotsialisticheskoe stroitelstvo Soyuzo SSR (1933-1938)*, (Socialist Construction in the Soviet Union, 1933-1938), Moscow-Leningrad, 1939, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> See *Sovietskoe krestyanstvo*. (The Soviet Peasantry), Moscow, 1970, p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> *Syezdy Sovietov v dokumentakh. 1917-1936* (Congresses of Soviets in Documents. 1917-1938), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1959, p. 121.

In the early period of the Civil War only a very small number of representatives of the deposed classes emigrated, but many of them, mainly former wealthy proprietors, fled to Siberia or the south of Russia. By the autumn of 1920 about 500,000 capitalists, landowners, officers and reactionary-minded intellectuals, all those who were active in the fight against Soviet power had amassed in the Crimea, the last stronghold of the Russian counter-revolution. When fleeing from the Crimea, General Wrangel managed to take along only 150,000 people, leaving more than 300,000 behind. Soviet government did not persecute them. They scattered all over the south of the republic and, of course, fought against the workers and peasants as best they could.

In general, the bulk of those who had been expropriated though not subjected to any special repression, remained where they were and most of them gradually dispersed among Soviet government employees. But when the Civil War ended and they became disenchanted with "Russia's destiny", a fairly large proportion of the former exploiter classes and their hangers-on from among the intellectuals fled to foreign countries forming, as Lenin put it, "a Russia abroad, Russia number two".

In one way or another, at the early stage of the revolution the deposed classes were a serious force which resorted to all and every means in its struggle against Soviet power. Addressing the Third Congress of the Communist International in 1921, Lenin said that in Russia, the big landowners and capitalists had been subjected to total expropriation and crushed politically as a class, but they had not vanished, their remnants were hiding out among Soviet government employees.

"They have preserved their class organisation abroad," Lenin continued, "as émigrés, numbering probably from 1,500,000 to 2,000,000 people, with over 50 daily newspapers of all bourgeois and 'socialist' (i.e., petty-bourgeois) parties, the remnants of an army, and numerous connections with the international bourgeoisie. These émigrés are striving, with might and main, to destroy the Soviet power and restore capitalism in Russia."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 455.

When speaking about the exploiter classes, one should not forget the *bais*, the semi-feudal lords in Central Asian republics and in Kazakhstan, whose final expropriation took place only after the land and water reform of 1925-1928. Prior to that they owned all the best farm lands, pastures and water. In 1924-1925 the *bais* in Uzbekistan owned more than 30 per cent of the total land under cultivation. In 1928, even after the redistribution of arable land in Kazakhstan, 33.8 per cent of the cattle stock belonged to *bai* farms, which comprised only 6.1 per cent of the total number. The *bais* continued to mercilessly exploit the farm labourers and the poor peasants, and almost everywhere they exerted a decisive influence on social and political activity and on the way of life in the villages. The situation was the same in some other national areas: in Daghestan, the autonomous mountain regions in the Northern Caucasus, in Buryatia and Yakutia, where the survivals of patriarchal-feudal relations still existed.

A few words must be said about the biggest exploiter class, the kulaks, who comprised the rural bourgeoisie. On the eve of the October Revolution there were over two million kulak farms in the countryside. Immediately after the revolution the number of kulaks increased and their economic and, consequently, political position improved somewhat. During the break-up of the landowners' property they seized part of that property. News that the kulaks were seizing property, cattle and lands belonging to the nobility, landowners and monasteries poured in from all parts of the country. Lenin wrote with indignation: "These vampires have been gathering the landed estates into their hands; they continue to enslave the poor people."<sup>1</sup> In addition to enriching themselves, the kulaks hid grain stocks, speculated in them and sabotaged the food policy of the Soviet government.

Only a real socialist revolution in the countryside could crush the resistance of the kulaks. This was done: more than 50 million hectares were confiscated from the kulaks and turned over to the poor peasants. As a result, the percentage of kulak farms declined sharply as compared with the

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 28, p. 57.



pre-revolutionary period. But with the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) they again began to increase in number and what was more important, strengthen their economic position. On top of that a part of the middle peasants grew rich and became kulaks, and managed to lay their hands on a third of the commonly-owned land in addition to their own allotments. This extended the limits of private production which had been fixed by the nationalisation of the land; the land which had been equally distributed among the peasants was virtually redistributed in conformity with the means of production available at each farm.

Nevertheless, the capitalist elements in the countryside were unable to reinstate themselves fully or even come close to their former position. Though prior to the revolution the kulaks accounted for 15 per cent of the total number of peasant households, and only 4.5 per cent in 1928-1929, they produced 20 per cent of the commodity grain. The system of capitalist (kulak) exploitation still existed in the countryside. Work for hire involved more than a half (55.2 per cent) of the peasant households. In the period preceding the collectivisation of agriculture the kulak class was the main obstacle to the consolidation of the socio-economic and political unity both of the workers and the peasants and within the working peasantry itself.

Such were the general features of the exploiter sections which in 1928 comprised 4.6 per cent of the Soviet Union's population. Because of its humane nature, the October Revolution, which promptly expropriated the expropriators and then eliminated the kulaks as a class, could not permit the physical extermination of the exploiters. Some of them fled the country, but most of them remained in the USSR. Soviet power gave them the chance to renounce the past, reform and find their place in society.

In the long run this course proved to be fully acceptable and realistic for the majority of these elements. But it was a very difficult one and was accompanied by class conflicts covering the entire period of transition from capitalism to socialism.

Now let us take a look at the working sections of the population after the October Revolution and trace the rise and development of their new community.

The radical and decisive factor which determined the new historical role of the people and its new destiny was the assertion of its *dominating* role in society headed by the *working class*. As Lenin pointed out, the October Revolution achieved what no revolution in the past had ever achieved—it elevated the people to independent history-making and made it the undivided master of its own destiny. As it moulded its own history, the people changed qualitatively and so did the relations between its classes and groups.

*In its socio-class content the problem of the formation of the Soviet people as a new historical community was that of the organic cohesion and the drawing together of the working class, the peasantry and the working intelligentsia under the leadership of the working class and its communist vanguard.*

The working class and the peasantry are the two main classes of the producers of the material wealth in modern society, including socialist society. Their activity and co-operation are absolutely essential for society. On the other hand, the life of humanity today is impossible without the intelligentsia, the mental workers, who play a tremendous role in creating spiritual values and society's entire cultural progress. Socialist society, whose entire activity rests on scientific, technological and cultural achievements and which of necessity requires unprecedentedly swift scientific, technological and cultural progress, cannot do without the intelligentsia.

The *working class* is the leading force of the people. Small as it was, Russia's working class diminished considerably during the Civil War. By 1922 the number of industrial workers had declined to 42 per cent of the 1917 figure. Beginning with 1923, however, its growth became assured and by 1928 the number of workers employed in large-scale industry increased almost twofold compared with the 1923 figure and almost reached the 1913 level. Its rate of growth was exceptionally fast during the industrialisation period. From 1928 to 1940 the number of industrial workers throughout the country increased by 5.2 million,

and in 1939 workers accounted for 32.5 per cent of the total population.<sup>1</sup>

The national contingents of the Soviet working class, including the peoples who prior to the revolution had no industry and no working class of their own, also increased at a rapid pace. In this case it was not a matter of the transformation of the pre-revolutionary proletariat into a socialist working class, but that of the rise of a new, socialist working class which did not have a capitalist past.

Obviously, it was a question not so much of the rapid numerical growth of the working class, as of its new mission in general, and new opportunities for performing its function as the leading class of the people. Having become society's ruling class, the proletariat was able to influence, organise and lead the other working masses, especially the peasantry, not only with the help of moral and political means as in the pre-revolutionary period, but also by relying on its political, economic and cultural gains, which enormously augmented its real possibilities of effectively influencing its allies, and re-educating them in the spirit of socialist ideals.

The October Revolution also fundamentally changed the position of the *peasantry* and charted its new destiny.

In Russia, which was a predominantly peasant country, where only the socialist revolution managed to abolish feudal exploitation in the countryside, it was the peasants, as Lenin noted, who benefited immediately and to a greater degree than anyone else from the dictatorship of the proletariat. The Decree on Land gave the peasants over 150 million *dessiatines* formerly owned by the exploiter classes. The peasants no longer had to make payments which annually amounted to more than 700 million rubles in gold and to spend enormous sums on purchasing land. They were also freed of their debt of 1,300 million rubles which the Land Bank had lent them for the purchase of land. Taking stock of the social meaning of the practical results of the revolution for the peasants, Lenin wrote: "Under the dictatorship of the proletariat the peasant *for the first time* has been work-

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<sup>1</sup> See *Itogi Vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda* (Results of the 1959 All-Union Population Census), Moscow, 1962, p. 92.

ing for himself and; *feeding better than the city dweller.* For the first time the peasant has seen real freedom—freedom to eat his bread, freedom from starvation.”<sup>1</sup>

The agrarian reforms carried out by the Soviet government substantially changed the social structure of the peasantry. The abolition of the large landed estates and the distribution of land among a vast number of landless and land-hungry peasants stimulated the growth of small peasant farms, whose number increased by 4 million (21 million in 1916 and 25 million in 1927) in the first decade after the revolution. The impoverishment of the working masses in the countryside came to an end. Farm labourers and the poor peasants received land and gradually improved their material conditions. The dwindling of the groups at either extreme gradually led to the increase in the number of middle peasant households. In 1927 the poor peasants and the proletarian strata made up 35 per cent of the rural population, as compared with 65 per cent on the eve of the revolution. At the same time the proportion of the middle peasants in the peasant population increased from 20 to almost 63 per cent in the first decade of Soviet power. The middle peasant became the central figure in the village.

The changes in the class structure of the rural population among the formerly backward peoples followed a different pattern from that of the peoples who had passed through the capitalist stage of development. In Central Asia and Kazakhstan, for example, feudal *bai* elements owned a considerable part of the land, water and cattle up to the mid-1920s, while the bulk of the working population was land-hungry and even landless and had neither draught animals nor farm implements. In 1927 56.3 per cent of the peasant households in Uzbekistan had no draught animals and more than 50 per cent had no farm implements. In Kazakhstan as late as 1928 poor peasant households made up 50.1 per cent of the village households. So, in the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan and in some other national areas the numerical growth of middle peasants was much slower than in the USSR as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 112.

Such were the changes in the composition of the peasantry from the point of view of the relations between its various propertied groups. The other aspect of this process and the principle one in the destiny of the peasantry as a class and of agriculture as a whole, was *the demarcation of the peasants into two groups: those who had united in co-operatives and those who had not*, and the changes in their proportion in the structure of the rural population. The collectives for the joint cultivation of land appeared immediately after the October Revolution, and by the end of 1917 the first communes and artels were established in a number of *gubernias*. In 1929 nearly 25 per cent of the peasant households were united in various producer co-operatives. But in the first decade of Soviet power the scale of co-operatives was rather small. There was a sea of small individual farms in the countryside. Even on the eve of the mass collectivisation drive in 1928 collective-farm peasants made up a mere 1.7 per cent of the country's population and individual peasant households owned 97.3 per cent of the basic means of agricultural production. Consequently, the peasantry remained the old petty-bourgeois class that was capable of breeding capitalism in the countryside.

The transformation of the peasantry into a socialist class proved to be a long and complex process organically connected with the socialist renovation of the whole of society, with the new revolution in the countryside—the total collectivisation of agriculture. This took place in the second decade of Soviet power. In 1939 collective farms embraced 96.9 per cent of the peasant households. The collective farmers and the co-operated handicraftsmen made up 47.2 per cent of the country's population, while individual farms and the non-co-operated handicraftsmen a mere 2.6 per cent.<sup>1</sup> Thus, by the end of the transitional period the Soviet peasantry had become a new, socialist class, representative of the public ownership of the means of production in its collective farm and co-operative form. In the socio-economic respect it was identical with the working class which was representative of the socialist property as belonging to the whole people.

<sup>1</sup> See *Itogi Vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1959 goda*, p. 92.

Being an inter-class stratum in all countries, the *intelligentsia* was not an independent economic class in Russia and so was not an independent political force. But by associating itself first with one struggling antagonistic class and then with the other it played a significant role in the outcome of the class struggle during the October Revolution and in the social development of later periods.

According to an official population count, Russia had 870,000 mental workers in 1897, of whom 368,400 were employed in the government machinery and in the management of industry and landed estates and 280,000 worked in the fields of science, art, education and health protection (including 3,000 scientists and writers).<sup>1</sup>

The intelligentsia in Russia considerably increased in number in the period between 1897 and the outbreak of the First World War. Although no general data showing this growth is available, it is possible to form an idea of it from individual indications. In 1914 there were 11,600 research workers in the country. The bulk of the intelligentsia was concentrated in Central Russia, chiefly in St. Petersburg and Moscow. There were very few intellectuals in the provinces, and, as regards the national outskirts, the intellectuals could be counted on one's fingers. In 1913, for instance, there were 139 doctors in Uzbekistan, 70 in Turkmenia, 21 in Kirghizia and 19 in Tajikistan.<sup>2</sup>

Between 1913 and the October Revolution there were no perceptible changes in the numerical composition of the Russian intelligentsia, for war was not conducive to its growth.

The intelligentsia which remained in the country after the revolution was a conglomerate of mental workers differing widely in their origins, their former social and official standing, property status, ideological and political outlooks, party affiliation, and so forth. Its upper crust was closely connected with the exploiter classes, while its middle sec-

<sup>1</sup> See L. K. Yerman, *Intelligentsia v pervoi russkoi revolyutsii* (The Intelligentsia in the First Russian Revolution), Moscow, 1966, pp. 11-15.

<sup>2</sup> "Narodnoe khozyaistvo SSSR v 1956 g. ", *Statisticheski Yezhegodnik*, (The National Economy of the USSR in 1956, Statistical Yearbook) Moscow, 1957, p. 272.

tions were socially and psychologically associated with the well-off petty-bourgeois section of the population.

It should be mentioned that a certain proportion of the pre-revolutionary intelligentsia was *socialist*. Numerically it was very small, of course, but it played an inestimable role in rearing the proletariat and the working people in the revolutionary spirit. Regardless of their origin, this group of educated people linked their future with that of the working class and the people to become their ideologists and champions. In the first place, they were intellectuals of the Leninist school, professional revolutionaries and the "working-class intelligentsia", i.e., workers who through self-education acquired the necessary knowledge and became dedicated revolutionary social-democrats, enlighteners and leaders of the masses. "This 'working-class intelligentsia' already exists in Russia,"<sup>1</sup> Lenin wrote with pride at the turn of the century.

The socialist intelligentsia which took shape before the revolution and the progressive bourgeois intelligentsia which immediately ranged itself with the revolution and took the side of the victorious people comprised the nucleus of the Soviet intelligentsia. Its later development followed two lines: re-education of the old intelligentsia and education of intellectuals from among the workers and the peasants.

The shift of the old intelligentsia towards the victorious people began shortly after the establishment and consolidation of Soviet power, but the process of re-educating and turning it into a new, Soviet intelligentsia took a fairly long time to accomplish. Only the 14th Congress of the Party held in 1925 could point out that "in his ambitions and sentiments the Soviet employee (teacher, doctor, engineer, agronomist, etc.) is starting to become socialist in essence".<sup>2</sup>

Needless to say, the formation of the intelligentsia from among the workers and peasants was a matter of decisive importance. This was the principal mission of the proletar-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 281.

<sup>2</sup> *KPSS v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferentsy i plenumov Ts. K. KPSS* (CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions of the Congresses, Conferences and CC CPSU Plenary Meetings), Part II, Moscow, 1953, p. 105.

ian revolution in abolishing the monopoly of the propertied classes in mental work. Unlike Voltaire, who said that his enlightening ideas were "not for the tailors and the boot-makers",<sup>1</sup> the Bolsheviks made it clear that their enlightening ideas were intended primarily for the workers and peasants. Having assumed power in a proletarian state, they took steps to foster the growth of the people's intelligentsia capable of educating other working masses and placing science and technology within their grasp. It was necessary to do this primarily for the purpose of training specialists to replace the old, bourgeois ones who stubbornly refused to accept reality. The replacement of the old specialists (particularly the most authoritative) with new ones at first inevitably entailed a certain decline in the level of training of personnel, in the technical management of the economy and the skill of writers and artists. Nonetheless, it was the most reliable way of giving the country the specialists it needed.

But these were not the main reasons for the accelerated training of specialists from among the workers and peasants. The revolution opened up vast prospects for intellectual activity, and specialists were needed in all fields of endeavour. The most crucial ones were public education, engineering and technology. A country where 75 per cent of the population was illiterate and dozens of nationalities had no written language of their own, needed an enormous number of teachers. The extensive industrialisation necessary to ensure the successful construction of socialism required tens of thousands of engineers and technicians whose standard of training would guarantee the country's technical independence. The school and the factory became the decisive sectors where the most strenuous efforts to build up a Soviet intelligentsia, were made and these efforts continued almost throughout the transitional period.

The policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government in this field began to yield fruit in a relatively short period of time. The number of mental workers increased from 2,700,000 in 1926 to 13,800,000 in 1939. By then almost

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<sup>1</sup> See Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 32, Berlin, 1965, S. 567.



90 per cent of the intelligentsia were people who had emerged from among the working people. The Soviet intelligentsia arose from the same socio-historical environment as the working class and the peasantry, and formed as an organic part of the Soviet people.

The October Revolution gave *women* full equality, a factor which was of great importance for the formation of the Soviet people. To weld all the working masses into a stable community, it was necessary to turn its female half from a passive into an active social force. Without accomplishing this revolutionary change, it would have been impossible to build a new, socialist life. "In pursuance of the socialist ideal," Lenin wrote in 1919, "we want to struggle for the full implementation of socialism, and here an extensive field of labour opens up before women. We are now making serious preparations to clear the ground for the building of socialism, but the building of socialism will begin only when we have achieved the complete equality of women and when we undertake the new work together with women...."<sup>1</sup>

In order to abolish the unequal status of women in public and private life and to draw them into conscious and active participation in socialist construction, it was essential to grant them real and not just political and legal equality. Besides promulgating new legislation on the status of women in the family and society, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government right from the start undertook comprehensive measures to educate and enlighten them and provide them with state and public assistance for improving their material and living conditions. Though this work could not yield immediate results, particularly in the national republics where the position of women was extremely harsh before the revolution, the Soviet country managed to do a great deal towards the solution of this important social problem even in the transitional period.

It was of the utmost importance that women were gradually drawn into production and gained economic inde-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 43.

pendence. In the prewar year of 1940 women in the USSR made up 39 per cent of industrial and office workers, as compared with 24 per cent in 1928. By that time the proportion of women enrolled in higher educational establishments had risen to 58 per cent, and in some spheres of mental work women outnumbered men.

#### 4. THE FORMATION OF THE USSR. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

The Great October Socialist Revolution inaugurated the formation of the *inter-nation community of the peoples of the USSR*.

As distinct from a national community, which arises irrespective of the will of the people, an inter-nation community takes shape as a result of the expression of the free will of the peoples wishing to unite. Of course, in this case, too, free will is a conscious necessity. The subjective factor plays an important role in the formation of a community of this type. The Soviet multinational state led by the Communist Party played an outstanding role in the establishment of such a community in the USSR.

The formation of the USSR itself was a natural outcome of the victory of the October Revolution and the implementation of the Communist Party's nationalities programme.

In "*The Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution*", a work written immediately upon his return to Russia, Lenin set a clear-cut goal which the proletariat had to attain after winning power: "The proletarian party strives to create as large a state as possible, for this is to the advantage of the working people; it strives to *draw nations closer together*, and bring about their *further fusion*; but it desires to achieve this aim not by violence, but exclusively through a free fraternal union of the workers and the working people of all nations."<sup>1</sup>

The peoples could build such a free union only if they were free to create their own national statehood. Therefore

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 24, p. 73.

the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets proclaimed that Soviet power "shall ensure for all nations inhabiting Russia the genuine right to self-determination" and that the formerly oppressed nations could freely, without any coercion at all, choose whatever forms of statehood they preferred.

The formation of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was followed by the establishment of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (1917), the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the RSFSR (1918), the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (1919), the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic (1920), the Kazakh Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic within the RSFSR (1920) and the Armenian (1920) and the Georgian (1921) Soviet Socialist Republics. Another 15 autonomous national republics and areas were formed within the first five years after the revolution. All that the peoples achieved in these five years in the sphere of exercising their right to self-determination and the right to secede and the experience of establishing and developing national states was striking proof of the infinite wisdom of Lenin's formula by which the Party was guided when it carried out the socialist revolution: "We want free unification; that is why we must recognise the right to secede."<sup>1</sup>

The greater the freedom enjoyed by the peoples in building their own statehood, the stronger their desire for a voluntary union. The centrifugal movement of the peoples that reigned in old Russia and which continued under its own momentum for a certain period after the revolution, gave way to a centripetal movement as soon as the people began to reap the fruits of their genuine right to secede.

The implementation of the Communist Party's policy of ensuring the right of the nations to self-determination up to and including the right to secede and form independent states generated tremendous centripetal forces and fostered trust between the working people of different nationalities. The very first acts of the Soviet Government designed to solve the national question—The Declaration of Rights of the Peoples of Russia, The Appeal to All the Working Moslems of Russia and The East, The Declaration of the Rights

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 176.

of the Toiling and Exploited People and the decrees recognising the independence of Poland, the Ukraine, Finland and Turkish Armenia—laid the political foundations for the establishment of genuinely fraternal relations between peoples and opened the way for their all-round co-operation in socialist construction. Prior to the October Revolution the shoots of friendship between peoples could hardly penetrate the thick layer of deceit and distrust, and those that did were crushed under the weight of colonial tyranny. *The socialist revolution elevated the concern for strengthening the friendship between peoples to the level of state policy.* Lenin wrote: "Our union, our new state is sounder than power based on violence which keeps artificial state entities hammered together with lies and bayonets in the way the imperialists want them.... This federation is invincible and will grow quite freely, without the help of lies and bayonets."<sup>1</sup> He advanced and substantiated the idea of the expedience of uniting the peoples into a state union along federal lines and at the same time regarded the federation as a "transitional form to complete unity".<sup>2</sup>

By proclaiming the full equality of the peoples and their right to self-determination as the basic principle of the Soviet state's nationalities policy, the October Revolution ensured boundless prospects for the nations to flourish. At the same time it promoted the tendency of the peoples to draw closer together, which was a guarantee of the successful outcome of socialist construction. The proletariat, wrote Lenin, "while recognising equality and equal rights to a national state, ... values above all and places foremost the alliance of the proletarians of all nations, and assesses any national demand, any national separation, *from the angle of the workers' class struggle*".<sup>3</sup>

The great magnetism of the October Revolution's internationalist principles awakened among the people an irresistible urge to form a state union.

The unification movement of the peoples of Russia, which developed in all the independent and free republics at the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 480-81.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Vol. 31, p. 147.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Vol. 20, p. 411.

initiative of their working masses and the national organizations of the Russian Communist Party, inevitably resulted in the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This historic event took place in 1922 and marked the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Soviet state as a whole and in the national and state development of all the Soviet peoples. At the same time the unification of all the Soviet Republics into a single multinational state was a great landmark in the history of socialist construction in the USSR. The Soviet Union became socialism's mighty force that organised and guided the activity of the people as the makers of history. In its Resolution on the Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the USSR, the CPSU Central Committee noted: "*The formation of the USSR occupies an outstanding place in the history of the Soviet state, for its political significance and socio-economic consequences.* This historic event was a convincing victory of the ideas of proletarian internationalism and the fruitful result of the implementation of the Communist Party's Leninist nationalities policy. The formation of the Soviet Union was one of the decisive factors which ensured favourable conditions for the reconstruction of society on a socialist basis, for building up the economy and culture in all of the Soviet Republics, and for strengthening the defence might and the international positions of the multinational state of working people."

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics first appeared as a federal state embracing four republics: the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic. The subsequent period in the history of the Soviet community of peoples was marked by the further development of the Soviet statehood of the peoples of the USSR. As one of the primary tasks in resolving the national question, the Tenth Party Congress decided to assist the backward nations to: "(a) promote and strengthen their Soviet statehood along lines conforming with the local conditions and the way of life and (b) confer greater authority upon their courts, administration, economic and government bodies and organs of state power functioning in the

native language and composed of local people well acquainted with the life and psychology of the local population."<sup>1</sup>

A broad network of state, administrative and economic bodies employing people of local nationalities was established in the national areas.

The national-state demarcation carried out in Central Asia in 1924 was a major event in the development of national Soviet statehood. As a result, the Uzbek and Turkmen Soviet Socialist Republics and the Tajik Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (within the Uzbek SSR), which was transformed into an independent republic in 1929, were formed on the territory of the Turkestan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic and the People's Soviet Republics of Bukhara and Khorezm.

The Soviet people's achievements in socialist construction and the fact that socialist society had in the main been built in the USSR were legislatively recorded in the Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1936. It also fixed the gains in the development of national statehood and state and political co-operation of the peoples of the USSR. The Constitution abolished the Transcaucasian Federation, in whose place the Soviet Socialist Republics of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia were set up as constituent republics of the USSR, and the Kazakh and Kirghiz Autonomous Republics were also transformed into Union republics. Thus the USSR became a federation of eleven sovereign Union republics.

Like the Constitution of 1924, the new Constitution envisaged a bicameral supreme organ of state power in the USSR. The Central Executive Committee of the USSR consisted of the Soviet of the Union and the Soviet of Nationalities, the first chamber represented the common interests of all working people, the second expressed the specific interests of each nation and nationality. The USSR Supreme Soviet is also constituted according to this principle, which fully expresses the organic harmony of the all-Soviet and the national-specific in the activity of the Soviet multinational state, concern for the indissolubility of the

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<sup>1</sup> *KPSS v rezolyutsakh...*, Vol. 1, p. 559.

common, federal interests and the interests of each republic and each people.

The Constitution of victorious socialism further strengthened the state and political foundation of the Soviet community and enhanced the socio-class and international unity of the Soviet people.

The history of the rise and development of the Soviet inter-nation community is closely associated with the economic-organisational and cultural-educational functions of the Soviet state.

After the October Revolution the correlation between the ethnic and national components of Russia also changed. In 1921 there were more than 75,000,000 Russians out of the 140 million or so people who inhabited the RSFSR and the independent Soviet republics associated with it. The Ukrainians were the second largest group, then came the Byelorussians, Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazakhs, Azerbaijanians, Armenians, Georgians and others. There is conflicting data about the number of nations, nationalities and other ethnic groups. The 1926 population census put their number at 194. This figure was subsequently checked and considerably reduced. Today there are over 100 nations and nationalities and national groups speaking 130 languages (including bilingual nations and nationalities). Some ethnic groups are very small. For instance, some of the peoples of Daghestan number less than 10,000, and certain peoples of the Far North have even less than a thousand members. Many of these small ethnic groups were doomed to extinction under the tsarist colonial rule and few people were aware of their existence as independent communities. The October Revolution breathed new life into them and stimulated their ethnic revival.

The peoples of the USSR had different socio-economic structures and there was a great gap in the level of their historical development.

Some of them (Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Georgians, Armenians and, partly, Azerbaijanians) had more or less passed through the industrial capitalism and had even reached its imperialist stage. Others, (Tatars, Uzbeks, Bashkirs, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Tajiks, Turkmenians and some others) had been drawn into the orbit of

capitalist development, but their life was dominated by patriarchal-feudal relations and even by patriarchal-tribal customs. Still others (including the peoples of the Far North, Siberia and some of the peoples of the Northern Caucasus) were at the pre-capitalist and even pre-feudal stages of development with their tribal relations.

In these circumstances the problem of abolishing their actual inequality and drawing them into the general movement towards socialism was of vital importance for successful socialist construction in the USSR and the promotion of fruitful creative co-operation between all the peoples.

Following Lenin's teaching about the non-capitalist development of the backward people towards socialism and consistently implementing his nationalities policy, the Communist Party and the Soviet people made tremendous headway in solving this complex and difficult problem as early as in the transitional period. Especially great progress was registered during the first and second five-year plan periods, when decisive steps were taken to abolish their actual inequality. The formerly backward peoples moved directly from pre-capitalist relations to socialism. All the national republics were drawn into the country's rapid industrialisation. They built industrial enterprises and towns and trained national contingents of the working class and specialists. In the course of the First Five-Year Economic Development Plan (1928-1932), the volume of industrial production in the old industrial areas of the USSR doubled and in the national republics increased more than 3.5 times.

The following figures are even more striking: from 1926 to 1959 the number of factory and office workers in Central Asia and Kazakhstan increased ten times, while in the USSR as a whole it increased six times.

The industrial development of the national republics was vital both for themselves and for the whole Soviet Union, since they played an ever greater role in enhancing the country's techno-economic potential and her defensive capacity.

As regards the socialist transformation of agriculture in the national republics, it formed a component part of the general upsurge that was taking place in all the rural



areas of the USSR, and yet it had still greater distinctive features. The rates of growth were slower, and the forms of association into collective farms had their specific characteristics. In the first place this was due to the backward state of agriculture in these republics and the need, as was often the case, to move from the patriarchal-tribal and patriarchal-feudal relations with their reactionary survivals directly to socialism. It was incredibly difficult, for instance, to unite the nomad herdsmen into collective farms, for this entailed a basic reconstruction of the entire economic pattern and a drastic change in the way of their life. On top of that, the formerly backward republics had far less farm machinery than the other republics.

Nevertheless, the majority of the national republics carried through the collectivisation of agriculture during the years of the Second Five-Year Plan. The success of the national republics in the socialist reconstruction and development of agriculture greatly stimulated the economic development of the USSR as a whole. The collectivisation of agriculture in Central Asia, for example, gave the USSR its own source of cotton and made it independent of cotton imports. Owing to the growth of cotton production, the proportion of imported cotton utilised by the USSR declined from 19.3 per cent in 1929 to 2.6 per cent in 1933.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the problem of abolishing actual inequality and the transition to socialism by-passing the capitalist stage of development was in the main solved in the course of the transitional period also in the development of agriculture among the formerly backward peoples.

The peoples of the USSR made tremendous headway in cultural growth. For many of the formerly backward peoples the transitional period was one of major breakthroughs in overcoming cultural inequality. More than 40 peoples of the USSR created their own written language in the first two decades of Soviet power. Peoples which were completely illiterate before the revolution created their national literature in those years. In 1927/1928 Kazakh-

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<sup>1</sup> See "Vneshnyaya torgovlya SSSR za 20 let. 1918-1937", *Statisticheski spravochnik*, (20 years of Soviet Foreign Trade. 1918-1937), *Statistical Handbook*, Moscow, 1939, p. 19.

stan had just one college with only 75 students, whereas on the eve of the Second World War the republic had 20 higher educational establishments with a student body of 10,500. In 1927/1928 Kirghizia, Tajikistan and Turkmenia had no higher educational establishments, while in the 1940-41 academic year they had 47 such establishments with 8,500 students. In 1939 three out of every thousand Kirghiz, Tajiks and Turkmenians had a higher education. Fairly large national contingents of Soviet intelligentsia, including men of arts and letters, were formed in all the national republics in the pre-war years. This was a truly historic achievement, for it testified to the fact that a single multinational culture had been created in the USSR. In his inauguration speech at the First Congress of Writers, the doyen of Soviet writers, Maxim Gorky, spoke with deep feeling about the outstanding achievements of Soviet multinational literature: "The literature of the different races and languages of all our republics represents a single whole to the proletariat of the Soviet Land, the revolutionary proletariat of all countries and to friendly writers throughout the world."<sup>1</sup>

The international front of literature and art played a most important part in fostering the spiritual unity of the people and consolidating their community.

So, the intense process of socialist transformations in the life of the peoples and their national relations which took place in the first two decades after the establishment of Soviet power resulted in the formation of the socialist inter-nation community of the peoples of the USSR.

##### 5. THE COMMUNIST PARTY'S HISTORIC EXPERIENCE IN ESTABLISHING A NEW COMMUNITY OF WORKING PEOPLE IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD

The establishment of the new historical community of people in the USSR was not accomplished with ease. Involving great difficulties and complex problems, the matter

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<sup>1</sup> M. Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 296 (in Russian).

required a genuinely revolutionary approach and the implementation of the Leninist policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet state.

We have already mentioned the difficulties created by the remnants of the exploiter classes and their ideologists in the first half of the transitional period. These elements violently opposed the socialist renovation of society and particularly the class and international unity of the working people under the leadership of the working class.

In the first place, the enemies of the revolution and the people wanted to deprive the working class and the peasantry of guidance by the Communist Party, to "liberate" them from the Bolsheviks. The leader of the Constitutional Democratic Party Milyukov, who was living abroad, formulated the slogan "Soviets without Communists" which was swiftly taken up by the forces of internal counter-revolution. The organisers of the Kronstadt mutiny coined the slogan "Power to the Soviets, not to parties".

Kulak disturbances in the countryside also took place under the slogan "Soviets without Communists", and at the beginning of 1918 the Socialist-Revolutionaries advanced a slogan which sounded like a declaration: "If not now then when, if not we then who will overthrow the Bolsheviks?"

The enemies of the Revolution and socialism were fully aware that it was leadership by the Communist Party that gave vitality and strength to the emerging new social system, and that this leadership was the force that rallied the toiling and exploited masses. They realised that, once the Soviets were deprived of Bolshevik leadership or influence, they would lose their revolutionary substance and switch to bourgeois positions. It was also clear to them that without leadership by the Communist Party it would be impossible to establish an alliance between workers and peasants and to unite the peoples.

It should be recalled here that the question of the Communist Party's role during the dictatorship of the proletariat engendered all sorts of speculations and erroneous views even among certain groups within the Party itself. Some sorry theoreticians thought that, since the proletariat had become the ruling class and could and should administer all affairs, the Party had no longer any role to play.

The Trotskyites, who demanded that the trade unions should be "governmentalised", adopted an anti-Leninist stand in the question of the relationship between the Party and the class, the masses. Lenin immediately saw the real meaning of the demand put forward by the Trotskyites during the "discussion on the trade unions" in the Party. The real difference with Trotsky on the trade union question, Lenin said, was "our different *approach* to the mass, the different way of winning it over and *keeping* in touch with it. That is the whole point."<sup>1</sup> The transfer of administrative functions to the trade unions would have been tantamount to repudiating their role as a school of communism and that would have undermined the dictatorship of the proletariat and denied the leading role of the Party.

The "Workers' Opposition", on the other hand, proceeding from anarcho-syndicalist positions, wanted to subordinate the state to the trade unions and demanded that the administration of the national economy be transferred to what they called an all-Russian producers' congress.

In connection with the appearance of anti-Party deviations, which in effect were aimed at denying the Party's leading role in all matters of social development, including economic development, Lenin wrote with indignation in 1921: "If we say that it is not the Party but the trade unions that put up the candidates and administrate, it may sound very democratic and might help us to catch a few votes, but not for long. It would be fatal for the dictatorship of the proletariat."<sup>2</sup>

Led by Lenin, the Party smashed all the liquidationist anti-Party groups, further strengthened the awareness of the working class and the people that they could not do without the Communist Party and its guiding role and made them infinitely loyal to the Party and its Leninist policy.

In carrying through its policy, the Communist Party above all relied on the working class viewing its conscious and organised activity as the chief force in the new social system, the decisive force underlying the union and the

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Trade Unions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Second All-Russia Congress of Miners", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, pp. 61-62.

cohesion of all the exploited and working masses in furthering the cause of socialism. And the working class of the USSR always lived up to its historical mission as the leader of the people. In 1918, when the workers set out for the countryside to help the poor peasants fight the kulaks, who sought to bring about the downfall of Soviet rule by exposing it to famine (at the time the fate of socialism depended on the successful outcome of the fight for grain), Lenin wrote: "One of the greatest and indefeasible accomplishments of the October Revolution—the Soviet Revolution—is that the advanced worker, *as the leader of the poor, as the leader of the toiling masses of the countryside, as the builder of the state of the toilers*, has gone among the people."<sup>1</sup>

The enemies of the Revolution had every reason to regard this exploit of the workers as a mortal threat to their hopes and plans of restoring the old order. It was symptomatic that the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries also intensified their struggle against the Bolsheviks and Soviet rule after the promulgation of decrees on the food policy and the establishment of Committees of Poor Peasants. Stooping to demagoguery, they called the organisation of these committees a measure directed against the "working peasant", a step allegedly designed to liquidate the local Soviets in villages, and so forth.

Their objective was to drive wedge into the alliance between the working class and the working peasants and sow discord between the proletarian town and the village. Another aspect of the "peasant theory" of the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries was repudiation of class differentiation within the peasantry. The "working peasantry", in their understanding of the term, embraced the poor, the middle and the rich peasants. They claimed that a differentiated approach to them was impermissible and harmful, and came out in defence of the kulaks and the "united" "working" peasantry.

As regards the Mensheviks, they preached national unity and came out against the splitting of "democracy" by the Bolsheviks and against the civil war. The programme of further struggle against Bolshevik rule adopted at the All-Russia Congress of Mensheviks in May 1918 said that it

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "On the Famine", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 397.

was necessary to replace "Soviet power with a power that united all the forces of democracy". And in February 1919, when Kolchak's forces were moving into Siberia and driving towards Perm, the Menshevik newspaper *Vsegda vperyod* (*Always Forward*) in an article entitled "End the Civil War" accused the Bolsheviks of starting this war. The demand "Down with the Civil War" was tantamount to direct support for Kolchak and the interventionists against the workers and the peasants who were defending the gains of the revolution. At Lenin's suggestion, the All-Russia Central Executive Committee resolved to close down the newspaper and expel the Mensheviks, who were trying to prevent the workers and peasants from defeating Kolchak, "to the confines of Kolchak's democracy".

The anti-Soviet forces did their utmost to impede the alliance between the working class and the peasantry in the knowledge that in a "peasant Russia" any dissension between these two classes would doom the "Bolshevik experiment". Addressing the Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets in January 1918, Lenin confidently spoke of "the unbreakable unity of the workers and the peasants" and then warned: "You can depend on the bourgeoisie to resort to every trick, to stake their all on crushing our unity."<sup>1</sup>

These were prophetic words. At first the ideologists of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie tried to prove that Soviet rule's agrarian policy would in the long run force the peasants to side with the bourgeoisie. The Constitutional Democrats entertained the hope that the peasants, who were playing an increasing role in the economy, would finally demand that Communism's general economic policy should be replaced by a "healthy economic, that is, bourgeois, policy".

The hopes of the bourgeoisie of regaining power soared even higher following the introduction of the New Economic Policy in Soviet Russia.

Of course, there was more to the matter than hopes and forecasts: counter-revolutionary elements also organised anti-Soviet actions in the rural areas and incited the peasants to sabotage the Soviet Government's financial, food

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Third All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 481

and other measures. Once in a while they would be successful because the peasants were vacillating in the transitional period and did not always understand and support the socialist measures designed to bring them socially and economically closer to the working class. Taking this into account, Lenin warned of the great danger of any possible differences between the working class and the peasantry.

Consequently, everything depended on the policy of the ruling Communist Party. There were no longer any other classes or parties which could determine the future of the country. During the transition to the New Economic Policy Lenin said that "we have no other support but the millions". The next came the class of the peasantry "which may side with us, if we are wise and if we pursue a correct policy within our own class... There is no class that can overthrow us: the majority of the proletarians and the rural poor are behind us. Nothing can ruin us but our own mistakes. This 'but' is the whole point".<sup>1</sup>

Lenin meant that it was imperative to establish a bond between town and country, so that the *working class* would be in a position to assist the peasants.

Of course, the working class which had come to power, was unable immediately to shed the customs and psychology which had been inculcated into it by capitalism. Moreover, in the initial period of Soviet rule the working class was surrounded by a mass of small producers and consequently came under their influence. In 1920 Lenin pointed out that the small producers "surround the proletariat on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection".<sup>2</sup>

In spite of these psychological "blemishes" it was only the working class, as the most advanced and revolutionary class, that could lead the people towards socialism. Lenin always made this point clear. He did so at the Third Congress

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Second All-Russia Congress of Miners", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism — an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 44.

of the Komsomol. "Only this class," he said, "can help the working masses unite, rally their ranks and conclusively defend, conclusively consolidate and conclusively build up a communist society."<sup>1</sup>

He also attached great importance to the organisation of planned, systematic assistance from the socialist town to the village. Comparing the relations between town and country under Soviet rule with those that existed under capitalism, Lenin wrote: "Under capitalism the town introduced political, economic, moral, physical, etc., corruption into the countryside. In our case, towns are automatically beginning to introduce the very opposite of this into the countryside."<sup>2</sup> But, he said, all this was being done spontaneously and it was necessary to develop this work on a broad scale and conduct it in a planned and systematic manner.

Intending to speak at a Congress of Soviets scheduled for December 1922 on the subject of workers' patronage over the rural population, Lenin began to gather material for his speech. However, illness prevented him from attending. Referring to this question he wrote in 1923 in *Pages from a Diary*: "... since I have been unable to deal with this problem and give publicity through the Congress, I submit the matter to the comrades for discussion now."<sup>3</sup> He emphasised that he drew the attention of his comrades in the Party leadership to this question because it was a giant cultural task of world-wide importance. "Here we have a fundamental political question—the relations between town and country—which is of decisive importance for the whole of our revolution.... We can and must utilise our political power to make the urban workers an effective vehicle of communist ideas among the rural proletariat."<sup>4</sup>

Following Lenin's instructions to the letter, the Party consistently strengthened the alliance of the workers and

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin "Pages from a Diary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 466.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 465.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



the peasants. We shall cite only one example of the Party's activity in this field, an episode from the life of Mikhail Kalinin, a prominent associate of Lenin, who regarded him as the living personification of the alliance between workers and peasants. It should be noted that Kalinin, who played a particularly important role in consolidating the union between town and country, between the working class and the peasantry, fully lived up to this description of him.

Addressing the 12th Party Congress, Mikhail Kalinin described his activity at the Conference of Peasants of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk Gubernia which was held in 1921. There was a large number of Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks at the Conference, where a real battle flared up between delegates representing various political organizations. "And so," he said, "as I was making my concluding speech, a highly venomous note was handed to me. It said: 'Whom does Soviet power value more, the worker or the peasant? Who has contributed more to the revolution, the worker or the peasant?' I read it out loud and there was a storm of applause and caustic laughter. 'Well, Kalinin,' they must have thought, 'let's see how you'll wriggle out of that.' Indeed it was an unexpected question but I managed to answer it. 'What does a person value more,' I said, 'his right leg or his left? I want to make it clear that to say that the worker is more valuable than the peasant for our revolution would be tantamount to cutting off the revolution's right or left leg, as one could do to a human being.' My reply evoked thunderous applause and in the end the peasants were satisfied that Soviet power recognises the significance of the role played by the peasant."<sup>1</sup>

A subtle psychologist and an outstanding politician with an excellent knowledge of the peasants and workers, Mikhail Kalinin could not fail to notice that these notes mirrored their sentiments and the relations between them. On the one hand, he related, there was the middle peasant who wanted to play a role in the revolution and have Soviet rule recognise this role, on the other hand, there was the worker who felt the full weight of the burden that had devolved onto him. "Indeed," Kalinin went on, "figuratively

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<sup>1</sup> 12th Congress of the RCP(B). Minutes, p. 451 (in Russian).

speaking, they are like two brothers, who throughout the Russian revolution, that is, over a span of six years... have been jealously watching each other: perhaps one of them has shifted the main burden onto the other, and the trace-horse is drawing a lighter load."

Dwelling on the relations between the workers and the peasants and the consolidation of their alliance, Kalinin was sharply critical of the anti-peasant stand of some spokesmen for the "average worker" who asserted that the "peasants had practically no burden to bear" and demanded that it should be increased through heavier taxation. At the same time, he was no less critical of those who, "striving to express and uphold the interests of the peasantry", were prepared to let the workers go hungry. Kalinin used to say that, if the Soviet government followed "instructions" of this sort, "it would have heavily overloaded one side of the ship". An experienced captain, however, would never put out to sea in a listing ship which was liable to capsize and sink in the slightest swell. He concluded: "The Communist Party is a captain with sufficient experience to avoid such indiscretion."

The Party has always fought against all those endeavouring to prevent the workers and the peasants from drawing closer together. It waged its last and decisive battle for the peasants during the collectivisation period, when the kulaks, the last exploiting class in the USSR, launched what can only be described as a war against the collective farms and the collective farmers. Instead of the old slogan "Soviets without Communists", they advanced the slogan "Soviets without collective farms", and prior to the beginning of the mass collectivisation agitated fiercely against the collective farms, spreading all sorts of lies and slander. Then, when despite their efforts, the mass of the peasants opted for the collective farms, the kulaks switched to terror and arson. Just one figure conveys a good idea of the nature and scale of the kulaks' anti-collective farm war: in 1929 approximately 30,000 cases of arson were registered in the rural areas of the RSFSR alone.

Once again, as during the existence of the Committees of Poor Peasants, the working class came to the assistance of the peasantry in the period of collectivisation, when the

future of the peasantry was being decided and a bitter class struggle was raging in the countryside. To help consolidate the collective-farm system, the working class sent thousands of dedicated and talented collective-farm and political organisers to the countryside. The Petrograd Communist Davydov in Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* is the type of worker which the Party sent to the rural areas.

Approximately a million kulak households were taken over during the drive for complete collectivisation. Together with their families, the majority of the kulaks were resettled in specially designated regions where they were given jobs and a chance to become honest working people. The kulaks constituted an alien body in the countryside, particularly when the collective-farm system was introduced and their removal from the rural population, which was becoming essentially socialist, strengthened the cohesion of the peasants and consolidated their community.

The collectivisation of agriculture was a most important and decisive step in turning the working class and the peasantry into socialist classes of one and the same type and establishing their socio-class community. This outstanding fact was legislatively confirmed in the Constitution of the USSR, which proclaimed the Soviet Union a socialist state of workers and peasants. The working class voluntarily surrendered its privileges. For example, equal election rights were granted to workers and peasants, to the entire population, and the elections to organs of state power became equal and universal.

Another difficult problem was that of building up a socialist intelligentsia and making it a component of a single socialist community together with the working class and the peasantry. In the initial period of the revolution the main task was to draw the old intelligentsia into socially useful activity and re-educate it. It was an extremely acute and intricate problem, and the Soviet state managed to solve it rationally and correctly, only thanks to Lenin's wisdom. There were few aspects of the post-revolutionary organisation of social activity to which Lenin devoted so much attention as he did to the question of working out the

correct attitude to the bourgeois intelligentsia. There were several reasons for this.

The overwhelming majority of the old intelligentsia was hostile to the October Revolution. This proved to be something of a surprise, particularly as far as the teachers, office workers and other rank-and-file mental workers were concerned. The behaviour of the upper strata of the intelligentsia was more logical, since their anti-Sovietism stemmed from their close ties with the bourgeoisie with whom they exploited the working people. There was also another circumstance which made them turn away from the socialist revolution. Some of them would have been even prepared to side with it, but only if it had not been a popular revolution aimed at bringing about far-reaching socio-economic reforms. In his work "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?" Lenin narrated a conversation with a wealthy engineer who had once even participated in the revolutionary movement, but who on the eve of the socialist revolution changed his attitude and was bitterly resentful of the turbulent and uncompromising workers.

Summing up the conversation with this "revolutionary", Lenin wrote: "He was willing to accept the social revolution if history were to lead to it in the peaceful, calm, smooth and precise manner of a German express train pulling into a station. A sedate conductor would open the carriage door and announce: 'Social Revolution Station! *Alle aussteigen!* (All change!).' In that case he would have no objection to changing his position of engineer under the *Tit Tityches* to that of engineer under the worker's organisations."<sup>1</sup> This conclusion explains the motives for the anti-Soviet behaviour of a considerable portion of the old intelligentsia.

How should the victorious proletariat treat the bourgeois intelligentsia? That was the crucial question, and Lenin provided the only correct and rational answer: to utilise the enemy's knowledge and experience, without which it would have been impossible to build a new life and advance towards socialism.

But there were people both in the Party and in public

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Can the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 119.

circles who opposed Lenin's policy towards the bourgeois intelligentsia. They even advocated that the proletariat should break with the intelligentsia in general, since it was not a part of the working class. Such was the stand of the ideologists of the Proletkult,<sup>1</sup> who considered that the creation of a proletarian culture was the task of the proletariat itself and the intelligentsia which it produced from its ranks.

Lenin scathingly ridiculed this idea and resolutely fought against its proponents. In the margin of the *Pravda* which published Pletnev's article entitled "On the Ideological Front", Lenin wrote "arch-fiction" next to the author's thesis: "Only the proletariat itself and the scientists, artists, engineers and other representatives of the intelligentsia which arise from its midst can solve the task of creating a proletarian culture."

Untenable as they were, the ideas of Proletkult carried weight and persisted for some time. Their proponents greatly impeded the rise of Soviet culture, particularly in the arts. In literature Proletkult ideology found its most vivid expression in the theory and practice of the members of RAPP.<sup>2</sup> The most odious aspect of their behaviour was that they called themselves true proletarian writers and defamed the name of the proletariat by always speaking "on its behalf".

In a letter to Gorky in 1926 Fyodor Gladkov asked him whether he was wholly on the side of the proletarian writers. Gorky replied: "You want to know whether I am 'wholly' with you. I cannot be 'wholly' on the side of people who are turning class psychology into a caste psychology, I shall never be 'wholly' with people who say 'we,

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<sup>1</sup> Proletkult—short for Proletarian Culture, a cultural and educational organisation. Its theoreticians preached views that were alien to Marxism. They asserted that the working class should artificially create its specific "proletarian culture", divorced from all previous cultures.

<sup>2</sup> RAPP—short for Rossijskaya assotsiatsia proletarskikh pisatelei (Russia's Association of Proletarian Writers)—was a literary and political organisation which existed in the USSR from 1925 to 1932.

At first it united the majority of proletarian writers who had produced a number of important works in the period. But it made serious ideological and political mistakes and fostered sectarianism and clannishness, thus impeding the development of Soviet literature.

proletarians' with the same feeling as other people used to say 'we, the nobility'. I no longer see 'proletarians' in Russia, but I do see in the person of the workers, the true masters of the Russian land and the teachers of all her other inhabitants. The first should already be understood and become a source of pride, the second requires careful handling so that 'no person' could say that a worker is not an organiser of a new life, but just as much a tyrant as any other dictator and just as foolish."<sup>1</sup>

The Communist Party condemned the theory and practice of the proletarian writers so-called. In 1932 RAPP was dissolved and the Union of Soviet Writers was founded.

As regards the working class itself, it had ample grounds to look upon the old intelligentsia from which it had seen nothing good, with dislike and distrust, and at first some of the workers and peasants were naturally ill-disposed and even hostile to "educated people".

On the whole, however, the working class was not guided by a desire for revenge in its attitude to the bourgeois intelligentsia. And if the workers and the peasants did view it with hostility in the first post-revolutionary years, it was mainly due to its subversive activity. The protest and sabotage of the intellectuals against Soviet rule and its revolutionary measures took the most subtle forms—ranging from participation in anti-Soviet plots and acts of terror to refusal to perform official duties.

Clearly, the intelligentsia alone was responsible for the antagonism it aroused among the workers and peasants. At the same time, the bourgeoisie and the anti-Soviet intelligentsia itself clamoured about "persecution" by the Bolsheviks and the Soviet organs they headed, and claimed that they "incited" the people against it. Professor M. Dukelsky mentioned this among other things in a letter to Lenin in 1919. Lenin replied that this was not the case and explained the actual state of affairs and the position of the Bolsheviks and Soviet rule. The workers and peasants overthrew the bourgeoisie and established Soviet power, he wrote, and it was now evident that it was neither a "gamble" nor "folly" on the part of the Bolsheviks but the beginning

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<sup>1</sup> M. Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 484 (in Russian).

of a universal change of two historic epochs, the epoch of the bourgeoisie and the epoch of socialism. Are we to blame, he asked, if the majority of the intelligentsia did not want to (and partly could not) see? The intelligentsia and officialdom started the sabotage and that inevitably evoked the anger of the workers and the peasants. Further Lenin wrote: "Had we 'incited' anybody against the 'intelligentsia', we would have deserved to be hanged for it. Far from inciting the people against the intelligentsia, we on the contrary, in the name of the Party and in the name of the Government, urged the necessity of creating the best possible working conditions for the intelligentsia."<sup>1</sup>

In their policy towards the intelligentsia the Communist Party and the Soviet state always displayed good will, the desire to win it over to their side and persuade it to cooperate honestly with the people. This Leninist policy proved to be fully successful, despite the serious difficulties which stood in its way.

Yet it was not only the anti-Soviet position of the majority of the intelligentsia at the beginning of the revolution that made the problem so complex. It was also necessary to take into account that the intelligentsia had suffered from serious technical shortcomings which Lenin described as follows: "This slovenliness, this carelessness, untidiness, unpunctuality, nervous haste, the inclination to substitute discussion for action, talk for work, the inclination to undertake everything under the sun without finishing anything, are characteristics of the 'educated'; and this is not due to the fact that they are bad by nature, still less is it due to their evil will; it is due to all their habits of life, the conditions of their work... to the abnormal separation of mental from manual labour, and so on, and so forth."<sup>2</sup>

In 1918 Lenin wrote in his article "How to Organise Competition?" that at the time when one of the major, if not the major, task was to develop in every possible way the independent initiative of the workers and all the working

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Reply to a Bourgeois Specialist", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 412.

people as regards creative *organising* work it was necessary that "the workers and peasants must be brought to see clearly the difference between the necessary advice of an educated man and the necessary control by the 'common' worker and peasant of the *slovenliness* that is so usual among the 'educated'.... We cannot dispense with the advice, the instruction of educated people, of intellectuals and specialists."<sup>1</sup> Lenin taught, however, that it was necessary to know their shortcomings and to supervise their work so as to keep things going.

The Party and the state put a great deal of effort into solving the difficult problem of re-educating the old intelligentsia, and it was chiefly in the reconstruction period that cadres of the old intelligentsia merged with the new, people's intelligentsia to become its organic component.

Nevertheless, the old intelligentsia could not be the chief source of the new intelligentsia if only because numerically it was much too small. The problem of building up a new, socialist intelligentsia was solved mainly by flinging open the doors of the higher school to the workers and peasants.

In August 1918 the Council of People's Commissars promulgated a decree *On Rules and Regulations Governing Admission to Educational Institutions of the RSFSR*, according to which all people who had reached the age of 16 could enter any educational institution without submitting any certificates of education or taking entrance examinations. Tuition fees were abolished and grants were paid to needy students. Of course, some of the points in the decree were of an emergency and temporary character and designed solely to democratise the higher school and make it fully accessible to workers and peasants. But the right to enter an institution of higher learning by itself was not enough to enable a person to get a higher education: adequate educational qualifications were needed and that was exactly what the bulk of the young workers and peasants lacked. This led to a disparity between the right to study and the opportunity to study. Among the measures which were taken to erase this discrepancy the most effective was the establishment of workers' faculties or high schools where, after three

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.



of four years of study, young workers and peasants acquired the necessary secondary education to enter an institution of higher learning. The establishment of workers' faculties was a landmark in the history of the development of the Soviet workers' and peasants' intelligentsia. They first appeared in 1919 and rapidly became widespread, playing a tremendous role in improving the social composition of the higher school and in training cadres of the new intelligentsia. Suffice it to say that in 1934 graduates from workers' faculties comprised 40 per cent of the people admitted to institutions of higher learning. Consequently, they comprised the nucleus of the first generation of the Soviet intelligentsia.

But since immediately after winning power the working class needed tens of thousands of people to lead and guide the masses, to work in Party organs and the Soviets, manage industry, trade and so forth, and there was no time to wait until the educational institutions trained the necessary personnel, most of these jobs were given to forward-thinking literate workers and peasants. Born of the revolution, this unusual method of augmenting the ranks of the intelligentsia served its purpose. The workers promoted to these posts performed a veritable exploit—they proved in practice that mental labour was not the monopoly of the propertied sections of the population. Without promoted workers it would have been impossible to organise the administration of the country in the initial period of Soviet rule. At the beginning of 1921 Lenin pointed out that workers accounted for 61.6 per cent of the staff of the administrative bodies.<sup>1</sup> The percentage of the workers in Party and government bodies was much higher. The promoted workers and peasants made up the first contingent of the mental workers reared by Soviet rule, and many of them subsequently acquired a higher education by managing to combine their enormous organising activity with study.

Eventually, when there were no longer any exploiting sections in Soviet society and the workers and peasants comprised two socialist classes, and also owing to the exten-

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<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "Once Again on the Trade Unions", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 88.

sive development of secondary education, the workers' faculties became redundant, for the young people were able to enter higher educational institutions after completing secondary education. The mass promotion of workers to administrative posts also became unnecessary. In 1940/41 the Soviet Union had 817 institutions of higher education with a total student body of 811,700, and more than 3,800 specialised secondary schools training approximately a million people.

Seen as a whole, the formation of the people's intelligentsia of the world's first socialist state was a complex process.

The most difficult task, however, was that establishing fraternal mutual relations between nations and nationalities—bringing them closer together and promoting their creative co-operation. In its resolution on the preparations for the 50th anniversary of the USSR the CPSU Central Committee pointed out that “this progressive process was neither easy nor simple. It was necessary to surmount considerable difficulties related to the economic and cultural backwardness, and to struggle against the attempts of counter-revolution to take advantage of the legacy of former national strife, bourgeois nationalism and great-power chauvinism, as well as the resistance of national deviationists within the Party.”

The Russian counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie shouted about the “disintegration of Russia” when the peoples of Russia began to exercise their right to self-determination up to and including secession and the formation of independent states, and tried its utmost to restore the old “single Russia”. In May 1918 the Constitutional Democrats worked out a programme of struggle against the Bolsheviks in the new conditions. One of its main points was the “revival of the single and indivisible Russia” in which all “aliens” would live under the aegis “of Russian statehood”.

Soviet rule and its nationalities policy also encountered opposition from the bourgeois nationalists, who strove to divide the peoples of Russia and prevent their voluntary union. The Ukrainian *Rada* launched a most vicious struggle resorting to the basest methods imaginable. Endeavouring to capitalise on the Soviet policy of granting self-determi-

nation to the peoples, the *Rada* declared, for example, that there was no difference between it and the Bolsheviks. V. P. Zatonsky, one of the leaders of the Ukrainian Bolsheviks, wrote that "all the underlings of the Central *Rada* also called themselves Bolsheviks". The *Rada* even invited the Bolsheviks to work together with it. This was a subtle move, calculated to mislead the masses and prevent them from perceiving the true methods of this organ of nationalist counter-revolution in the Ukraine. In Turkestan the nationalist bourgeoisie and the reactionary clergy lost no time in mounting an armed struggle against Soviet rule in an attempt to tear Turkestan away from Soviet Russia and restore the domination of the exploiting classes there. All the anti-Soviet nationalist forces there formed an alliance and in 1918 created the "Kokand Autonomy", and, when it collapsed, they joined the Basmachi bands and continued the struggle. Such were the methods employed by the bourgeois nationalists in all national areas, and everywhere they operated in close contact with international imperialist reaction in the hope of carrying through their common plan of dismembering Russia.

The struggle against the anti-Soviet forces in the national areas went on even after the rout of the bourgeois nationalist "governments". In Central Asia, for example, the Basmachi counter-revolution lasted until the middle of the 1920s. Besides the forces which openly fought against Soviet rule, the nationalist reaction had concealed forces in the form of the still existing propertied classes and their ideologists, who furiously opposed Soviet policy and hampered the internationalist consolidation of the working masses.

There were other circumstances which made the establishment of fraternal relations between the peoples of Russia a difficult and complicated task. And it was only thanks to the Leninist nationalities policy that they were successfully surmounted and the community of peoples was able to attain full development.

Pursuing this policy, the Party took into account the specific aspects of the national question in Russia, the place it occupied in the life of the country and the concrete situation which took shape in the national relations after the Revolution.

The formation of a community of peoples, each with its specific national features, is always a difficult task, but it was particularly complicated in Russia, where it was necessary to unite peoples which were at the most diverse levels of development and which, moreover, had inherited from tsarism the left-overs of national discord and distrust.

The great significance attached to the national question found its reflection in the system of Party and state organs. A People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities was set up within the Soviet Government formed by the Second All-Russia Congress of Soviets. Headed by J. V. Stalin, the Commissariat also included V. Mickevičius-Kapsukas, V. Avanesov, Y. Leshchinsky, Z. Aleksa-Angarietis, S. Bobinsky, S. Dimanshtein and other prominent Party members. It had 18 subordinate commissariats and departments, which were the permanent missions of their respective peoples with the Soviet Government. The Commissariat had its own central organ *Zhizn natsionalnoŝtei* (Life of the Nationalities) and its commissariats and departments published 28 newspapers of which 17 were intended expressly for the Moslem population. Moreover, it published the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin in the languages of the different nationalities and conducted a fairly large amount of work in the field of training national personnel.

It was the duty of the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities to help implement the nationalities programme of the proletarian revolution, assist in reviving the backward peoples, educate the working people of all nationalities in the spirit of socialist internationalism and fraternal co-operation and introduce common, Soviet principles into their life and activities.

Immediately after the revolution the People's Commissariat for the Affairs of Nationalities and the Russian Academy of Sciences started a thorough study of Russia's national composition. The Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of Russia, consisting of Academicians V. I. Vernadsky, N. Y. Marr, S. F. Oldenburg, I. A. Orbeli and other distinguished scientists, was formed in 1919.

So it came about that even in the grim years of the Civil War the Soviet state attached great importance to the

national question and sought the most reasonable ways and means of resolving it.

Voluntary, fraternal co-operation between peoples can rest only on principles of mutual trust, and Lenin coupled the establishment of the alliance of working peoples of different nationalities directly with these principles. "The interests of labour," he wrote, "demand the fullest confidence and the closest alliance among the working people of different... nations".<sup>1</sup>

In the early period of Soviet rule different peoples had little or no trust in each other. The formerly backward peoples were particularly distrustful of the Russian people and of the activity of their representatives. This was a great obstacle on the way to the establishment of the Soviet community of nations. "This must be taken into account, it must be combated..."<sup>2</sup> Lenin wrote.

The decisive role in accomplishing this political task devolved on to the Soviets, which were the state form of the dictatorship of the proletariat. "The Soviets, thanks to their nearness and accessibility to all strata of the working population, made it possible to unite the multi-million-strong masses of the peasantry and all the working people of various nationalities around the working class. The very internationalist character of the Soviets prompted the masses of the working people in the Republic to set up a single state. The experience of the Soviets showed that the workers and peasants could successfully manage the state on the principles of the broadest and most consistent democracy and complete national equality."

As regards the establishment of national statehood, Lenin allowed no compromise on all issues concerning the fundamental interests of the proletarian revolution and socialism—on matters of the proletarian struggle and dictatorship of the proletariat, which were equally important for all nations. On the more specific issues, such as the concrete form of state organisation, consideration for the national, cultural, language and other features, Lenin called for

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Letter to Workers and Peasants of the Ukraine", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 195.

tact, circumspection, flexibility, tractability and consideration for concrete local conditions.

In a speech at the Second Congress of the Communist International in 1920, in which he formulated the classic tenet about the non-capitalist course of development of the backward peoples, Lenin also dealt with the question of the form of organisation of their state power and the social composition of their Soviets: "One of the most important tasks confronting us," he said, "is to consider how the foundation-stone of the organisation of the Soviet movement can be laid in the non-capitalist countries. Soviets are possible there; they will not be workers' Soviets, but peasants' Soviets, or Soviets of working people."<sup>1</sup> Bourgeois-democratic nationalism, too, could play a specific progressive role in the efforts of many backward peoples to establish national statehood; since these peoples had not passed through the capitalist stage they likewise by-passed the stage of international class-political and ideological demarcation. The first thing that had to be done in the republics of the East even after the October Revolution was to eliminate the survivals of medievalism.

On the whole, the social foundation of the Soviets in the country was the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, but in some republics the Soviets, composed mostly of peasants, also included some representatives of the progressive sections of the non-working classes (the bourgeoisie and even the clergy), since they still enjoyed a certain influence with the local population and were loyal to Soviet rule.

Bearing this in mind, Lenin told representatives of the Communist organisations of the peoples of the East in 1919: "You will have to base yourself on the bourgeois nationalism which is awakening, and must awaken, among those peoples and which has its historical justification."<sup>2</sup>

This, needless to say, could be permitted for a certain period of time. But as each nation became divided into clearly defined classes and the toiling masses acquired a higher degree of consciousness and organisation, a relent-

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 232-33.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "2nd Congress of Communist Organisations of the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.

less struggle had to be waged against all forms of nationalism.

Similar principles were applied in the solution of economic questions. Lenin said that even when it was firmly established that a measure would be expedient from the point of view of common interests, it should be carried into effect only with due consideration for the local conditions and the opinion of the peoples concerned. For example, Lenin was more than anyone else aware that economic unity was essential for socialism, and yet he demanded that it should be achieved through agitation and persuasion and not by administrative measures. "One cannot argue," he wrote, "that economic unity should be effected under all circumstances. Of course, it is necessary! But we must endeavour to secure it by propaganda, by agitation, by voluntary alliance."<sup>1</sup>

In this connection it is important to note that in the initial period of the establishment of the Soviet community Lenin and the Party adopted an implacable attitude towards any manifestations of great-power chauvinism. Lenin insisted that there should be a different approach to the nationalism of the former dominating nation and the nationalism of the oppressed nations, since the latter was a historically justified phenomenon. At the time the survivals of great-power chauvinism greatly impeded the establishment of fraternal relations based on mutual trust, and he fought against this evil with the utmost determination.

In 1922, in view of the forthcoming union of the republics and the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Lenin opposed Stalin's idea of "autonomisation", that is, the joining of the RSFSR by all the Soviet republics on an autonomous basis. He said it infringed the rights of the republics and peoples that were to create together with the RSFSR and the Russian people a voluntary, equal union of sovereign republics. Here is another fact illustrating Lenin's uncompromising attitude towards even the slightest manifestation of great-power chauvinism. Referring to the leading body of the future federal state, Lenin wrote:

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP (B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 195.

"I declare war to the death on Great-Russian chauvinism....

"It must be *absolutely* insisted that the Union Central Executive Committee should be *presided over* in turn by a Russian, Ukrainian, Georgian, etc. *Absolutely!*"<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the heightened attention to the struggle against great-power chauvinism did not in the least diminish the danger and harmfulness of local nationalism. It only expressed the concrete-historical approach to the complicated issue of fighting nationalism and the capacity to single out the key tasks from a range of the lesser ones.

Incidentally, it would be wrong to reduce the question of great-power nationalism exclusively to Great-Russian chauvinism. Of course, the latter was the principal form of great-power nationalism and the greatest enemy of internationalism in Russia. But Lenin drew attention to other varieties of nationalism—the nationalism of those nations which under capitalism also oppressed weaker and smaller nations and nationalities.

Pursuing its policy, the Party encountered specific difficulties in the national East, where it was essential to awaken the working masses, *regardless of the level of their historical development*, to conscious revolutionary activity. In implementing general communist principles and tackling communist tasks, the Party had to take into account the historical conditions under which these peoples were developing, and not mechanically impose on them the experience of other peoples and republics which had attained a higher level of social development. There were no text-book solutions to these problems, which called for a creative approach based on the experience of the revolutionary changes taking place in Russia. "Such are the problems whose solution you will not find in any communist book, but will find in the common struggle begun by Russia," Lenin noted.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Memo to the Political Bureau on Combating Dominant Nation Chauvinism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 372.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "2nd Congress of Communist Organisations of the East", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 162.



The Party cut short all attempts to mechanically transfer to the national regions the methods and forms of state, political, economic and cultural development employed in the more advanced central areas of the country. On the other hand, the Party had to combat fetishistic attachment to national features and attempts to deviate from the common road of Soviet development.

The danger of this second deviation was all the more serious because it voluntarily or involuntarily mirrored the ideology of local bourgeois nationalism, the desire of the exploiting upper strata of nations to divert "their" peoples from the socialist to the bourgeois road of development. The bourgeois nationalists propagated the idea that the non-Russian peoples were socially homogeneous and that class antagonism was alien to them. They said that Lenin's tenet about two cultures in each national culture in the bourgeois epoch was inapplicable to their previous national culture. The theoretical fabrications and practical deeds of the nationalists enormously hampered the unification of the peoples and their progress towards an international Soviet community. In view of this, the Party had no alternative but to fight relentlessly against all manifestations of nationalism.

In their practical efforts to promote national relations, the Party and the Soviet state concentrated on organising the mutual assistance of the peoples in the fields of state-political, economic and cultural development with emphasis on the assistance of the more advanced peoples to the backward ones.

The Party began to put into effect the programme which it had drawn up before the October Socialist Revolution. The victorious working class, Lenin wrote in 1916, will help the peoples of the national outskirts to shift to the use of machines to facilitate their labour, to democracy and to socialism.

It was a difficult task if only because it was necessary to make the formerly backward peoples accept machines and then teach them how to operate them. There is a story illustrating this point. It was related by one of the leaders of Tajikistan to a prominent functionary of the international communist movement, Paul Vaillant-Couturier, during his

visit to the Soviet Union in the mid-thirties. "And now you see Tajiks driving lorries and tractors. When, six years ago, we drove into a village in a lorry which the local people called *shaitan-arba* or "devil's cart", they brought hay and oats for its engine. And when in 1929 the first locomotive pulled into Dushanbe ten thousand people descended from the mountains to feed it with fruit, mutton and flat-cakes."

Manual labour was dominant in the agriculture of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Transcaucasia, the Northern Caucasus and other areas. There was a negligible amount of farm machinery and most of the implements were primitive, the most widespread being the hoe and the *omach* (a sort of a wooden plough). When the collectivisation of agriculture was launched in Ferghana and Tashkent regions, for example, the number of farm implements available to the farmers was less than 10 per cent of that in use in the central areas of the Russian Federation. Even the wealthy *bais* rarely had better implements. The 481 *bai* farms which were liquidated in these regions during the land and water reform of 1925-1928, had only 85 iron ploughs and 83 other "European" implements, but 966 *omaches*.

The Russians and other advanced peoples rendered the backward peoples extensive and varied assistance, two aspects of which were the transfer of equipment and industrial enterprises to the national republics and participation in their socialist industrialisation and cultural revolution.

There is no better evidence of this assistance than the following document which was published in those years in the *Severnaya Azia* (Northern Asia) magazine:

"Anadyr District Revolutionary Committee, Kamchatka Area, August 17, 1926, No. 979.

"On the recommendation of the Kamchatka Revolutionary Committee the bearer of this letter a Chukchi by name of Tevlyanto is being sent to study in the schools of Soviet Russia so that when he returns after a period of several years he will share the knowledge he acquired with his kinsmen.

"He was born and bred in the cheerless, rigorous tundra, in an environment which exists only in the Arctic regions.

"The country where he is going to is wholly unlike his native Anadyr. The Revolutionary Committee fears that

he will meet with severe privations, and, due to his ignorance of the Russian language and customs, may find himself in inextricable difficulties. Moreover, his inherent pride, excessive sensitiveness and other features of his character may also land him in trouble.

"We sincerely request all those who read this letter to help Tevlyanto to the best of their ability if circumstances force him seek assistance. He fully deserves it, for though he is totally illiterate, his level of intellectual development and inquiring mind make him one of the most gifted of the young Chukchis in Anadyr District. He possesses many latent natural endowments that the Russian schools will undoubtedly develop and which will be of service to his kinsmen.

"By showing concern for the future of this citizen you will help the Kamchatka Revolutionary Committee in its first steps to educate the nomad natives of our Extreme Northwest where on the eve of the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution there is not a single literate person.

"Concerned with the future of Comrade Tevlyanto, the Anadyr Revolutionary Committee urges all people whom he may approach with this letter to inquire into his needs and wishes and to send a cable if necessary, or at his request to the Anadyr Revolutionary Military Committee, and to indicate the return address."

It should be borne in mind that the leaders of the Anadyr Revolutionary Committee were Russians, emissaries of the Russian people, who were helping the population of the Far North build a new life. Tevlyanto became the first Chukchi teacher. Subsequently he was Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee of the Chukotka National Area and the first Chukchi deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

In the transitional period the system of co-operation and mutual assistance was geared mainly to the help which was given by the advanced peoples, especially the Russians, to the backward peoples for the purpose of abolishing their factual inequality. But even then the peoples initiated and subsequently tremendously developed mutual assistance and mutual enrichment in the fields of material and spiritual life.

In tsarist Russia cultural achievements did not become available to all the peoples because of the barriers that divided them and stood in the way of their intercourse and mutual assimilation of spiritual values.

In 1920 the barrister A. F. Koni, Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Belles Lettres Department, wrote a letter to the actor A. I. Yuzhin-Sumbatov in which he said:

"...I should like to tell you how deeply I have been impressed by the poet Rustaveli whose poem and verses I have just read (*The Knight in a Tiger's Skin* in a translation by Balmont). What music, what inimitable versification, what tenderness of thought and vividness of expression! And all this on the threshold of the 12th and 13th centuries. I can only envy your homeland which has long had such a poet.... Now I intend to look for someone who could speak about Rustaveli at the next Turgenev meeting, so that our members should learn more about this profound and genuine poet."<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet social system opened up broad prospects for all the peoples of the USSR to draw closer together and assimilate the best spiritual and cultural features inherent in each people. This process of co-operation and mutual enrichment began immediately after the October Revolution and inside two decades became widely developed.

In the first decade following the establishment of Soviet rule considerable headway was achieved in the matter of abolishing the factual inequality of the peoples, but it was still a long way from completion. In 1926-27 the proportion of industrial production in the USSR's national economy was more than 44 per cent, whereas in the national economy of Byelorussia it was 24 per cent, in Uzbekistan—30 per cent and Kazakhstan—11 per cent. There was still a great lag in cultural development. Dozens of nationalities were illiterate and the creation of their written languages was only at the initial stage.

It was with good reason that the directives for the first five-year economic development plan, worked out at the

<sup>1</sup> *The Knight in a Tiger's Skin*, a classic of world literature created by a son of the Georgian people, was unknown to the Russian reader for six centuries.

Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU(B) which took place in 1927, pointed out that "the plan should devote special attention to questions connected with raising the economy and culture of the backward national outskirts and backward areas, taking into account the need to gradually abolish their economic and cultural lag through faster rates of their economic and cultural growth and thus tie in the needs and requirements of these areas with those of the Union".<sup>1</sup>

This directive determined the economic and cultural policy for the last decade of the transitional period. By then the factual inequality of the peoples had been liquidated in the main; they acquired a socialist economy which ensured their consistent development and scored major successes in the cultural revolution.

It should be noted that non-capitalist development was attended by tremendous difficulties both for the peoples who performed the heroic leap that carried them over an entire stage of historic development and for the peoples who stunted themselves in everything in order to help others to march in step. They shouldered this burden voluntarily at a time when they themselves were performing the immense task of building a new life.

Mutual assistance, which became a law of the co-operation of the peoples in shaping their history, played a decisive role in the achievement of factual equality and the building of socialism.

The successes of the peoples of the USSR in the spheres of state-political, economic and cultural development under the guidance of the Communist Party in the first twenty years of Soviet rule resulted in the socialist transformation of the old, bourgeois nations and nationalities into new, socialist nations and nationalities. Moreover, they united all the peoples into a single socialist family—an international community.

Thus, by the end of the transitional period, when the construction of socialism was basically complete in the USSR, a new historical community—the Soviet people—had also *basically* taken shape in the country.

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<sup>1</sup> *KPSS v rezolyutsiakh...*, Part II, p 343.

### III. THE SOVIET PEOPLE— A COMMUNITY BORN OF SOCIALISM

#### 1. ON ITS OWN FOUNDATION

After the transitional period, when socialism had won in the USSR, the new community began to develop on its own, *socialist foundation*.

Radical changes took place in the social conditions determining the content, nature and the speed of the formation and development of the new historical community. The socio-economic, state-political, ideological and cultural factors uniting and fusing the working classes and social groups and all nations and nationalities took on a different quality. As the new historical conditions for the development of Soviet society continued to improve, the more effectively they promoted the consolidation of the socio-class and international community of Soviet people. But the war which broke out in 1941 interrupted peaceful construction in the USSR and put Soviet life onto a war footing, subordinating it solely to the achievement of victory. Therefore, in this section we shall deal with some important aspects of the pre-war (1938-1941) development of the Soviet community.

The rise of the Soviet people as a socio-class community was accompanied by two processes: the liquidation of the exploiting classes and their survivals, on the one hand, and the socialist transformation of the class of small proprietors, the peasantry in the first place, on the other. Now these processes were a thing of the past, the entire Soviet society consisted wholly of working people whose activity was directly connected with socialist production and other spheres of socialist public life.

Likewise a thing of the past were the specific processes which in the transitional period accompanied the formation of new national relations and the rise of the international community of working people of the USSR. The factual inequality of the backward peoples was overcome in the main; having traversed the non-capitalist road of development, they entered socialism together with the other peoples of the USSR. Now the Soviet people as an international community personified the unity of socialist nations and nationalities.

In the pre-war years the social structure of Soviet society changed rapidly and its socialist nature became more and more perfect. The swift development of industry stimulated the numerical growth of the working class and other groups of working people engaged in industrial production. By 1940 the total number of industrial workers had reached 8.3 million.

Naturally, this growth led to a marked improvement in the professional qualifications of the working class owing to several factors and, in particular, the raising of the educational and cultural level of the Soviet workers. In 1939 8.2 per cent of the workers had a higher or secondary (including incomplete) education, peasants—1.7 per cent and the entire working population—4.3 per cent.

At the same time the workers became politically more conscious and organised, and the number of Party members among them increased. In 1941 trade union membership embraced 25 million workers and office employees, compared with 12 million in 1928, with industrial workers comprising the overwhelming majority.

Industrial development promoted the growth of towns and the urban population. More and more new towns and urban-type settlements were built. All this altered the balance between the urban and rural population, as the former increased while the latter diminished. In 1939 the urban population comprised 33 per cent and the rural 67 per cent of the total.<sup>1</sup>

Even more important, however, were changes that took place in the social character of the peasantry and the new features they engendered in the character and the ethos of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry. The Soviet peasantry became a class socially and economically similar to the working class, a socialist class.

Substantial changes occurred in the structure of the peasantry and the rural population in the pre-war years.

The collective-farm peasantry moved into the leading position in agriculture, in the entire countryside, as the collective farms accounted for over 90 per cent of the gross agricultural output. In 1939 they covered 96.9 per cent of the peasant households. As regards individual peasant households, of which there were about 700,000, their role in the economic life in the countryside was insignificant.

The consolidation of the collective-farm system gradually altered the settlement pattern of the peasants. The enlargement of the collective-farm villages and the resultant liquidation of a large proportion of the farmsteads (*khutors*) considerably reduced the number of rural settlements (from 613,600 in 1926 to 573,000 in 1939). As the peasant class changed its socio-economic nature, the peasants, formerly scattered and isolated, became members of large collectives with common interests and requirements.

New contingents of workers now made up a considerable proportion of the collective-farm population. One was the contingent of farm machinery operators and repair personnel (2.5 million in 1940); the other consisted of the collective-farm intelligentsia directly concerned with the orga-

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<sup>1</sup> See: *Itogi Vsesoyuznoi perepisi naseleniya 1959 g.* (Results of the 1959 All-Union Population Census), p. 176; *Kulturnaya revoliutsiya v SSSR. 1917—1965* (The Cultural Revolution in the USSR. 1917-1965), Moscow, 1967, p. 99; *Sovetskoye krestyanstvo* (The Soviet Peasantry), p. 486.



nisation and administration of collective-farm production—collective-farm chairmen and their deputies, agronomists, livestock experts and other specialists—who in 1939 totalled approximately one million people (or nearly three per cent of the people engaged in collective-farm production).

In the period between 1926 and 1939, the years of socialist industrialisation of the country and collectivisation of agriculture, more than 18,500,000 peasants moved from the rural areas to the cities. In the same period a large number of collective-farm organisers, political workers and specialists moved to the countryside, bringing the peasants advanced culture, political knowledge and socialist discipline. Of course, this stream of people was incomparably smaller than the one that flowed to the cities, but it played a most important role in consolidating the alliance between the workers and the peasants, in enhancing proletarian influence on life in the rural areas and furthering its development along socialist lines.

The collectivisation of agriculture wrought a profound change in the spiritual make-up of the peasantry. As distinct from the peasant of the pre-collectivisation period, the collective farmer of the end of the 1930s was a literate, politically conscious person, keenly interested in public affairs.

The 1939 census showed that the level of literacy among the peasants had risen considerably, though illiteracy, particularly among the women (almost 33 per cent), was still fairly high. But the system of cultural and educational establishments was rapidly expanding in the rural areas, and in the period from 1928 to 1940 the number of lending libraries there increased from 20,900 to 76,900, and the number of village clubs from 30,000 to 108,000. Newspapers and books became a daily necessity in the collective-farm villages and there was an unprecedented upsurge in cultural, educational and amateur art activities among the rural workers.

There was a steadily growing demand for city goods and modern household articles, which were delivered in increasing quantities to the collective-farm villages, thus helping to gradually erase the distinctions between town and country.

By the end of the 1930s the collective-farm system had become firmly established in all Soviet republics. The First All-Union Congress of Leading Collective-Farm Workers was attended by representatives from 45 nationalities.

The builders of the famous Great Ferghana Canal forcefully demonstrated what people acting in fraternal co-operation with each other can achieve. In 1939 160,000 collective farmers from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Kirghizia dug a canal 270 kilometres in length in just six weeks. It improved the irrigation of 500,000 hectares of cultivated land and made it possible to develop another 70,000 hectares of irrigated land. The construction of the canal was nothing less than an act of heroism on the part of the Central Asian collective farmers, thousands of whom were awarded government decorations. In 1940 several irrigation systems were completed in Turkmenia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan. These were nation-wide construction projects which were built by peoples from all the fraternal republics of the USSR.

On August 1, 1939, the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition opened in Moscow. Taking part in it were 16,000 collective farms, about 300 Machine and Tractor Stations, 900 state farms and 134,000 of the foremost workers in agriculture. The exhibition acted as a clearing-house for advanced experience. More than 3,500,000 people, including thousands of delegations from collective and state farms and machine and tractor stations, visited it within the first 85 days.

The exhibition played a major role in furthering the education of the Soviet working people in the spirit of internationalism. It helped the republics to draw on each other's experience in agricultural production and promote broad contacts between people of all Soviet nationalities. The displays in the pavilions of the Union republics spoke of their achievements and prospects for the future. All this enabled the peoples to draw still closer together and work out common features in their economic activity and everyday life.

The working class continued to play the decisive role in narrowing the gap between town and country. Its co-operation with the collective-farm peasantry and technical assistance to the countryside were effectively conducted through the Machine and Tractor Stations, whose numbers

in the pre-war years of 1932-1940 increased from 2,400 to 7,100. The proportion of the collective farms they serviced rose to 85 per cent and the mechanisation of field work attained a higher level.

The intelligentsia, as under capitalism, remained an inter-class stratum. But it was no longer formed of people from antagonistic classes who occupied an intermediate position and consequently vacillated between the exploiters and the exploited. Under socialism, the intelligentsia was drawn from the workers and peasants and, by virtue of its social origin and status, was organically connected with these working, socialist classes, and was consequently a *socialist, people's* intelligentsia.

It was only natural, therefore, that it rapidly increased in numbers. In 1939 the intelligentsia made up 17.5 per cent of the country's population and in 1941 there were 2,400,000 specialists with a higher or secondary education as against 190,000 in 1913 and 521,000 in 1928.<sup>1</sup>

There were 908,000 specialists with a higher education in 1941 (in 1913 there were 136,000 and in 1928—233,000). The number of engineers and technicians employed in industry increased from 722,000 in 1937 to 932,000 in 1940. Of the 50,000 agricultural specialists in 1941 35,000 were agronomists, livestock experts, veterinary workers and foresters.<sup>2</sup>

All this was indicative of the *intensive process of the enhancement of the social homogeneity of Soviet society* and of the socio-class community of the working masses, which made rapid strides in the Soviet Union during those years. Of course, this process was based on the socio-economic community of the working class and the peasantry and their unity with the socialist intelligentsia.

At the same time the enhancement of the homogeneity of the Soviet society was also connected with the re-education of the exploiter elements, primarily the former kulaks and their families, through work. The Soviet Government, which undertook to provide the former kulaks with jobs, included them in the labour process and created conditions

<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 g.* (The National Economy of the USSR in 1958), Moscow, 1959, p. 102.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 528.

enabling them to work for the benefit of society. Some of the dispossessed kulaks were drawn into industrial production and the others (just under a half) into agricultural production.

In the early thirties agricultural, fishing and other artels uniting the former kulaks were set up in the regions where they had been resettled. In a way this could be regarded as the co-operation of the majority of the dispossessed kulak families who were not employed in industry. With time these artels became ordinary collective farms.

The process was completed with the victory of socialism in the USSR. In keeping with a government decision passed in 1938, these artels were made subject to the Rules of the ordinary agricultural artels. In less than a decade the former rural exploiters covered a road which took them from labour conscription through artels of a special type to ordinary collective farms.

It took a shorter time to re-educate the former kulaks who worked at industrial enterprises. All the factors of production and public influence helped them, especially the young people, to become real working people, shake off their resentment and anger at being dispossessed and become equal members of the production collectives of the Soviet working class.

In 1931 and 1934 the Central Executive Committee of the USSR adopted the procedure for rehabilitating the former kulaks.

Some of them refused to reconcile themselves to the loss of their dominating position in the countryside even after they had been resettled. They continued to struggle against Soviet rule and even planned to organise uprisings. These, however, were episodes in the life of the former kulaks, the majority of whom gradually joined the ranks of the Soviet working people.

The re-education through labour of the former kulaks in the USSR and their transformation into working people was the most striking example of the remaking of an entire exploiting class ever recorded in history.

The remaking of other sections of the exploiting classes and parasitical elements, which waded up an insignificant group compared with the kulaks, into honest working

people and their merger with the whole people followed a different course.

The social remaking of the former exploiting elements and their merger with the working people was an important aspect of the general process of the formation of the social homogeneity of the Soviet community.

The enhancement of the social homogeneity of Soviet society was mirrored in the development of Soviet statehood and socialist democracy.

The Constitution of the USSR adopted in 1936 proclaimed: "The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall be a socialist state of workers and peasants." This signified a further expansion of the socialist state's social foundation. While retaining its leading role in social development, the working class, however, voluntarily surrendered its legal privileges. Soviet democracy developed into a democracy of all working people, enjoying equal rights in all spheres of political activity.

Thus "the state began to grow into a nation-wide organization of the working people of socialist society. Proletarian democracy was growing more and more into a socialist democracy of the people as a whole".<sup>1</sup>

A major development was that the state no longer had to exercise its function of suppressing the resistance of the exploiter elements inside the country. At the same time it energised its organisational and educational functions and came to play an increasing role in consolidating the unity of the Soviet people as a socio-class and inter-nation community.

The community of the peoples of the USSR, the Soviet inter-nation community, attained an ever higher level of development.

In January 1938 the first session of the USSR Supreme Soviet elected the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet headed by President Mikhail Kalinin and 11 Vice-Presidents representing all the Union republics. The same year elections were held to the Supreme Soviets of the Union and Autonomous republics and, a year later, to the local Soviets of Working People's Deputies. Through direct and secret

<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, Moscow, 1961, p. 547.

ballot the working masses participated in the formation of organs of state administration from bottom to top.

The 1936 Constitution reflected the victory of socialism in the USSR and testified to the further strengthening of the state and political foundation of the Soviet community and the development of the socio-class and international unity of the Soviet people.

In the pre-war years the industrial development of the national republics proceeded at a rapid pace. It was particularly fast in the Central Asian republics, where in the period from 1932 to 1937 the number of industrial and office workers increased 59.5 per cent as compared with 22.2 per cent in the Central, Northern and North-Western Regions and the Ukraine.<sup>1</sup> Thus, the Soviet working class became truly multinational.

A major role in the history of the USSR and the formation of the Soviet international community was the accession of new republics and regions to the USSR in the pre-war years. "The reunification of the Ukrainian people in 1939-1945 and the reunification of the Byelorussian people in 1939," stated the Resolution of the CPSU Central Committee on the Preparations for the 50th Anniversary of the Formation of the USSR, "were noteworthy events in the life of our multinational socialist state. In 1940 the working people of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia in the course of revolutionary struggle re-established Soviet statehood. On the basis of the free expression of their people's will, the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian Soviet Republics joined the USSR. As a result of the reunification of the Moldavian people, the Moldavian ASSR was transformed into a Union Republic."

With the appearance of new republics in the USSR, its population increased by almost 20 million. Naturally, the economy of the new republics and regions and their class composition was at first characterised by diversity of economic structures and heterogeneity. But socialist transformations were launched in all spheres as soon as they restored the Soviet state system. The young republics of the

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<sup>1</sup> See *Izmeneniye v chislennosti i sostave sovetskogo rabocheho klassa* (Changes in the Size and Composition of the Soviet Working Class), p. 51.

USSR had made considerable headway in the socialist reorganisation of life even before the Second World War.

The Communist Party heightened its guiding and leading role in the formation of the Soviet people as a new historical community, as it did in all other fields of socialist construction. By the beginning of 1941 the Party had 3,500,000 members and candidates for membership. Consisting as it did of the most conscious and active representatives of the working class and all working people, the Party effectively performed its mission as the political leader of the people, the organiser and educator of the masses in the struggle for socialism and communism.

"In the 1930s", said Leonid Brezhnev in his report on the occasion of the centenary of Lenin's birth, "socialism was firmly established in every sphere of life in our country. The world saw a socialist industrial and collective-farm power moving forward in a determined, powerful drive. Conditions were being created for the next great stride along the way mapped out by Lenin.

"This was prevented by the war. The country was subjected to a piratical attack by the fascist invaders."<sup>1</sup>

Interrupting their peaceful labour, the Soviet people rose to defend the gains of the revolution and socialism.

## 2. THE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR: THE TEST OF THE UNITY OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

The Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany was the first and unprecedentedly rigorous test for the Soviet people as a new historical community.

As regards the Soviet people and the Communist Party, they had complete confidence in their strength. But those who started this war of aggrandisement in the hope of furthering their anti-Soviet plans and their abettors imagined that the Soviet people would fail to stand up to the forthcoming trials.

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Lenin's Cause Lives On and Triumphs*, Moscow, 1972, p. 27.

History abounds in examples of states which were conglomerates of heterogeneous ethnic groups and antagonistic classes and which crumbled under the onslaught of their more powerful enemies. By historical analogy, the enemies of the Soviet Union predicted for it the same fate.

Nazi Germany's politicians and strategists indulged in wishful thinking when they prepared the attack on the USSR and based their plans on the false concept of the instability of Soviet society, which they thought would immediately collapse under outside pressure. For example, they calculated on a split between the working class and the peasantry which, it was widely believed in the West, was organically opposed to the collective farms and would welcome those who would liberate them from the collective-farm system with open arms. Hitler's "experts" attached considerable importance to what they called the "seeming loyalty" of the Soviet intelligentsia to Soviet power and believed that this loyalty could easily turn into hostility in the event of war.

Yet it was the non-existent contradictions between the Soviet peoples which, in the opinion of the nazis, constituted the most powerful element of the imaginary "fifth column" in the USSR. They thought that in the event of a military clash with an external enemy, the "centrifugal movement" of the peoples of the USSR would take on such proportions that the Soviet Government would be powerless to stop it. The nazi leaders looked upon the multinational Soviet state as an "ethnic conglomerate" which lacked internal unity and, consequently, would fall apart at the first military setbacks. They ordered the military to bear this in mind and to foment national strife between the peoples in the occupied areas of the USSR, applying the time-honoured principle of "divide and rule".

Goering's "Green File" contained detailed instructions on this score: "In the Baltic states German organs should rely on the local Germans"; there followed a list of directions for making the best use of any contradictions between the peoples.

The war, however, showed that all these calculations and plans were built on sand.

Led by the Communist Party, the Soviet people displayed their monolithic unity to the full in the Great Patriotic War.



In those grim years they became deeply aware of their patriotic duty and rallied still closer together under the guidance of the Party.

The ordeals of the war firmly welded the Party and people together and enormously enhanced its prestige. Millions of servicemen and home front workers joined the Party, whose ranks during the war years were augmented by more than five million candidates for membership and 3.5 million full members, or almost as many as joined the Party between 1929 and 1941. The Soviet people were confident in the wisdom and strength of the Communist Party and under its leadership rose to a man to defend their land.

The alliance of the working class and the peasantry and the unity of will and action of the multinational Soviet people became still stronger during the war. A great purpose engendered an indomitable energy. "When a people has to achieve great and vital objectives," wrote Mikhail Kalinin, "when it has to fulfil enormous nation-wide tasks which are clearly defined and understandable, it builds up energy which overturns all obstacles in its way. It was an energy of this kind which arose in our people when a mortal danger loomed over our country, when every Soviet citizen, even the most backward collective-farm woman realised that everything was at stake, our life, our freedom, our national honour and the independence of our state."<sup>1</sup>

As always, the working class, the leading force in Soviet society, was in the forefront of the war effort. "The proletarian state has reared and educated me," said Sinitsin, a worker at the Moscow Transformer Plant, before leaving for the front. "I am indebted to it for everything. And now, at the decisive hour of the battle against the enemy of our homeland I voluntarily join the ranks of the Red Army. I promise, my friends, to fight for the happiness and freedom of our land, for the cause of all the toiling people."<sup>2</sup> Hundreds of thousands of workers volunteered for service; millions of them fought heroically at the front; and those who remained in the factories each did the work of two or even three

<sup>1</sup> M. I. Kalinin, *O kolkhoznom stroye i kolkhoznitsakh* (The Collective-Farm System and the Collective-Farm Women), Moscow, 1959, p. 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Trud*, July 3, 1941.

people, because in the years 1941-1942 the number of industrial and other workers employed in the economy dropped by 12,800,000. In the autumn of 1941 the workers of the Chelyabinsk Tractor Works pledged: "Our work ought to be wholly subordinated to the achievement of a single objective, that of turning out increasing amounts of output for the sake of victory over the enemy. We shall work without sparing our strength, as much as our homeland requires."<sup>1</sup> Rallying to the nation-wide slogan "All for the front, all for victory", all collectives and contingents of the working class toiled indefatigably to keep the army supplied with everything it needed.

By moving industry from the west to the east of the country, the workers and top administrative personnel wrote a glorious page in the history of the Great Patriotic War. It was an unprecedented task, both as regards its scale and the speed with which it was accomplished: 1,360 large enterprises and more than 10 million people were evacuated to the east between July and November 1941 alone.

Towards the end of 1942 the country had a well-organised defence industry capable of steadily increasing the production of weapons and equipment. In 1943 the Soviet Union gained the ascendancy over Nazi Germany in this field. One of the basic factors which enabled the Soviet people to defeat the powerful imperialist enemy was that "socialism ensured the invincible unity of the entire Soviet society, the might and unprecedented mobility of its economy".<sup>2</sup> It was the workers and the commanders of industry, their skill and dedicated labour, that made the Soviet economy powerful and mobile.

Alongside the working class, the Soviet peasantry fought the enemy on the battlefields and toiled on the home front. Rank-and-file collective farmers and collective-farm chairmen and many other organisers of the collective-farm movement were with the army in the field.

Workers and peasants heroically fought the enemy on the vast front which extended for thousands of kilometres. Now the peasants were defending other interests than in the October Revolution and the Civil War.

<sup>1</sup> *Chelyabinsky rabochy*, November 4, 1941.

<sup>2</sup> *On the Centenary of the Birth of V. I. Lenin*, Moscow, 1970, p. 24.

In the Great Patriotic War the collective farmers stood up in defence of freedom and socialism. The war showed that the Soviet peasants had fully benefited from the school of collective-farm life and had become a socialist class. This was an important asset for the Soviet Army, for the majority of its fighting men were collective farmers.

The collective farms shouldered the tremendous burden of providing the front and the country with food and industry with raw materials. At the beginning of the war the Soviet Union lost almost 50 per cent of its cultivated area. The regions temporarily occupied by the enemy contained 47 per cent of the total sown area and 45 per cent of the cattle population, and while it proved possible to move out a part of the cattle, it was impossible to transfer the fields.... The task of growing more grain on a much smaller area was all the more difficult because up to 40 per cent of the able-bodied adult population was in the armed forces. So, as was the case in industry, the men who went to the front were replaced by those who remained at home, including youngsters and old people who had long been retired on pension.

Addressing a meeting at a collective farm in Kuibyshev Region, P. Fedyakin, an elderly collective-farmer said: "I'm not used to speaking in public. But now I cannot remain silent. At such a time youngsters and old folk, all have to work on our collective farm. There should be no lack of discipline among the collective farmers. So let's work! If necessary, we, old people, will work nights, too. I wish to tell our sons... smite the enemy and have no fears about the collective farm, we shall rear and reap the harvest, never fear."<sup>1</sup>

Thanks to the heroic labour of the rural population, the army and the country had an uninterrupted supply of the necessary minimum of foodstuffs. Such was the great contribution of the Soviet countryside to the economic victory over nazism.

As regards the Soviet intelligentsia, it too played an inestimable role in securing the Soviet people's victory over nazi Germany. Men of science, technology and culture gave unstintingly of their talent and skill to help their country

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, July 6, 1941.

and her armed forces. Scientists devised ways of neutralising magnetic mines, designed radar installations, devices for piloting ships and aircraft and for artillery fire control. Of particular importance was the method of obtaining high-octane petrol discovered by a team of chemists led by N. D. Zelinsky. Thanks to the achievements of medical scientists, approximately 75 per cent of the wounded personnel were able to return to active service. Social scientists did much to strengthen the morale of the people. Over a thousand writers were with the army in the field as correspondents, political officers or commanders, and many of them met a hero's death. Composers and painters created a large number of patriotic works which enriched the spiritual world of the Soviet people, strengthened their confidence in the ultimate victory and inspired them to perform acts of heroism in the fight against the enemy.

Thus, in the Great Patriotic War the Soviet people proved its unconquerable strength as a socio-class community of workers, peasants and intellectuals.

The war shattered the enemy's hopes of splitting the international unity of the peoples of the USSR. In the grim trials of the war the Soviet community demonstrated its invincibility. All the nations and nationalities of the Soviet Union rose in a single wave to the defence of their land and their socialist gains. Millions of people, the sons and daughters of all the peoples of the Soviet Union, went to the front from all the cities and villages in all the Soviet republics. Here is a splendid example of their patriotism: a collective-farm shepherd in a Kazakh village asked the local military commissar to enlist his four sons into the army. "They are all splendid horsemen, their bodies are used to the saddle, their hands know how to wield a sword and their hearts are filled with hatred for the enemy. Take them!"

Apart from units which consisted of representatives of many nationalities, the Soviet Army had national formations made up of people coming from the various Caucasian, Central Asian and Baltic republics. On all sectors of the front people of different nationalities fought shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. For example, Sergeant Pavlov's group which for 50 days and nights defended a building, now called Pavlov's House, in Stalingrad against inces-

sant enemy attacks consisted of three Russians, two Ukrainians, two Georgians, an Uzbek, a Kazakh, a Tajik, a Tatar and an Abkhazian.

The Soviet people's militant internationalism was a natural outcome of the common basic interests with which socialism united all the peoples of the USSR into an indestructible alliance. Whatever his nationality, a Soviet person regarded the town where he happened to be in wartime as his native town, every patch of Soviet land as a patch of his native land.

In the autumn of 1941 the beleaguered Leningrad received by a radio the "Message" written by the 95-year old Kazakh bard Jambul whose opening lines were:

"Leningraders, my children!  
Leningraders, my pride!  
In the jet of a stream  
That flow in the steppe  
The jet of the Neva's reflected."

In October 1942 the working people of Uzbekistan sent a letter to the Uzbek servicemen telling them to fight bravely shoulder to shoulder with the sons of all the peoples of the Soviet homeland. "Free sons and daughters of the Uzbek people! Your people is the offspring of the Soviet Union. For 25 years together with you the Russian, Ukrainian, Byelorussian, Azerbaijanian, Georgian, Armenian, Tajik, Turkmen, Kazakh and the Kirghiz night and day built our big house, our country, our culture.... You should not wait for the insidious and bloodthirsty bandit to break into your street, but drive him away from your brothers' doorstep. For your street begins in Byelorussia and the home of Ukrainian in your home."<sup>1</sup>

Their unity on the battlefield was matched by their unity on the home-front. Besides tackling the common task of raising the efficiency of production, they had to help put the industrial enterprises which had been evacuated to their republics into operation. In the years 1941-1942 more than 250 large industrial enterprises and 40 light industry factories were evacuated to the Soviet Central Asian Republics

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, October 31, 1942.

and Kazakhstan, where they were reassembled and put into service. In addition to industrial enterprises with a large number of workers, hundreds of educational, research and cultural institutions and other organisations were moved to these distant areas. The working people of the Soviet republics coped successfully with these difficult tasks. This was a large part of their inestimable contribution to the common cause of the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany.

The USSR was victorious in the Great Patriotic War thanks to the high consciousness and dedication of the Soviet people and their glorious armed forces, thanks to the indestructible unity of the workers, peasants and intellectuals and the inviolable fraternal union of the peoples of the USSR. For meritorious action and heroism seven million men of the fighting forces, representatives of 100 nationalities of the Soviet land, were awarded orders and medals, and 11,603 were made Heroes of the Soviet Union.

The war caused irreparable losses to the Soviet people. Twenty million people died for their country, for its happy future. But the Soviet people emerged from this hard-fought battle against the shock force of world imperialist reaction with a still greater degree of *political and moral* unity and invincibility.

Victory in the Great Patriotic War made the Soviet people, the socio-class and inter-nation community of working people of the USSR, even more monolithic and viable.

### 3. FACTORS IN THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOVIET SOCIALIST COMMUNITY

After the Great Patriotic War the Soviet people returned to peaceful labour. Their creative efforts brought about the complete and final victory of socialism and the establishment of a *developed* socialist society in the USSR. In the CC CPSU's Report to the 24th Party Congress Leonid Brezhnev pointed out the following important historical fact: "The developed socialist society to which Lenin referred in 1918 as being the future of our country has been built by the selfless labour of the Soviet people."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, Moscow, 1971, pp. 47-48.

In the course of their society's advance towards socialism the Soviet community of working people also grew stronger and became a *developed* socialist community.

Having become a historical community, the Soviet people now relied for its development on the qualitatively new socio-economic, political and cultural conditions which were created during the construction of socialism and its further progress. These conditions were linked with the *improvement of socialist social relations, the strengthening of the material and technical basis of socialism and the growth of the culture and consciousness of the broad masses of the people.*

Let us look into the more important of these conditions which were directly connected with the future of the Soviet community and became general factors of its development as a socio-class and inter-nation community.

The most important of these conditions was the further strengthening of the socialist principles in the economy and the establishment of a *developed socialist economy* in the country.

The postwar economy of the USSR saw an intensive improvement of socialist relations of production. Specific tasks confronted the new Soviet republics, where the postwar rehabilitation of the economy merged with further socialist changes, the collectivisation of agriculture in the first place. By drawing on the experience of the old republics and the all-round assistance of the federal state, these republics were able to facilitate the collectivisation of agriculture and carry through the socialist changes at a relatively rapid pace. In 1949 collective farms in the Latvian SSR embraced 98.4 of the peasant households and the situation was the same in Estonia. In Lithuania the collectivisation of agriculture was in the main completed in 1951. Thus, at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s socialism was established in the new Soviet republics, and, together with all the fraternal republics, they went ahead with the construction of a developed socialist society.

Once this historic task had been accomplished, the economy of the USSR became *fully and absolutely socialist*. While in 1937 the socialist economy accounted for 99 per cent of the country's fixed production assets, 99.1 per cent of the national income, 99.8 per cent of the industrial output, 99.5 per cent of the gross agricultural production and 100 per

cent of the retail trade turnover of the trading organisations, in 1970 it accounted for 100 per cent in all these spheres.

With the establishment of a developed socialist society, substantial changes took place in its *social structure*. All non-socialist elements disappeared, including individual peasants and handicraftsmen who were not members of co-operatives and who in 1939 comprised 2.6 per cent and in 1959, 0.3 per cent of the total population.

In the economic sphere industry developed much faster than agriculture. This was a major factor in the creation of the material and technical basis of socialism and its further development in preparation for the transition to communism. In the period from 1940 to 1970 the fixed assets of industry increased 1,085 per cent and those of agriculture 425 per cent.<sup>1</sup>

The ratio between the urban and rural population changed substantially. In 1940 it was 33 : 67 and in 1970—56 : 44. Thus the proportion of the urban population is considerably larger than that of the rural. From 1926 to 1971 955 new towns and 2,223 urban-type communities were built in the USSR.

There were other social phenomena which appeared as a result of the developed socialist social relations. The percentage of people *employed* in various branches of the national economy rose from 46.2 per cent in 1939 to 47.8 per cent in 1970.<sup>2</sup> The growth in the number of employed women is a notable fact. In a socialist society a woman is a fully independent person who earns her own living and participates in socio-political activity. It should be recalled that in tsarist Russia women comprised only 19 per cent of the gainfully employed population. In the USSR in 1970 they comprised 50 per cent, and an even greater proportion among the mental workers. There are groups of mental workers—medical specialists, teachers and others—where women constitute the absolute majority.

One highly interesting demographic trend is the growing *mobility* of the population. The gigantic scale of construction taking place in many parts of the USSR, the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, pp. 60, 22, 46.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.



the working people have discarded what can be termed as "local conservatism", and the introduction of moral and material incentives tend to make people more willing to move from place to place; now increasing numbers of people freely and easily change their place of residence and work and move from one microenvironment to another.

Sociological studies show that the degree of the mobility of people in all socio-professional groups depends on a number of factors. We shall examine two of them.

Young people are more mobile than people of the older generation, and in the USSR the proportion of the former is steadily increasing. In 1970 people under the age of 30 comprised more than 50 per cent of the total population.

It should also be noted that the degree of mobility rises with the educational level. Since the level of education is rising continuously the scale of migration naturally increases. Migration in Soviet society, however, does not follow a haphazard pattern. In effect it is an organised migration, aimed at further developing the natural resources and productive forces in sparsely populated areas. At the same time this planned migration is conducted on a *strictly voluntary* basis.

In the mid-1950s hundreds of thousands of people moved to develop virgin and long-fallow lands in Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Urals Area and elsewhere; a large number of people from all parts of the country went to work at the construction sites of industrial giants in Siberia and other parts of the country.

Mobility is an important factor in the exchange of work habits and life styles. Intensive migration has a very favourable impact on the further intermixing of people of different nationalities and natives of the most diverse parts of the country. The production collectives at large construction sites, or industrial enterprises invariably consist of people of dozens of nationalities.

Finally, special mention should be made of the rising level of *organisation* of the Soviet people's socio-political activity. This organisation has two sources: 1) the organising principles operating in the production collectives of workers and peasants and state employees, and 2) the unifying principles

operating in Soviet public organisations. Let us glance at the latter source.

Besides industrial enterprises, various institutions and educational establishments employing workers, peasants and intellectuals, the Soviet Union has numerous public organisations embracing broad masses of the working people who without payment perform various functions and assignments. Public organisations have different charters or rules and forms of activity, but a single purpose: to rear their members in the spirit of socialist awareness, organisation and activity.

The *trade unions* are the biggest mass organisation in the Soviet Union. In 1971 their membership totalled over 93 million and included almost all industrial and office workers. In the middle of the sixties trade unions were established at collective farms, where farm-machinery operators and other agricultural specialists became members. In 1970 about 20 per cent of the collective farmers were members of rural trade unions. Another mass public organisation and one which plays a very important role in the life of the Soviet youth is the All-Union Lenin Young Communist League (YCL or Komsomol) which in 1971 embraced about 28 million people. Besides the trade unions, the Komsomol and the co-operative societies there are a number of smaller mass organisations, among them the All-Union Znaniye (Knowledge) Society, which in 1970 had over two million members engaged in the dissemination of scientific and political knowledge; the All-Union Society of Inventors and Rationalisers with a membership of 5,700,000; the Scientific and Technical Society with 4,700,000 members; the Voluntary Society for Assisting the Army, Air Force and Navy (DOSAAF); the Society for the Protection of Nature and many others.

*The Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the ruling party of the Soviet state, its guiding and leading force, the vanguard of the working class and of the whole Soviet people, occupies a special place in the system of public organisations. It is leadership by the Communist Party that chiefly accounts for the high level of organisation of the Soviet people, of its ideological and political unity, consciousness and creative initiative. The Party's leading role and the authority it carries with the Soviet people increased to a still greater extent in*

the course of the completion of socialist construction and the establishment of a developed socialist society. The CPSU is conducting extensive and fruitful work in the field of educating the people in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology and fidelity to communist ideas and socialist internationalism. Its leading role is of decisive importance for the further strengthening of the socio-class and international unity of the Soviet people.

In 1959 the CPSU had 8.2 million full and candidate members, and in 1970 a total of 14.4 million Communists were united in 370,000 primary Party organisations.

These are some of the economic and socio-political factors of the development of the socialist community of Soviet people.

Its development is closely connected with the continued improvement of the material and technical conditions of socialist progress. In order to make a full assessment of the changes in this field, it is necessary to recall the tremendous damage which the material and technical basis of Soviet society sustained in the war and the consequences of the barbarous devastation caused by the nazi hordes as they retreated from temporarily occupied Soviet territory.

The nazi aggression threw many key branches of the Soviet economy many years back in their development. It was only thanks to the socialist social system and the Soviet people's selfless labour that the national economy was restored in the first postwar five-year period.

Only two figures are needed to illustrate the growth of the Soviet Union's economic potential and the material basis of Soviet society. In 1970 the Soviet economy in a single day turned out almost 2,000 million rubles' worth of the social product, or almost ten times more than at the end of the thirties. Investments in the national economy in 1970 amounted to 82,000 million rubles or nearly 1.5 times more than under the first three five-year plans taken together.

*Technological progress* plays a most important part in strengthening internal bonds, the interdependence and unity of the component elements of the Soviet community. Technology is a mighty factor in the drawing together of people and social and national groups, a factor in social integration and the internationalisation of the life of individuals and peoples.

A machine is oblivious to social and national peculiarities; its language is the most universal and international language there is. And it is a popular language in the intercourse between various social groups and nations.

In the last years of socialist construction and the establishment of a developed socialist society, the Soviet Union made a major step in technological progress. It designed and built an enormous number of sophisticated machines and equipment, carried through an extensive modernisation of production technology and made considerable headway in the mechanisation and automation of production.

Technological progress was organically connected with major scientific achievements, with the transformation of science into a direct productive force of society. Hence the term "scientific and technological revolution". The Soviet Union's successes in this field in the past 10-15 years are well known and universally recognised.

The most striking proof of this are the achievements of the Soviet Union in *space exploration*: the launching of the world's first earth satellite, the flights of automatic laboratories to Venus and the transmission of valuable information directly from its surface, *Yuri Gagarin's pioneering orbital space flight* and the many-day group flights of the manned *Soyuz* spaceships.

Lenin pointed out in his day that each newly-built kilometre of railway intensified the internationalisation of economic life, for transport and communications play a tremendous role in bringing people and nations closer together.

The proverb "A road is expensive, but roadlessness is even more expensive" is correct not only in the sense that those who travel on bad roads incur material losses. It has an incomparably deeper socio-economic and socio-cultural meaning. Old Russia owed her economic and cultural backwardness to lack of railways and communications between various parts of the country, national areas and numerous backwoods.

Among the industrially advanced countries pre-revolutionary Russia had the least developed railway system. Moreover, 83 per cent of the railways were in the European part and only 17 per cent ran through the Asian part which was three times bigger. There was an especially great shortage of roads in the national regions of the East. The single-

track Samara-Orenburg-Tashkent Railway was the only line which connected Central Asia with the country's railway system. There were no direct railway communications with Siberia and no railways in Eastern and Central Kazakhstan. All other types of transport were extremely poorly developed. Road and air transport was virtually non-existent, and waterways totalled only 65,000 kilometres.

In his travel notes *From Siberia* Anton Chekhov recounted an amusing conversation with a rich peasant in Krasny Yar, where he stopped over on his way to Sakhalin in 1890:

"Are you from Russia?" he asked me.

"Yes."

"Never been there. There are a few people here who've been to Tomsk and now they're holding their noses in the air as if they'd seen the whole world. The newspapers say we'll soon have a railway. I know that steam drives the engine. But there is something I don't understand, sir. Suppose the engine passes through the village. That means that it will smash the houses and run over people."

He listened attentively to my explanation and said: "Well, what d'you know!"

The underdeveloped system of roads and communications was a heavy legacy from tsarist Russia and greatly handicapped the Soviet Union's economic and cultural growth.

Without adequate transport and communication facilities it was impossible to organise the economic link between town and country, to close the cultural gap between them and to consolidate the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. It was impossible to develop intensive co-operation and the drawing together of the peoples and further their national consolidation.

That was why the GOELRO Plan adopted in 1920 fixed the principal trends in the rehabilitation, reconstruction and development of transport and provided for the creation of efficient and cheap transport means which "could bring together the remote parts of the republic and turn it into a single and more compact economic body".

The Soviet Union launched the extensive construction of transport and communication facilities. By 1941 the railway system had increased by 30,000 kilometres as com-

pared with the pre-revolutionary period. Among the newly-built railways the Turkestan-Siberian Trunk Line, completed in the first five-year plan period, played an important role in the development of the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan. Railway links between the eastern and western parts of the country were expanded. In 1970 the Soviet Union had 135,200 kilometres of railways as compared with 106,100 in 1940.

Sea, river, road and air transport also developed extensively in the Soviet Union. In 1928 the country had practically no air service; in 1940 the total length of airline routes was 146,300 kilometres and in 1970 773,400 kilometres. That year Soviet airlines carried 71,400,000 passengers.

One of the heroes of Anatole France's novel *La Vie en Fleur* expressed the view that, with time and as a result of progress in aeronautics when millions of people would be travelling by air, "frontiers would cease to exist and all people would form a single people". Though this was a utopian thought, travel by air shrinks distances and does a great deal to bring peoples closer together. Today it takes a person as much time to fly from Frunze, the capital of Kirghizia, to Moscow, as it once took a Kirghiz to travel to a neighbouring village.

Communication facilities also developed rapidly. In 1913 old Russia had only 11,000 post offices, most of which were in towns. In 1918 the Council of People's Commissars authorised the establishment of 3,000 post and telegraph offices in rural areas. The delivery of mail to peasants' homes began in 1925.

Russia, the land where radio was first invented, was far behind other countries in the field of radio communication. The first radio broadcasting station was opened in Moscow in the autumn of 1922. In 1939 the Moscow and Leningrad television centres began regular broadcasts. The development of television was interrupted by the war.

Today television has become part of everyday life. It enriches people culturally and strengthens the links between the various parts of the country. In 1940 there were only 400 TV sets in the country, while in 1970 their number totalled 34.8 million. Thanks to the Orbita Communication Satellite System which embraces the Far North, the Far East,

Siberia and Central Asia, 70 per cent of the country's population now watch television programmes.

The higher the peoples' level of literacy and education the greater their urge to communicate with each other and the faster they develop their links and consequently speed up their mutual enrichment both in the material and cultural spheres. The *rising educational and cultural level of the population is an important factor of the unity of the community*, particularly in the socialist social system.

The level of literacy and education among all sections of the people rose rapidly during the construction of a developed socialist society. In 1940 87.4 per cent of people between the age of 9 and 49 were literate and in 1970—99.7 per cent. Considering that 0.3 per cent of the illiterate were persons who were unable to study, owing to physical handicaps or chronic ailments, it can be said that the USSR is a land of total literacy. Needless to say, the people of a socialist society have to be educated, not only literate.

In the past several decades the educational level has risen tremendously in the Soviet Union. During the eighth five-year plan period considerable progress was achieved in promoting universal secondary education. In 1970 an estimated 80 per cent of the pupils with an eight-year schooling went on to study in secondary schools. The number of people with a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education increased more than 4.5 times between 1939 and 1971. Today out of every thousand people at the age of 10 years and over, 496 have a higher or secondary education.<sup>1</sup>

*Books* play an important role in consolidating the Soviet community of people and bringing their cultures closer together.

In the first years of the revolution Lenin demanded that the People's Commissariat for Education and other cultural institutions should concentrate not on publishing books but on teaching the population to read. Within a period of 15 or 20 years the vast majority of the people were literate and in another 10 or 15 years the Soviet Union became a country where more reading was done than anywhere else in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoy e khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 23

Soviet people are avid readers, and the Soviet Union today publishes more books than any other country.

Books carry the reader through time and space, they link him with the past and the future, and with his contemporaries on other continents. But there are all sorts of books. Not all of them serve to enlighten people, to elevate them intellectually and morally, and not all books are capable of uniting the working people.

Nadezhda Krupskaya used to say: "There are books that organise and books that disorganise, therefore it is extremely important to choose the right books to read." From the very beginning Soviet publishing houses have been endeavouring to publish books which organise the working people and unite them by common views on life and understanding of public duty.

In 1913 30,000 book titles in 99 million copies were published on the territory now comprising the Soviet Union. In 1940 a total of 46,000 books in 462,000,000 copies were put out in the Soviet Union. The fact that the number of book titles increased by just over 1.5 times and the number of copies by more than 4.5 times testified to the increase in the number of readers. Formerly only a narrow circle of people belonging to the propertied classes read books, whereas in Soviet times the reading public includes broad sections of the people.

"Tolstoy the artist is known to an infinitesimal minority even in Russia," Lenin wrote in 1910. "If his great works are really to be made the possession of *all*, a struggle must be waged against the system of society which condemns millions and scores of millions to ignorance, benightedness, drudgery and poverty—a socialist revolution must be accomplished."<sup>1</sup> Since the revolution millions of workers and peasants have read the works of Tolstoy and other classics.

Nearly 2,400,000 books (36,500 million copies) were published in the USSR between 1918 and 1970. More and more books are being published each year. In 1970 Soviet publishing houses put out 78,900 books (1,362 million copies) in 145 languages, including 89 languages of the Soviet peoples.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "L. N. Tolstoy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 323.



It is estimated that the USSR accounts for 25 per cent of the total annual world book output.

In 1971 there were 360,000 libraries with 3,324 million books and magazines in the country. But there are books in every Soviet family and many have well-stocked personal libraries. Socialism has created a mass reading public.

Books and all other publications and the entire system of cultural and political education of the working people in the USSR serve the cause of rearing conscious and active builders of socialism and communism.

The Party's chief task in communist education is to help Soviet people develop a scientific world outlook and a Marxist-Leninist ideology. The entire system of humanitarian education in all types of Soviet school, extra-mural political self-education of the working people and their ideological and political education is geared to this aim. Instruction in social sciences in general education and special schools and in institutions of higher learning is being continuously improved. For example, instruction in social sciences in schools and lectures in scientific communism in institutions of higher learning improve the ideological grounding of the rising generation. A major role in the ideological and political education of the people and in raising the theoretical qualifications of the administrative personnel is played by the system of Party education, which embraces a steadily increasing number of people studying Marxist-Leninist theory, the history of the Party and contemporary politics. In the 1969/70 academic year 16 million Communists and non-Party members attended lectures in the system of political education. About 3.3 million people attended 15,800 people's universities where they studied politics, economy and history.

In their ideological activity the Party and the Soviet scientific community attach no small importance to anti-religious propaganda in view of the considerable religious prejudices which still exist among the people, and the activity of the church. In the USSR, where the Constitution guarantees freedom of religious worship and of anti-religious propaganda for all citizens, there are many churches and religions, including the Russian Orthodox, Roman-Catholic, Armenian-Gregorian, Georgian Orthodox, Evangelical Christian Baptist, Moslem, Buddhist and Jewish. All these reli-

gious trends and sects are harmful not only because they nourish all sorts of unscientific outlooks and prejudices which prevent the people from correctly understanding the meaning of life, but also because they morally disunite the believers and disorganise the working people. The division of people into religious communities seriously impedes the further development of the Soviet community. Therefore, the emancipation of people from religious prejudices, or their secularisation, is a factor which goes a long way towards strengthening the moral unity of the Soviet people.

As a result of the scientific anti-religious propaganda which has been conducted from the day the USSR came into existence, the influence of the church and religion has declined considerably.

The Party has made the study of the works of the founders of scientific communism and their continuer, Lenin, the basis of its entire propaganda and ideological and educational work. The number and the size of the editions of these works show the scope and scale of the ideological work carried on in the country. Between 1917 and 1970 the works of Marx and Engels were published in 2,565 editions totalling more than 93,500,000 copies. Lenin's works were published in 10,871 editions (more than 387,500,000 copies). In the period from 1969 to 1971 Lenin's works and works about Lenin and Leninism were published in editions numbering over 76 million copies.

The Marxist-Leninist ideology, which has become the dominating ideology of the Soviet people, firmly cements their spiritual unity.

Socialism's successes in all walks of life were accompanied by a steady growth of the consciousness and creative activity of the people. These lofty social qualities of the Soviet people manifested themselves to the full in the development of socialist competition.

Lenin's idea of competition had long ago become the most powerful moral stimulus to the selfless labour of millions of workers, collective farmers and intellectuals. The competition of the working people under socialism is characterised by their mutual assistance in mastering advanced methods of labour and raising the efficiency of social production. To an enormous extent the Soviet Union owes its outstand-

ing economic achievements to the far-flung competition which accompanied socialist construction at all its stages. As the USSR entered the period of full-scale socialist construction and transition to communism, the socialist competition also entered a new stage in its development, the stage of the movement for communist labour, which was inaugurated at the end of the fifties and involved millions of forward-thinking workers, collective farmers and intellectuals. By the beginning of 1971 there were approximately 18 million communist labour shock-workers. Following their example, an increasing number of workers became innovators and leading people in industry, agriculture and other branches of production.

Such, in general, are the most important socio-economic, material and technical, political, cultural and ideological conditions which made it possible to build a developed socialist society in the USSR and which at the same time were factors in the integration of the population and the further drawing together of its social and ethnic formations, and factors in the continuing development of the Soviet community as a whole.

Let us now examine the development of this community in two of its aspects: socio-class and inter-nation aspects.

#### 4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOCIO-CLASS COMMUNITY OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

The Soviet people is a community of two friendly classes and the intelligentsia; simultaneously it is a community of socialist nations and nationalities. In examining the correlation between these two aspects, it is necessary to take into account the *pre-eminence of the class factor over the national factor*.

"In any really serious and profound political issues," Lenin pointed out, "sides are taken according to classes, not nations."<sup>1</sup>

In principle, Lenin's tenet fully applies also to the groups

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Critical Remarks on the National Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 36.

of people forming the Soviet community. Inasmuch as classes and class distinctions still exist under socialism, they are the main determinants of the structure and the nature of society. The Soviet people are a *socio-class unity of working people*. Therein lies its strength and vitality. The socio-class unity of the Soviet people is the foundation of the *socialist international community of people*. The Soviet nations and nationalities constitute a lasting inter-nation community, insofar as they themselves consist solely of working people, of socialist classes and social groups. Having a socialist socio-class nature, the nations and nationalities of the USSR naturally gravitate towards each other and form a viable international community.

That is why, in examining the most important stages in the development of the Soviet community under socialism, we begin with its socio-class aspect.

In the course of the completion of socialist construction and the establishment of a developed socialist society, certain changes took place in the structure of Soviet society: the proportion between its three components—the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia changed, and it became socially homogeneous to an increasing degree.

The continuous *quantitative and qualitative growth of the working class* is a law-governed and vitally important fact. The working class occupies a key position in the national economy and together with the scientific and technical cadres determines the future of society's material and technical basis. It also plays a great role in the further perfection of socialist relations.

As a result of its rapid growth in the period under review, the working class has become numerically the biggest social force in Soviet society; in 1970 it totalled 62 million people, slightly over 55 per cent of the whole population, as against 32.5 per cent in 1939. Thus, Soviet society's leading class also acquired a numerical majority, a factor of exceptional importance for the consolidation of the community of working people.

It was the collective farm peasants who more than anyone else swelled the ranks of the working class. Another circumstance that merits special attention is the relatively rapid growth in the number of agricultural workers, especially the

personnel of the state farms. The number of agricultural workers increased from about 1,800,000 in 1940 to nearly 9,800,000 in 1970. Together with industrial, transport, building, communications, education, medical and other workers employed in state organisations, workers and employees living in the countryside comprised 61 per cent of the total number of workers in the countryside. City-dwellers who moved to the countryside in the periods of the upsurge of agricultural production and improvement of the economic conditions in villages also augmented the ranks of rural workers. This was a new tendency, that of reciprocal exchange of cadres between workers and peasants. The process was an important factor in bridging the gap between town and country and obliterating socio-professional and cultural distinctions and differences in living conditions between the rural and urban populations.

In recent years school-leavers have noticeably increased the numbers of the working class. For example, in 1970 more than 2,600,000 people received a complete ten-year education. A third of them went on to study at universities and institutes and two-thirds took up work at various industrial and other enterprises.<sup>1</sup> These young men and women substantially raised the educational level of the working class. But they lacked the necessary professional experience. To eliminate this shortcoming, a large number of technical schools training skilled workers from among young people with a secondary education was established in the system of vocational education.

The growth in the number of skilled workers, the increased demand for qualified labour, the appearance of new professions and the modification of old ones are characteristic features of the present-day Soviet working class, occasioned by the demands of the scientific and technological revolution.

The growth of the workers' cultural and technical standards and their professional skill depends on their educational level. Progress in this field has been very considerable. In 1926, at the end of the first decade of Soviet rule, less than

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye obrazovaniye, nauka i kultura v SSSR* (Public Education, Science and Culture in the USSR), Moscow, 1971, pp. 102, 187.

1.5 per cent of the manual workers had a secondary education. On the eve of the Great Patriotic War 8.2 per cent of the workers had a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education, 38.6 per cent in 1959 and 55 per cent in 1970.

At the same time the workers became more technically-minded. In 1959, within a year of its establishment the All-Union Society of Inventors and Rationalisers counted 504,400 workers among its members. In 1970 it had over three million workers, or well over 50 per cent of the total membership. In the Scientific and Technical Society the proportion of workers increased from 8.2 per cent in 1956 to 12.3 per cent in 1971. It should be borne in mind that this society is concerned with serious problems of the scientific and technological revolution.

Among the advanced workers there are many innovators whose role in technological progress is just as important as that of engineers and highly qualified specialists and for whom the boundary between physical and mental labour has ceased to exist.

A. V. Victorov, a fitter at the 1st State Bearing Plant and leader of a team of workers mastering new machines and equipment was elected to the presidium of the 24th CPSU Congress. During the eighth five-year plan period he made 70 new devices which raised the efficiency of the new equipment. Referring to the work of his team he said: "We find it interesting. Our job is to improve and heighten the technology of production.... We are not workers in the ordinary sense of the word, for we have an equal say with the designers and technologists at all discussions at which we also submit our recommendations and corrections."

The working class is enhancing its leading role in society as a result of its increasing political awareness and rising level of organisation. The best proof of this is the strengthening of the workers' nucleus in the Party. There was a particularly steady growth in the proportion of workers in the CPSU membership over the past decade. In 1959 workers made up 32.6 per cent of its membership and 40.1 per cent in 1970. The 24th CPSU Congress noted that of the three million people who had been accepted into the Party since the 23rd Congress, more than 50 per cent, or about 1,600,000, were workers.

More and more workers are being elected to the Soviets. Between 1957 and 1969 alone the percentage of workers among the deputies to the Soviets increased from 15.5 to 35. Workers' deputies comprised about a third (481) of the deputies in both chambers of the 1970 USSR Supreme Soviet.

The Soviet working class plays the leading role in all spheres of social activity. This, however, does not detract from the role played by the peasantry in society, for agriculture is the principal source of food and of raw materials for the light industry. Therefore, farmers and cattle breeders still occupy an important place among the peasantry.

At the same time, however, the proportion of the peasantry and of the rural population as a whole is steadily decreasing in the social structure of Soviet society. This is a natural phenomenon, for in view of intensive mechanisation agricultural production no longer requires as many workers as formerly.

In 1939 peasants accounted for 49.8 per cent of the total population (of them collective farmers and artisans united in co-operatives made up 47.2 per cent, and individual farmers and self-employed artisans—2.6 per cent). In 1970 the collective farmers and artisans united in co-operatives made up only 20 per cent.<sup>1</sup> There were three reasons for this: some of the collective farmers became industrial workers, some became state farm workers and others became workers when their villages were transformed into urban-type communities. As a result of the transformation of a section of the collective-farm peasants into state-farm workers, the "demography of the collective farmers" not only alters the proportion between the urban and rural population, but also influences the structure of the whole population. The proportion of the peasants is declining both in the population of the whole country, and in the rural population.

Between 1940 and 1970 the number of state farms increased from 4,159 to 14,994, while the number of collective farms dropped from 236,900 to 33,600. The sharp reduction in the number of collective farms was due to two factors:

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 22.

the transformation of a part of them into state farms and the enlargement of many others. There was also a fall in the number of collective-farm households: 18,700,000 in 1940 and 14,400,000 in 1970. The size of the collective-farm peasantry also diminished. In 1939 the collective-farmers accounted for 67 per cent of the rural population and in 1970 for less than 50 per cent.

Thus, *the correlation between the two classes of the Soviet society steadily changed in favour of the working class in the course of socialist construction.* When socialist construction was launched, there were from five to six times more peasants than workers, while in the period of developed socialism and the gradual transition to communism the peasants comprised the absolute minority. In 1970 the ratio between the peasants and the workers was 1 : 2.75.

This circumstance, however, does not make the problem of the proportion between the working class and the collective-farm peasantry less important. It is the principal problem of the social structure of Soviet society and of the sustained development of the social community of working people of the USSR.

The crux of this problem is the need to erase the class distinctions between the workers and the peasants and achieve a complete approximation of the two forms of socialist ownership of the means of production which these two classes represent.

Soviet society has made considerable headway in these two directions in the course of its socio-economic development, particularly during the last decade.

When speaking of drawing closer together the two forms of public property, it is necessary to bear in mind the two basic principles of this process. First, the drawing together of the co-operative form of public property and the property of the whole people is a natural phenomenon stemming from the very nature of the collective-farm system, one which gains in intensity as the collective farms continue to develop. Second, this approximation is connected with the increasing assistance rendered by the working class to the collective-farm peasantry, chiefly in the matter of strengthening the technical basis of agriculture and raising labour productivity at collective farms.



Life itself has already fixed the ways for the drawing together of these two forms of socialist property.

In this process the main role is played by the growth of the collective farms' non-distributable funds, the substantial changes taking place in their character, and by the increasing socialisation of the means of production. Non-distributable funds are the foundation of collective-farm property, the main factor in the improvement of the collective nature of the life of collective farmers and their common interests. The growth of the non-distributable funds not only testifies to the economic strength of the collective farms but is also an indication of the further drawing together of their economy and that of the whole people. The non-distributable funds are very close to the property of the whole people both in structure and the manner in which they are utilised.

The growth in the level of socialisation of collective-farm production manifested itself first and foremost in the establishment of large collective farms through the merger of small ones. It is most important to note that the enlargement of the collective farms is a major factor in the consolidation of the community of economic, socio-political and cultural activity of the mass of the collective farmers and the improvement of their living conditions.

A major role in strengthening the social principles in the life of the collective farmers and the drawing together of the two forms of public property is also played by the steadily increasing number of inter-collective-farm associations which build power stations, irrigation systems, roads and large production, cultural and other projects. In 1970 there were 4,554 inter-collective-farm enterprises, associations and organisations whose shareholders were about 65,000 collective farms.<sup>1</sup>

A still more effective role in bringing the two forms of socialist property closer together is played by mixed state and collective-farm enterprises, whose numbers are also increasing.

When it helped and encouraged the peasants to unite in collective farms, the Party knew that the collective farms

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 392.

were not the ultimate aim of the socialisation of the peasants' life but an essential stage which would lead the rural population to nation-wide collectivism: once the collective farmers acquired collectivist traits, they would gradually surmount inter-collective-farm barriers and take an interest in the activity of the whole country. "It is necessary," said Mikhail Kalinin in connection with the victory of the collective-farm system, "that the mental horizon and the political views of the collective farmer should continuously grow and transcend the bounds of his collective farm. It is essential that the collective farmer should learn to understand not only the activity of his collective farm but also the activity of the whole state."<sup>1</sup> For the mid-1930s these words were taken as a programmatic wish addressed to the collective farmers, who were only beginning to acquire the traits of collectivism and had just started organisationally, economically and politically to strengthen the collective farms. For the collective farmers of the 1970s this is no longer a recommendation but is largely a reality. The majority of collective farmers began to concern themselves with state interests and the performance of their civic duty, as well as with their co-operative interests.

The process of the drawing together of the working class and the peasantry, and of town and country in general is based on the development of the material and technical basis of agriculture. With the assistance of the working class and the state, the socialist countryside has gone a long way towards solving this cardinal problem.

Between 1940 and 1970 the power capacity of agriculture rose from 47.5 million hp to 336.4 million hp. In the same period the tractor fleet (in terms of 15 hp units) increased from 684,000 to 4,343,000 and the number of combine harvesters rose from 182,000 to 623,000. By 1971 all the basic types of field work in collective and state farms had been fully mechanised. The capacity of rural power stations rose from 265,000 kwh in 1940 to 3,980,000 kwh in 1970. In 1950 only 15 per cent of the collective farms and 75 per cent of the state farms had electricity; by 1970 electricity

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<sup>1</sup> M. I. Kalinin, *Statyi i rechi* (Articles and Speeches), Moscow, 1935, p. 61.

was available at 99.8 per cent of the collective and state farms.

These figures alone testify to the technical re-equipment of agriculture—a real technical revolution in the countryside. Of course, the problem of fully eliminating the considerable distinctions in the technical level of industry and agriculture, the levelling out of the development of their productive forces and the modification of agricultural labour into a variety of industrial labour is still to be solved.

Nevertheless, the existing material and technical basis of agriculture has enormously raised the level of the economy and the standard of life in the countryside. Together with the steady improvement of social relations it was responsible for the marked changes in the structure of the rural population and its socio-professional composition. The most important of these changes are as follows.

There is a sustained increase in the proportion of workers and employees and a decline in the proportion of the peasants in the structure of the rural population, which consists of all groups making up the Soviet society. The countryside is becoming “de-peasantised”. Collective farmers are augmenting the ranks of workers at state farms and other state-run enterprises in rural areas. The number of office employees at state enterprises and organisations is also growing at the expense of the collective farmers, especially the young people. In 1939 workers and employees of the state sector in agriculture comprised 26 per cent of the total rural population, in 1959 they made up 36 per cent and in 1970 the majority—61 per cent. The proportion of the peasants dropped from 74 to 39 per cent.

The socio-professional structure also changed and became more complex. The rising level of mechanisation of agriculture required more and more qualified personnel, with the result that the proportion of machine operators in the rural population grew continuously. In 1940 collective farms had about 1,300,000 farm-machinery operators. By 1970 this figure had risen to more than 2,000,000 (12 per cent of the total number of collective farmers). The number of specialists also increased rapidly. In 1970 there were more than 1,100,000 specialists with a higher or secondary specialised education at collective and state farms and other

enterprises, and also at research institutes, medical institutions and the agricultural administration organs. At the same time the number of unskilled manual workers declined. This twofold process in the socio-professional structure of the rural population repeated the process in the cities, thus constituting a rural modification of a general regularity.

Obviously, the relations between country and town are no longer solely a problem of the collective-farm peasantry and its attitude to the town and the working class. It also mirrors another important regularity, namely the mounting role played by the state sector and people employed in it in the life of the countryside. The proportion of agricultural workers in the working class of the country increased from 18 per cent in 1940 to 30.8 per cent in 1970.

It should be borne in mind that the agricultural contingent of workers occupies a specific place in the social structure of Soviet society. From the point of view of its socio-economic position, it is a component part of the working class, but, as far as its cultural and living conditions and character of work are concerned, it is closer to the collective-farm peasantry. At the same time the workers of state farms and other state-operated agricultural establishments represent the working class in the countryside and play their leading and unifying role in direct contact with the collective-farm peasants.

Thus, the evolution of the social structure of the rural population increases its resemblance to that of the urban population and strengthens the socio-class homogeneity of the Soviet people. This also takes place as a result of the changes in the life of the rural population and its rising material and cultural level. In this respect the most noteworthy changes have taken place in recent years. In 1966 the collective farms with the assistance of the state went over to the monetary remuneration of the work of the collective farmers along the same lines as at state farms. This means that remuneration of work is guaranteed at the collective farms. Formerly, the sum which was paid out to the collective farmers for their work was determined after the collective farms had fulfilled their commitments to the state and the necessary sums had been deduced for the non-distributable and other production funds. As a result, the

collective farmers did not receive a fixed remuneration for their labour and this had a negative effect on their welfare. Now priority is given to the labour remuneration fund, whatever the results of the economic year. Its amount is determined in advance according to the rates of tariff and production norms established at the state farms. The Soviet state guarantees the new form of remuneration of the work of the collective farmers by extending credits to the collective farms whenever necessary. The introduction of a new pension system for the collective farmers was another important measure. In 1964 the USSR Supreme Soviet passed a Law on Pensions and Grants to Collective-Farm Members under which pensions were guaranteed to all collective farmers.

The above measures improved the collective farmers' welfare and went a long way to eliminate the difference in the socio-economic position of the collective farmer and the industrial worker, to equalise the form and size of the share of social product received by them and their living standards. That is why these two measures were of primary importance for the further strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the collective farmers, for the unity of the Soviet people.

The level of political awareness of the collective-farm peasantry is drawing close to that of the working class. Together with the working class and largely under its influence, the collective-farm peasantry is rallying around the Communist Party to an ever increasing extent. This fact is reflected in the growth in the number of Communists among the collective farmers. In 1937 out of the 296,900 rural Communists, 187,000 were collective farmers, while in 1969 collective-farm Party organisations embraced 1,600,000 Communists. Incidentally, a few decades ago there was only one Party cell for several collective farms. In 1930, the year when mass collectivisation was launched, there were 40 Party cells per 100 village Soviets and each Soviet covered about 10 villages. In those years the collective farms were, for the most part, formed as peasant associations within the limits of individual villages. Addressing the Third All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers, which was held in Moscow in 1969, Leonid Brezhnev said: "...today over 5 million Communists, over 8 million Komsomol

members and 15 million trade union members are living and working in the country. There is not a single collective farm or state farm today that does not have a Party organisation. The Communists are the recognised vanguard of the rural working people; they set an example in the work of advancing collective- and state-farm production."<sup>1</sup>

The collective farmers are participating on a very large scale in the running of the affairs of society and the state. They have come to play a particularly important role in this respect following the complete victory of socialism and the transformation of the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat into the state of the whole people, an organ expressing the will and interests of the entire population. The local Soviets were invested with greater rights and functions. At the end of 1958 the USSR Supreme Soviet adopted a decree increasing representation in all local Soviets, particularly in rural Soviets. The number of deputies elected to village Soviets increased from 15-35 to 20-50 and to rural district Soviets from 35-60 to 40-80. The proportion of the peasants among the number of deputies to the local Soviets is now much higher than their proportion among the population as a whole. In addition to the standing committees of the Soviets there appeared other forms of the broad and active participation of the deputies and other working people in the economic and cultural development of the countryside. This particularly applies to the village committees, which first appeared in 1961 in remote localities. Elected at village meetings, these committees under the guidance of the local Soviets concentrate on improving cultural and welfare facilities, promoting health and public services and so forth.

In short, the collective-farm village is steadily enhancing its socialist economy and becoming an ever more conscious and politically active element in Soviet society. To a large extent this is due to the rising educational and cultural level of the collective farmers. The proportion of literate people among the rural population rose from 84 per cent in 1939 to 98.2 per cent in 1959. The problem of universal literacy in the countryside has been solved. At the same

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<sup>1</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course* Moscow, 1972, p. 247.  
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time steps were taken to raise its educational level, which, naturally, was much more difficult to achieve. Prior to the Great Patriotic War a mere 6.3 per cent of the rural population had a higher or secondary education. The percentage of educated collective farmers was even lower.

By the beginning of 1971 more than half the employed rural population had a higher or secondary education. Among the collective farmers this level was slightly lower; yet it was sufficiently high.

A very notable development has been the tremendous leap in the educational level of the peasant women. In twenty years, between 1939 and 1959, the number of women with a higher or secondary education per thousand working in the countryside increased from 27 to 176, or almost sevenfold, while the number of men collective farmers increased by less than four times. On the whole, however, the educational level of the men is still higher than that of the women.

There are numerous indications and facts testifying to the tremendous growth in the spiritual requirements of the Soviet peasantry and its great interest in all spheres of political and cultural activity. The system of cultural and educational establishments has steadily expanded and more and more villagers have studied and raised their cultural level. Tens of thousands of general education schools have been opened in the rural areas since the war. In the period from 1961 to 1969 the number of rural people's universities rose from 1,500 to more than 4,700, and their attendance increased from 210,000 to 563,000. When the war ended, there were 38,000 rural libraries with a total of 31 million books and magazines. In 1970 the villagers had 91,000 libraries containing 588 million books and magazines. In 1950 the village libraries lent an average of 14.2 books to each reader and 17.2 in 1970. In the 1960s the circulation of specialised agricultural newspapers rose by over a million copies. The number of village amateur art circles increased from 142,000 in 1950 to 276,700 in 1970 and the number of participants from 1,800,000 to more than 3,600,000. These changes acquire still greater significance if we take into account that in this period the size of the rural population decreased considerably.

Such are some of the facts and figures illustrating the cultural progress in the countryside and the marked headway in bringing the cultural level of the collective-farm peasantry closer to that of the working class.

All this is borne out by the conclusion formulated in the CC Report to the 24th CPSU Congress: "The growth of the productive forces of agriculture, the gradual conversion of agricultural labour into a variety of industrial work, the cultural upsurge in the countryside and the remaking of rural life have led to changes in the peasant's social make-up and way of thinking. He now has more and more features in common with the worker. The number of collective farmers whose work is directly linked with machines and other forms of mechanisation is growing steadily, and the educational level of the collective-farm peasantry is rising."<sup>1</sup>

The drawing together of the working class and the peasantry is the principal element of the social changes which took place in the life of Soviet society in the course of socialist construction and which led to the formation of the unshakeable socio-class community of Soviet people. But there is another element in the social relations which is almost as important, and that is the relationship between the working class and the peasantry, on the one hand, and the intelligentsia, on the other.

History has upheld Lenin's premise that, as it develops, socialism will require increasing numbers of specialists in all fields. The number of mental workers increased steadily in the course of socialist construction. Between 1918 and 1970 higher and specialised secondary educational institutions trained 23.8 million specialists, of whom 9.1 million had a higher and 14.7 million a specialised secondary education. The following figures show the speed with which specialists were trained: between 1946 and 1950 Soviet institutes and universities trained 652,000 people and 2,618,000 in the period from 1966 to 1970; in these years 4,446,000 people completed a course of study at specialised secondary schools.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the course of the eighth five-

<sup>1</sup> 24th Congress of the CPSU, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 645.



year plan period more than seven million specialists with a higher or specialised secondary education were trained in the country.

In 1946 2,262,000 specialists with a higher or specialised secondary education were employed in the Soviet national economy, eight million in 1959 and 16,800,000 in 1970. The intelligentsia includes not only specialists with a higher or secondary specialised education, but also a considerable proportion of people with a secondary general education, most of whom are mental workers. According to the 1970 census, there were more than 95 million people with a higher or secondary (complete or incomplete) education as against 58.7 million in 1959. Therefore, the numerical size of the intelligentsia is much greater than the number of specialists with a higher or secondary specialised education. In 1971 the Soviet intelligentsia numbered more than 30 million people.<sup>1</sup> This means that about a third of the gainfully-employed population are mental workers.

A noteworthy fact is the rapid growth of the highly-qualified sections of the Soviet intelligentsia, especially scientists and engineers, who play the decisive role in the development of science and technology. This contingent of the intelligentsia is growing faster than the others owing to the scientific and technological revolution and the intensive transformation of science into a direct productive force of the socialist society. In 1940 there were 98,300 research workers in the USSR, in 1960—354,000 and 1965—664,500. In the course of the eighth five-year plan period their number increased 1.4 times to total 927,700. In these years the number of engineers increased from 1,630,800 to 2,486,500.<sup>2</sup>

Workers in the social sciences occupy a considerable place among the scientific intelligentsia, and in 1970 they numbered almost 187,000. The economists (57,500) make up the biggest contingent of the intelligentsia specialising in the humanities. This is understandable, for economics is coming to play an increasing role in the organisation and management of the economy.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> See *Narodnoye obrazovaniye...*, p. 252.

The contingent of the intelligentsia devoted to arts and letters in 1971 embraced the Union of Journalists with 49,103 members, the Union of Artists—13,049 members, the Union of Architects—12,085 members, the Union of Writers—7,174 members, the Union of Cinematographers—4,648 members and the Union of Composers—1,733 members. The artistic personnel of professional theatres throughout the country numbered 32,225 people.<sup>1</sup>

*The Soviet intelligentsia is an organic part of the people.* Being socialist in nature, as are the working class and the peasantry, it is indissolubly connected with these two classes. To a great extent the Soviet intelligentsia, particularly the technological intelligentsia, is recruited from the ranks of the workers and peasants. To illustrate this point, the Report of the Central Committee to the 24th CPSU Congress pointed out that at the Pervouralsk Pipe Works 42 per cent of the engineers and technicians were of working-class background, 32 per cent of peasant origin and 26 per cent were from the families of office employees. Leonid Brezhnev, who delivered the report, noted that the situation at other industrial enterprises was approximately the same. Apart from emerging from the midst of the workers and peasants, the Soviet intelligentsia is a socialist social group ideologically and politically. A scientific world outlook and the Marxist-Leninist ideology form the basis of its spiritual make-up and determine its creative efforts. It has common interests with the working class and the peasantry and seeks to further these interests in its practical activity. It lives and works as befits a truly people's intelligentsia.

Yet even in a socialist society the intelligentsia retains certain social features by virtue of which it continues to be an inter-class group.

There is a marked unevenness in the distribution of mental workers between town and country and the various socio-economic spheres of public life. Most of the intelligentsia is concentrated in towns, whereas the majority of people engaged in physical work live in the countryside. The intelligentsia is also very unevenly distributed among the

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoug obrazovaniye...*, p. 341.

three economic sectors: it constitutes 33 per cent of the total number of people employed in the urban state sector, approximately 25 per cent in the rural state sector and only 2.5 per cent in the collective-farm sector. The reason is that thus far the demand for mental workers is not the same in all three sectors. With time, however, the distribution of the intelligentsia will be more even. It should be borne in mind that a characteristic feature of some mental professions is that their representatives create spiritual values for the entire society regardless of where they live and work. On the other hand, the spiritual values (scientific truths, works of art and so forth), unlike the material values, are lasting and can satisfy the requirements of any number of people, wherever they live. That is why the scientific and artistic intelligentsia plays such a great role in promoting the cultural growth of society.

The experience of the socialist community of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia in the Soviet Union shows that socialism firmly binds the intelligentsia with the two friendly classes.

The eradication of the survivals of class distinctions between the workers and the collective farmers, the differences in the cultural level and the living conditions between town and country and the gradual obliteration of distinctions between mental and physical labour are matters of decisive importance for the further consolidation of the socio-class community of Soviet people.

*The guiding and unifying role played by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union* in the life of the Soviet people is steadily growing. "As a result of the victory of socialism in the USSR and the consolidation of the unity of Soviet society," the 22nd CPSU Congress stated, "the Communist Party of the working class has become the vanguard of the Soviet people, a Party of the entire people, and extended its guiding influence to all spheres of social life."<sup>1</sup>

It follows that the Communist Party became nearer and closer to the peasantry and the Soviet intelligentsia as it became nearer and closer to the workers. Therein lies the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, pp. 582-83.

inexhaustible source of the strength and durability of the socio-class and international community of the Soviet people.

##### 5. INDESTRUCTIBLE COMMUNITY OF MANY NATIONS

In examining the correlation between the socio-class and national aspects of the community of working people, it is necessary, as was mentioned above, to take into account the ascendancy of the former over the latter. This, however, does not mean that the significance of the national aspect should be belittled.

Rebuffing the nihilist attitude to the national question, Lenin wrote: "Marx had no doubt as to the subordinate position of the national question as compared with the 'labour question'. But his theory is as far from ignoring national movements as heaven is from earth."<sup>1</sup> In principle Lenin's words are also fully applicable to the correlation between the socio-class and the national in the socialist community.

It is impossible to understand the Soviet community of working people and its specific features without taking its international nature and national structure into consideration. The history of the formation and consolidation of the Soviet people is also the history of the inexorable drawing together of nations and nationalities and their community.

As an inter-nation community the Soviet people covered a difficult road of formation and development. It was difficult mainly because of the specific features of its national components.

In contrast to its socio-class structure, the ethnic structure of the population is extremely mosaic-like and multiform. The socio-class community of working people consists of three basic elements—the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia, and their inter-nation community in the USSR embraces dozens of ethnic units, each with

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Right of Nations to Self-Determination", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 436.

its historically formed specific features. Therefore, the process of the formation of an inter-nation community was the integration of numerous relatively independent micro-processes characterising the drawing together of nations and nationalities.

It should also be borne in mind that ethnic distinctions are fairly durable and take longer to become obliterated than class distinctions. The latter disappear with the merger of the two forms of socialist ownership in the means of production and their transformation into a single property of the entire people. National distinctions between people are not as directly contingent on economic relations; they are connected with more varied and numerous peculiarities embracing not only political and economic activity but also such spheres as language, culture and way of life.

In Lenin's opinion, this was a long and complicated process. "A foundation—socialist production—is essential for the abolition of national oppression," he wrote, "but this foundation must *also* carry a democratically organised state, a democratic army, etc. By transforming capitalism into socialism the proletariat creates the *possibility* of abolishing national oppression; the possibility becomes *reality* 'only'—'only'!—with the establishment of full democracy in all spheres. ...And this, in turn, will serve as a basis for developing the *practical* elimination of even the slightest national friction and the least national mistrust, for accelerated drawing together and fusion of nations that will be completed..."<sup>1</sup>

Clearly, Lenin fully ruled out a simplistic notion of the process of the drawing together of nations and the formation of a socialist community of people.

The complexity of this process also arises from a number of concrete historical reasons, including the varying levels of ethnic progress and national consolidation among the peoples of the USSR. It was pointed out in the preceding chapters that on the eve of the Great October Socialist Revolution some peoples were already bourgeois nations, some were at the early stage of this process, while others were in a state of pre-national ethnic formation.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 325.

It should be noted that the general relative backwardness of pre-revolutionary Russia left its imprint on all ethnic communities, including those which had attained nation level. Even the most advanced nations, not to mention the dozens of backward tribes and nationalities, lacked consolidation and economic and cultural unity.

Recounting his impressions of the way of life and thinking of the Russian population in the Amur Area, Anton Chekhov wrote in his travel notes *Island of Sakhalin*: "...I was constantly under the impression that the mode of our Russian life was absolutely alien to the indigenous population of the Amur Area, that Pushkin and Gogol were not understood here and therefore were not needed..." If Chekhov had visited other parts of the vast Russian Empire, he would have observed a still more striking absence of close economic and cultural links between the elements comprising ethnic communities among the backward peoples.

Yet a multinational community presupposes an intra-ethnic consolidation of the nations and nationalities it embraces. The process of its rise and development is accompanied by the national revival of all peoples and the rise and development of socialist ethnic communities.

The socialist nations and nationalities of the USSR began to take shape while having different ethnic pre-conditions and dissimilar starting points. For a time this process developed along different lines: in one case, it developed through the radical transformation of the old bourgeois nations and, in the other, through the socialist transformation of pre-national ethnic groups, during which they by-passed the stage of the bourgeois national community.

The process of the formation of socialist ethnic communities in the USSR was, in the main, completed with the victory of socialism. The further development and consolidation of the country's inter-nation community was of necessity engendered by the socialist and internationalist nature of Soviet nations and nationalities. The liquidation of the factual inequality of the peoples which was, in the main, achieved in the pre-war years was an important factor of their drawing still closer together.

The development and the drawing together of nations and the strengthening of the inter-nation community of

working people was especially intensive in the course of the completion of socialist construction and the establishment of a developed socialist society. Let us first examine the demographic changes in the proportion of the national components making up the population.

The USSR is a community of more than a hundred large and small nations and nationalities, including the Russians, who comprise more than 50 per cent of the population (in 1970 they numbered 129 million out of a total of 241,700,000) and the Yukagirs of whom there are only 600. The Ukrainians—40.8 million—are the second biggest group, then come the Uzbeks—9.2 million, Byelorussians—9 million, Tatars—9 million, Kazakhs—5.3 million, Azerbaijanians—4.4 million, Armenians—3.6 million, Georgians—3.2 million, Moldavians—2.7 million, Lithuanians—2.7 million, Jews—2.2 million, Tajiks—2.1 million, Germans—1.8 million, Chuvashes—1.7 million, Turkmenians—1.5 million, Kirghiz—1.5 million, Latvians—1.4 million, Mordvinians—1.3 million, Bashkirs—1.2 million, Poles—1.2 million, Estonians—1 million, the peoples of Daghestan—1.4 million, etc.

Of definite interest is the role played by the ethnic factor in the dynamic balance of the population which has been characterised by a certain inequality, as some peoples increase at a rapid pace, some slower, while others even more slowly.

Between 1959 and 1970 the population of the USSR increased by almost 16 per cent. As regards the peoples of Central Asia, Azerbaijanians and Kazakhs, their growth (46-53 per cent) was much higher than the average for the whole country. The Moldavians, Armenians and Georgians increased in number at a rate slightly above the average for the whole country, while the growth in the number of Latvians and Estonians was a mere 2-2.5 per cent. Between these extreme groups we find the Russians, Byelorussians, Lithuanians and other nations whose numerical growth was approximately the same as the average for the USSR.

It is important that, despite the increasing movement of the population, the proportion of the native population in most of the republics continued to rise. In the period from 1959 to 1970 the number of Uzbeks in Uzbekistan

increased 53 per cent and their proportion of the republic's population rose from 61.1 to 64.7 per cent; the number of Tajiks in Tajikistan increased 55 per cent and their proportion of the republic's population went up from 53.1 to 56.2 per cent; and the number of Kirghiz in Kirghizia increased 55 per cent and their proportion of the republic's population rose from 40.5 to 43.8 per cent.

Various Soviet republics have thus far retained their specific balance between the urban and rural populations. On the whole, the proportion of the urban population in the USSR rose from 33 per cent in 1940 to 57 per cent in 1970. In the Russian Federation and the Armenian, Estonian and Latvian republics the percentage of the urban population was higher: 59-65 per cent. Towns in Moldavia and the Central Asian republics accounted for only 32-37 per cent of their total population. In all these republics, however, especially in Kazakhstan, Kirghizia and Turkmenia, there has been a rapid inflow of the indigenous population into towns in recent years.

There were considerable differences in the social structure of the population in the republics. According to the 1959 census, workers comprised 48 per cent, collective farmers 32 per cent and office and other employees 20 per cent of the USSR's population. In the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Estonia and Latvia the proportion of workers (51-58 per cent) was higher than the average for the whole country; in the other republics, particularly in Moldavia, Tajikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Byelorussia and Turkmenia it was lower (21-37 per cent). Consequently, the proportion of the collective farmers was higher in these republics. Examined in its national aspect, the ratio between the workers and collective farmers was much higher in favour of the latter. In Kirghizia, Moldavia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan industrial workers of indigenous nationalities made up a mere four per cent of the population of each of these republics.

Owing to specific socio-historical causes, the difference in the social structure of the republics' population has in subsequent years declined in importance. Today it is only a residual phenomenon which is due in the first place to the all-Union division of labour connected primarily with the



natural features of the individual areas of the USSR and the need for the rational specialisation of production in them.

The intensive movement of the population is a notable fact in the life of the Soviet people, furthering the country's internationalisation. This progressive process springs from the socialist distribution of the productive forces throughout the country, designed to attain the maximum economic effect and ensure an upsurge of the economy in all the republics. On the other hand, the migration of people in the USSR was also due to important moral factors. A Soviet citizen, whatever his nationality and place of birth, regards the whole multinational Soviet state as his homeland and is prepared to work anywhere in it for the common good; he feels himself at home in any national milieu, which accepts him and judges him by his work and public activity.

The Soviet republics have always had a multinational population and they are becoming even more multinational as the USSR advances towards communism.

The further development of the multinational community of the Soviet people is fostered by the increasing state and political, economic and cultural co-operation of the peoples of the USSR and the consolidation of their unity.

In recent years the political activity of the peoples of the USSR has been characterised by the *strengthening of their statehood and the enhancement of its role in creative work*. Between 1955 and 1970 the Soviet republics extended their rights in the sphere of economic and financial policy and planning.

In view of the increasing role played by the state and political co-operation between the Soviet peoples, their representation in the higher organ of state power of the USSR has also been increased. In 1966 the number of representatives from the Union republics in the Soviet of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet was raised from 25 to 32. The number of deputies representing the autonomous republics and regions in the Soviet of Nationalities has also been increased.

The legislative activity of the higher organs of state power in the Union republics also increased. In the first half of the 1960s the republican Supreme Soviets adopted laws on the judicial system, criminal and legal-procedure codes and

also new civil and civil-procedure codes, all of which are based on common principles laid down in the all-Union legislation with due account being taken of the local national features.

The republican organs of state power exercise their sovereign rights in the interests of their people and the entire Soviet community. The territorial changes that took place in the mid-1960s in Central Asia and Kazakhstan are a vivid example of the solicitude of each Soviet republic for the needs of others. Uzbekistan transferred 50.5 million hectares of virgin land to the Tajik SSR, which enabled Tajikistan to join Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan in the development of the Hungry Steppe. At the same time Kazakhstan turned over more than 3.5 million hectares of the Hungry Steppe to Uzbekistan. This territory, which is suitable for growing cotton, is being more rationally used by the people of the Uzbek Republic, where cotton-growing is the leading branch of production.

The political development of the peoples and the further growth of their statehood organically combine with the strengthening of centralism in the administration of the country as a whole, and consolidation of the state and political unity of the peoples of the USSR.

The period of the completion of socialist construction was characterised by major progress in the *economic sphere of national relations*.

The elimination of the peoples' factual inequality substantially modified the nature of their economic co-operation which increased in scale and became more diversified and balanced. The predominantly *one-sided assistance* gave way to all-round *mutual assistance* of the peoples. Having acquired the possibility of widely developing their resources, the national republics could now successfully participate in the all-Union division of labour and co-operation and augment their contribution to the country's general economic progress.

The importance of the economic co-operation between the peoples increased to a still greater extent with the establishment of a developed socialist society, its gradual transition into the communist phase and the building of the material and technical basis of communism. "The building of the mate-

rial and technical basis of communism," as the CPSU Programme points out, "leads to still greater unity of the Soviet peoples."<sup>1</sup> At the same time, it calls for greater co-operation between the Soviet republics in economic development.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union fixed the main tasks in this field. They include the all-round economic development of republics, rational distribution of production and balanced exploitation of natural resources, more effective division of labour between the republics, the pooling and co-ordination of their labour efforts and the correct combination of the interests of the Soviet Union as a whole and of each of its republics, as are set out in the CPSU Programme. These tasks were specified in the CPSU documents dealing with its nationalities and economic policies. For example, the Directives for the Eighth Five-Year Economic Development Plan adopted at the 23rd CPSU Congress point out that "the five-year plans of the Union Republics must take their economic features and potentialities into account, provide for strengthening and improving the economic ties between them and meet with the interests of all the fraternal peoples of the USSR".<sup>2</sup> The need for a still greater organic fusion of the efforts of the Soviet republics was also dictated by the fact that the new level of the productive forces and the scientific and technological progress called for the steady improvement of the specialisation and co-operation of production based on the division of labour between them.

One of the central problems of the economic co-operation between the peoples is that of removing the remnants of their former inequality. Levelling out the peoples' socio-economic development is a key factor in the transformation of socialist national relations into communist relations, for at first there will still be nations and national distinctions. In the directives on drafting long-term economic development plans, the CPSU repeatedly stressed the need to correctly distribute the productive forces throughout the country in order to achieve the greatest effect for the

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> *23rd Congress of the CPSU*, Moscow, 1966, p. 190.

entire Soviet Union, ensure the growth of the economy in all the Union republics and do away with all remnants of the former inequality of the peoples.

A major step in narrowing the gap between the levels of economic development was made in the 1960s when the Central Asian republics, Byelorussia, Lithuania and Moldavia considerably overtook the RSFSR for the rates of growth of per capita investments. As a result, they came closer to the average indices for the USSR and increased the share of each of them in the all-Union distribution of investments. The approximation of the levels of economic development of the republics was due in the first place to the growth of their industrial potential. In 1970, for example, the overall growth of industrial production in the USSR as a whole surpassed the 1940 figures by 1,190 per cent and in the eastern regions of the country by 1,550 per cent.<sup>1</sup> The faster rate of growth of industrial production in a number of the republics that were formerly somewhat behind the average rate for the entire country arose from the establishment of new branches of production there, including some of nation-wide importance. Byelorussia, which had tractor, heavy-duty lorry and farm machinery factories, began to build up her own electronics, radio electronics, electrical, instrument-making and chemical industries. The three latter branches of industry also began to develop in Moldavia. In 1959 industrial output in Moldavia accounted for 50.3 per cent and in 1965 for 53.6 per cent of the republic's total social product. Moldavia was turning from an agrarian-industrial republic into an industrial-agrarian one. The Central Asian republics intensified the development of their power and fuel resources. The construction of a cascade of hydroelectric power stations consisting of the Nurek, Toktogul and Charvak schemes, which will enormously stimulate the economic development of the whole of Central Asia, was launched on the Vakhsh river in Tajikistan. The republic also began to produce natural gas, and the first section of the Central Asia-Centre gas pipeline was completed in 1967. Oil production is growing in Turkmenia.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1970 g.*, p. 152.

The 1960s also witnessed an industrial upsurge in the autonomous republics of the Russian Federation. Oil production in Tataria and Bashkiria, the electrical and instrument-making industries in Chuvashia, the engineering industry in Udmurtia, non-ferrous metallurgy in Karelia and other branches of production acquired country-wide importance.

A characteristic feature of the contemporary stage of economic co-operation is that all the republics are augmenting and diversifying their contribution to the nation-wide material production. "The national economy of all the republics has made a stride forward," it was emphasised in the CC CPSU Report to the 24th Party Congress, "and the contribution of each to the fulfilment of all-Union tasks has grown. This means that the economic foundation of the union and brotherhood of all our peoples has been enlarged."<sup>1</sup>

Today all Soviet republics have heavy and light industries which deliver a part of their output to other Soviet republics and foreign countries. Tajikistan, for example, supplies other republics, mainly Central Asian and the Russian Federation, with spare parts for tractors and motor vehicles, accessories for pipe-rolling mills, transformers, looms and cultivators, cotton and silk fabrics. The volume of inter-republican deliveries increased almost twofold in the course of the 1960s.

In their development and participation in nation-wide progress all national republics depend on their own national manpower and natural resources. At the same time, every republic receives whatever products it needs from the other republics where their production is the most rational. The specialisation and co-operation of material production is in keeping with the national interests of each Soviet republic and the entire Soviet Union.

Dwelling on the significance of close co-operation and mutual assistance of the peoples at the contemporary stage, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirghizia T.U. Usubaliyev said: "The creation of the material and technical basis of Communism requires still closer interconnection of the Soviet republics. Today

<sup>1</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, pp. 43-44.

not a single nation-wide construction project can be carried to completion without the assistance of all the fraternal peoples. The Uch-Kurgan Hydroelectric Power Station, the biggest in Central Asia, was built by dozens of nationalities: industrial enterprises in the Russian Federation, Byelorussia and the Baltic republics supplied the equipment and building machinery. The fraternal republics played an important part in the construction of the Grand Chu Canal, the Orto-Tokoi storage lake, the Frunze Thermal Power Station, Kirghizavtomash, Central Asia's first car factory, and other projects.

"Needless to say, these economic links are bilateral and reciprocal. Kirghizia delivers 158 various industrial products, including automated and semi-automated lines, precision instruments, metal-cutting machine-tools, electric motors, mercury and antimony which have become the standard of quality on the world market, cotton fibre, silk, woollen and cotton fabrics. Our manufactured goods, which embody the labour of the entire Soviet people, are also exported to almost 50 countries. Such is the economic level of present-day Kirghizia. Of course, we were able to attain it, like many other things, only in co-operation with all the peoples of the USSR."<sup>1</sup>

Concern for common interests, which has always been one of the basic principles of economic co-operation between all the Soviet peoples, has become a matter of particular importance. The first thing that is taken into account in planning the construction of new projects and determining the size of investments in the economies of the republics is their economic potential, specialisation and the place they occupy in the all-Union division of labour. It can be said that *formerly each republic built for itself because it built for all, now each republic builds for all and that means it also builds for itself*. National interests have merged to become a single nation-wide interest.

The development of fraternal economic co-operation between the peoples of the USSR manifested itself, among other things, in the multinational composition of the population of new towns and collectives of major construction

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<sup>1</sup> *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, May 1, 1972.

sites and industrial enterprises. In whatever republic they appeared, they were created by the combined efforts of people from the fraternal republics and the local contingent of the working class.

The new towns which have been built in all republics and regions are living memorials to the friendship of the Soviet peoples. Bratsk, a town born of the Bratsk Hydroelectric Power Station, was built by workers and specialists of 52 nationalities of the Soviet Union; Temirtau with its giant metallurgical plant was built by people of a hundred different nationalities; Rustavi in the Georgian SSR where workers and specialists of 38 peoples built the giant Transcaucasian Iron and Steel Works and other industrial enterprises; Nurek with the famous Nurek Hydroelectric Power Station in Tajikistan was built with the participation of people of 41 nationalities. This list could be a very long one, for in a mere 12 years (1959-1971) 264 new towns were built in the USSR. As regards large industrial enterprises, 1,870 of them were put up in the eighth five-year plan period alone. Built as they were by the combined efforts of all the Soviet peoples, these towns and large factories are in fact friendly international collectives consisting of people of dozens of nationalities of the USSR.

There are multinational collectives in agriculture too. In many Soviet republics most of the collective and state farms consist of people of many nationalities.

The need to develop more and more natural resources in the eastern areas of the USSR, including the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan, called for a fresh influx of manpower. On the other hand, in view of the growth of productive forces, some regions in Transcaucasia, the Northern Caucasus and the Ukraine were able to release a part of the labour force, with the result that people began to move to the eastern areas. Though these migrations were most beneficial for the Central Asian republics and Kazakhstan, they also made a certain impact on the lives of all the republics.

The movement of working people from one republic to another, the formation of numerous multinational production collectives and the appearance of localities with mixed

populations stimulated the intercourse between nations and their further drawing together.

The reciprocal assistance of working people of the Soviet republics was not confined to direct participation in the building of new production complexes and developing the economy. They rendered even greater and more diverse assistance by manufacturing and delivering equipment and placing their scientific and technical know-how at each other's disposal. For example, more than 300 factories and mills and about 40 research and design institutes throughout the country participated in the construction of the Nurek Hydroelectric Power Station; and over 500 enterprises in various republics built and delivered equipment for the iron and steel combine in Temirtau. All that is created in the Soviet Union is the result of the efforts of the working people of all the fraternal republics.

Scientific and technological co-operation between the republics developed successfully and in the past 10-15 years it has taken the shape of broadly organised co-ordination of scientific and technological activity conducted through the system of the USSR Academy of Sciences and its affiliated institutes on an all-Union or regional scale. The Inter-Academic Co-ordination Council of Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia guided co-operation between the scientists of these republics in the field of chemistry, particularly in petrochemical synthesis. The All-Union Cotton-Growing Research Institute in Uzbekistan co-ordinated research in all the cotton-growing republics. The Astrophysical Institute of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Deserts of the Turkmenian Academy of Sciences and other research institutes conducted their work on a nation-wide scale. Research institutes in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and Byelorussia, together with the Central Economico-Mathematical Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, worked on the methodology of compiling the inter-branch balance of an economic area. Today, when science is rapidly developing into society's direct productive force and the scientific and technological revolution has already become a decisive factor in the creation of the material and technical basis of communism, the close co-operation of the republics in science and technology has acquired special importance.



There is no doubt that the peoples' fruitful scientific and technological co-operation played a major role in strengthening their economic and cultural community.

The now traditional exchange of technological know-how and the socialist emulation of the working people of the republics also served this purpose. The achievements of the advanced production collectives and innovators in one republic or another were promptly made available to all the other republics. This form of creative co-operation and mutual assistance of the peoples shows that national distinctions have given way to unity of purpose and community of interests of the entire multinational Soviet people.

*The Soviet Union is developing as a single economic organism, a single economic system in which each national republic occupies the place designated by the vital interests of both the Soviet Union as a whole and its constituent republics.*

The strengthening of the state-political and economic unity of the Soviet peoples was accompanied by the development of their *spiritual community*. Though the drawing together of the nations and nationalities in the sphere of cultural life was not as swift and marked as in the sphere of political and economic activity, it was, nevertheless, an inexorable process.

The spiritual drawing together of the peoples was based on Marxist-Leninist ideology and its inherent internationalism. Since the Great Patriotic War there has been fresh progress in the education of working people in the spirit of socialist internationalism and intolerance of nationalism.

The Party has always given a great deal of attention to educating Soviet people in the internationalist spirit. The resolution adopted at the Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee in 1963 devoted to ideological work said: "The Party makes it incumbent on Party organisations to intensify their activity in the sphere of educating the people in the spirit of socialist *internationalism*, to strengthen the fraternal friendship of the peoples of the Soviet Union, which is the greatest gain of socialism, to actively encourage the mutual enrichment of the cultures of the peoples of the USSR and to wage a relentless struggle against any manifestations of nationalism: parochialism, advocacy of

national exclusiveness and isolation, the idealisation of the past and the lauding of reactionary traditions and customs."<sup>1</sup>

The ideology of internationalism was asserted in the consciousness of the people during the struggle against all sorts of manifestations of nationalism, which does not automatically disappear with the victory of the socialist social system.

Any manifestation of nationalistic tendencies in Soviet society, where their socio-economic causes have long ceased to exist, is among other reasons due to a certain lag in the consciousness of the people behind the conditions of material life. To an extent they are also engendered by the still not fully erased differences in the level of economic and cultural development and that of the material conditions of some of the peoples. Religion too is instrumental in sustaining and reviving nationalistic sentiments among the backward section of the population.

In the course of socialist development nationalism is connected not only with the survivals of bourgeois ideology and its influence stemming from the capitalist world; to a certain degree it is also connected with the national revival of peoples and the growth of their national consciousness. Experience shows that the development of national consciousness of individual peoples, if it is not combined with their effective internationalist education and respect for other peoples, may give rise to a false conception of national exclusiveness and superiority, and leads to national narrow-mindedness, conceit and belittlement of the national virtues of others.

Engels called nationalism "*wholesale selfishness*".<sup>2</sup> This wholesale selfishness can exist and make itself felt even in socialist society. Therefore, the Communist Party devotes unceasing attention to the internationalist education and cohesion of the people. The interests of the unity of the peoples of the USSR and the strengthening of their international community called imperatively for the education

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<sup>1</sup> *KPSS o kulture, prosveshchenii i nauke* (CPSU on Culture, Education and Science), Moscow, 1963, p. 111.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain*, 1953, p. 335.

of the people in the spirit of internationalism and Soviet patriotism and for a resolute struggle against all manifestations of nationalism.

An inestimable role in the fulfilment of this task is played by the propaganda of the ideas of scientific communism and the study of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin by broad sections of the people in all the republics. There are numerous facts and figures illustrating the great scope and scale which the study of Marxism-Leninism has assumed in the country. Since we have already spoken about the study of this subject at schools and institutions of higher learning, and the political education of the broad masses of people, we shall quote only the following figures: in the period from 1917 to 1970 the works of Marx and Engels were published in the languages of the peoples of the USSR (excluding Russian) in 1,072 editions, totalling 10,433,000 copies, including 18 editions (186,000 copies) in 1970 alone; Lenin's works in the period between 1917 and 1970 were put out in 63 languages of the peoples of the USSR in 2,324 editions totalling 28,767,000, including 247 editions (3,253,000 copies) in 1970.<sup>1</sup>

The peoples' cultural drawing together was directly connected with the steadfast eradication of the survivals of their former inequality in culture and education. Vestiges of the cultural inequality of the peoples persisted for a longer period than similar phenomena in politics and economy. In the past decades however, outstanding progress has been made in surmounting them.

In 1939 the level of literacy in Moldavia, Kirghizia, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan, Lithuania and some other republics was considerably lower than the average in the USSR as a whole. In 1970 all Soviet republics had one hundred per cent literacy. The percentage of girls in general education schools in the republics of the Soviet East in 1939 was much lower than in the country as a whole. By 1970 the gap had, in the main, been closed. The percentage of girls in primary schools was the same in all the republics; their percentage in classes 9-10 (11) was lower than the average for the country (56 per cent) in three republics only: 48 per

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<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye obrazovaniye...*, p. 365.

cent in Azerbaijan, and 49 per cent in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The approximation of the educational and cultural levels is borne out by the growth in the numbers of specialists with a higher education. Between 1960 and 1970 their numbers in the country as a whole rose from 16 to 26 per ten thousand of the population. In Kazakhstan, Moldavia, Kirghizia and Tajikistan the increase in their number was almost twofold, and although these and some other republics were still behind the average figures for the USSR, their rates of growth were faster than in the rest of the republics. Very indicative is the percentage of women specialists with a higher or secondary education employed in the national economy. In many republics they constituted a mere 10-15 per cent prior to the war. In 1970 the figures for most of the republics were about equal. Only five republics (Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenia, Azerbaijan and Armenia) were considerably behind the others: the percentage of employed women specialists there ranged from 43 to 49 per cent compared with 59 per cent for the entire Soviet Union. On the whole, however, the cultural growth of all these peoples proceeded at a rapid pace and resulted in the strengthening of their cultural community.

The development of the inter-nation cultural community was accompanied by a new flowering of national cultures. The Soviet Union's single culture, international in content, absorbed the diversity of national forms existing in the country. But the process of cultural drawing closer together did not signify a unification of the national forms of culture.

The form of culture continues to play a vital role in the socialist cultural progress of the peoples. The diversity of national forms of culture, their multivalency, constitute the great wealth of humanity's spiritual world, which is in harmony with the infinitely complex structure of man's spiritual world and his numerous and varied cultural requirements.

Nonetheless, like everything else in the world, the form of culture is not immutable. As the peoples drew closer to each other, their forms of culture became more perfect. Each national group absorbed the progressive national-specific elements in other peoples' cultures. This process

did not extinguish the national form or its specific features. On the contrary, it further improved the national forms of culture in new socio-historical conditions.

The originality of the national form of culture, cleansed of reactionary, obsolete elements, is the wealth of each people and should also be prized by other peoples, for all of them absorb everything humane and progressive in the forms of each other's cultures. This is the wealth of each nation and is its specific contribution to the common treasure-store of socialism's international culture. In the course of the socialist renovation of culture the peoples of the USSR created new cultural traditions common to all nations.

The mutual enrichment and drawing together of the peoples in cultural life took place in both its spheres—in the promotion of science and art and in the absorption of spiritual values by the masses.

Cultural progress carried dozens of peoples of the USSR from pre-capitalist backwardness to socialist civilisation. But if they had had to rely solely on their own national achievements handed down from the past, many of them would have required centuries to attain the contemporary level of cultural development. Thanks to the creative influence and direct assistance of the advanced nations, the formerly backward peoples attained this level in 2-3 decades. For example, professional music began to develop in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, Byelorussia, Tajikistan, Bashkiria and Buryatia only after the October Socialist Revolution. In artistic life the peoples of the USSR are not divided into those who created their culture and art after the Revolution and those having ancient cultural traditions. Enjoying identical cultural and historical conditions, they have equal opportunities to promote their artistic culture.

The postwar period was the most fruitful one in the development of literature and art of the peoples of the USSR. Talented people representing dozens of nations and nationalities swelled the ranks of the intelligentsia. When its first Congress convened in 1934, the Writers' Union had 2,500 members of 52 nationalities. The Fourth Congress, which was held in 1971, was attended by 1,274 writers of 61 nationalities. In 1971 the Soviet Writers' Union had

more than 7,000 members writing in 75 languages of the Soviet peoples.

Not to mention the peoples who attained artistic maturity at a still earlier period, these years witnessed the appearance of a number of gifted writers from the small peoples of the North and the Far East: Semyon Kurilov, a Yukagir whose people number only 600, the Nanai Grigori Khodzher, the Mansi poet Yuvan Shestalov, the Nivkh writer and folklorist Vladimir Sangi, the Chukchi poetess Antonina Kymytval, the Nenets Leonid Laisui, the Udeghes Jansi Kimonko, the Evenk Nikolai Tarabukin, the Koryak Ketsai Kekketyn and others.

How did the formerly backward peoples begin to assimilate culture, or rather its rudiments? The well-known Chukchi writer Yuri Rytkeu gives a memorable description of the process. "Every morning the small boy of my childhood days would step out of his yaranga (skin tent—*Ed.*) to attend classes at school and, without realising it, would span millennia. In the evening he would return to his customary way of life. Squatting on a walrus hide amidst the school-books, his relatives dipped the sleeves of their parkas into a bowl of sea water: that was how they predicted the currents in the strait, the movements of walrus herds heading for their favourite grounds. They supplicated the gods to help them in their daily life and in hunting. Someone chanted an incantation.... And while all this was going on, the boy read aloud the poems of Pushkin, Lermontov and Mayakovsky. But once in a while the adults would interrupt him to smear sacrificial blood on his brow."

In the past few decades Soviet writers, artists, composers and cinematographers have produced many splendid works dedicated to the aesthetic and moral education of Soviet man—the builder of communism.

The progress of the artistic culture of the Soviet peoples was marked by the all-round consolidation of its ideological unity and the development of its international content in a diversity of national forms. The formula "Each writer, wherever he lives, and whatever the language he writes in, writes for all the peoples of the Soviet land" is acquiring a more real, concrete meaning.

Scientific progress plays a particularly important part in strengthening the cohesion of the peoples and their multinational community. It should be noted that in effect science has no national characteristics: scientific concepts and logical categories have no distinct national forms and are fully identical, whatever the language in which they are formulated. Nations may have a different level of scientific development, but this manifestation of factual inequality cannot be attributed to national features. Consequently, as distinct from artistic and moral aspects of development, scientific and theoretical knowledge is international both in content and in form. In science, therefore, it is less difficult to solve the problem of reception—the interchange of scientific achievements between nations and the international unification of these achievements—than in any other fields of culture. This does not imply, of course, that factual inequality between peoples in scientific progress can be easily and swiftly eliminated. In view of its creative nature, science calls for more fundamental socio-cultural conditions for its development than other spheres of production of spiritual values.

Science has made great strides in all Soviet republics since the war. Suffice it to say that in the 1940s and 1950s Academies of Science were established in eight Union republics.

The spiritual values created by men of science and the arts stimulated socialist progress inasmuch as they became the property of broad masses of people of all nationalities. The cultural progress of all the peoples of the USSR went hand in hand with the eradication of local narrow-mindedness and the growth of common, international tendencies and features in their spiritual make-up.

All the peoples of the USSR acquired their own numerous scientific cadres. In this connection the following figures are of interest: between 1940 and 1970 the number of scientists and research workers increased in the USSR from 98,315 to 927,709, while in Kazakhstan they increased from 1,727 to 26,802, in Moldavia from 180 to 5,695, in Kirghizia from 323 to 5,867 and in Tajikistan from 353 to 5,067. Consequently, the rates of growth of scientific personnel in the republics of the formerly

backward peoples were faster than in the USSR as a whole.

It was only natural that, as a result of the growth of scientific personnel in all the republics, the development of scientific thought among all the peoples and the extensive spread of scientific knowledge among the masses, science to an ever increasing extent stimulated the drawing together of the peoples on the basis of a single world outlook and a common striving for progress.

The fresh opportunities for strengthening the material and technical basis of culture, the enormous development of the mass media and the establishment of mass cultural and educational institutions encouraged the further internationalisation of the cultural environment. Suffice it to say that the central TV programme is transmitted to all the Union republics, which are linked by a single TV network. Soviet Radio broadcasts in 61 languages of the peoples of the USSR and beams its programmes to all corners of the country. All this greatly stimulated the development of identical cultural conditions for all the peoples, which is an important factor in their cultural approximation.

In the course of their cultural co-operation the peoples evolved new effective forms of their reciprocal exchange and influence.

Days, weeks and decades of art and literature of the republics which are organised in other republics, guest performances given by Soviet actors and musicians abroad, peoples' friendship meetings, film festivals of the Soviet republics and exchange tours of theatrical and other artistic groups are but some of the forms of co-operation which promote the further flowering of the multinational Soviet culture, disclose the people's spiritual make-up and mutually enrich them. The best works of national art and literature are becoming ever more international in character. By regarding them as their own achievements, all peoples participate in the formation of a single culture for Soviet society. At the same time, all conditions are created for the burgeoning of each nation and the development of its foremost traditions.

All peoples have spiritual values which are understood by other peoples in the original, for example, the music of



Dmitry Shostakovich or the paintings by Martiros Saryan. But only the Avars and the other nationalities of Daghestan who use the Avar written language are able to read the poems of Rasul Gamzatov in the original and this applies to the writers of other nationalities.

This language barrier is being surmounted primarily by translating their works. Translations occupy an important place in the book funds of all the republics. Yet it is extremely difficult to translate every useful book into all the languages of the Soviet people, all the more so if we take into account that books in the USSR are published in more than 100 languages.

A very important role in helping the Soviet people to absorb each other's achievements in science and culture is played by the *Russian language which has become a means of communication between the peoples of the Soviet Union.*

The Russian language has become the second native language for the vast majority of the reading public in all the Soviet republics. They have received the broadest access to the works of Lenin and the classics of Russian literature in the original.

Pushkin dreamed of the time when his name would be spoken in all the languages existing in Russia. Today his works are read by all the peoples of the USSR in their native language. But it is doubtful whether there is a person in the Soviet republics who would be unable to read Pushkin in the original. This is a fact of great cultural significance.

Thanks to the widespread use of the Russian language, all the peoples of the USSR are able to read Russian books in the original and books by authors of other Soviet nationalities and foreign writers in Russian translation.

In 1970 books in the Russian language comprised more than three quarters of the total number of books (copies) published in the USSR. In addition to books in their native language, all Soviet republics publish a large number of books in other languages. A considerable portion of the book output in Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, Byelorussia, Uzbekistan, Moldavia and Turkmenia was made up of books in Russian and other non-indigenous languages.<sup>1</sup> This is an

<sup>1</sup> See *Narodnoye obrazovaniye...*, pp. 362-63.

indication of the steadily growing role of the Russian language as a means of communication between peoples of different nationalities in the USSR.

The significance of the Russian language in the life of the peoples of the USSR is not confined solely to its cultural functions: it also plays an exceptionally important role in the political and economic co-operation of the peoples. Life has fully endorsed Lenin's words when he said prior to the revolution that the fluent mastery of the Russian language by every inhabitant of Russia was an essential factor of the close intercourse and fraternal unity of the oppressed classes irrespective of nations.<sup>1</sup>

In 1959 more than 10 million non-Russians considered Russian to be their native language, and 13 million in 1970. Moreover, 41.9 million non-Russians had a good command of the Russian language. Thus, 183.7 million people, or over 75 per cent of the total population of the USSR, speak Russian. The widespread bilinguality of the Soviet people is a result of the increasing movement of the population and the reciprocal influence of national cultures.

The existence of an inter-nation language and its increasing role as the common medium of intercourse between nations does not detract from the functions of the national languages. On the contrary, the all-round economic and cultural co-operation between nations and the exchange of scientific, political and technical information enrich the national languages and bring their vocabulary to the contemporary level of social progress. A language which is a medium of intercourse between nations neither encroaches upon nor replaces the languages of the ethnic communities—the national languages—but, serving as it does the Soviet people as an inter-nation community, it functions in co-operation with them.

Both national and the Russian languages perform different but equally important functions in the life of all peoples of the USSR: a national language is a means of intranation communication, while the other is a means of inter-nation intercourse. Therefore, they are both vitally important.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Is a Compulsory Official Language Needed?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, pp. 72-73.

The CPSU Programme assesses the historic importance of the widespread use of the Russian language in the Soviet Union as follows: "The voluntary study of Russian in addition to the native language is of positive significance, since it facilitates reciprocal exchanges of experience and access of every nation and nationality to the cultural gains of all the other peoples of the USSR, and to world culture. The Russian language has, in effect, become the common medium of intercourse and co-operation between all the peoples of the USSR."<sup>1</sup>

The flowering of the national cultures, including the national languages, takes place in the process of their interaction and reciprocal enrichment. The multinational Soviet people took shape as a new historical community not as a result of the "absorption of nations", but as a result of the attainment of a definite stage of their unity determined by socio-economic and ideological and political factors. It embodies the common features, traditions and historical experience of all the nations and nationalities comprising it.

The eradication of prejudices in the mode of life and the establishment of new, socialist norms and rules of behaviour constitute an important part of the general process of the internationalisation of life of the peoples of the USSR. Distinctions in ways of life are no longer as pronounced as in the past. New features of daily life, traditions, customs, morals and manners common to all the Soviet peoples appeared in the course of socialist construction. There are numerous factors, from common holidays that have become traditional to mixed marriages, evidencing the gradual drawing together of the nations and nationalities of the USSR in everyday life and the assertion of socialist principles in the mode of life.

It should be said, however, that the "revolution in the way of life" seriously lagged behind the changes in other spheres of human activity. To a large extent, this was due to the specifics of the way of life itself, a sphere which yields to state or public influence with exceptional difficulty. Here the principal role is played by the cultural level of the people, their life habits and awareness of their acts

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism*, p. 562.

and attitudes. More than any other sphere of human behaviour, the way of life is burdened vestiges of the past. Obsolete views and customs live longer in it and sometimes there is an "unexpected" revival of old morals and customs, whose proponents usually assert that "they are not in the least harmful". When thoroughly examined, however, an uncultured way of life stands in the way of everything, including the strengthening of the inter-nation community. The Evenk historian V. N. Uvachan correctly noted in his book *The Northern Peoples' Road to Socialism* that "any attempt to preserve the obsolete 'national distinctiveness' at whatever the cost leads to national backwardness and narrow-mindedness, to the desire to fence oneself off from the highway of world communist civilisation and, finally, to stagnation for the sake of preserving the archaic national way of life. This invariably leads to the advocacy of national isolation and then of nationalism".

The drawing of the peoples closer together in the sphere of culture and life is an essential element of the general process of the strengthening of their socialist community.

The development of the inter-nation community means that the nations are strengthening their political, economic, cultural and ideological unity and are more intensively acquiring common traits in their spiritual make-up and way of life. This process of integration is combined with the further development of all nations, which enables them more fully to disclose their creative possibilities and make the optimum contribution to the common cause.

Nations and national relations will remain even after classes and class relations disappear. Consequently, the national aspect of the community of people will be of overwhelming significance for its historical evolution.

#### 6. THE WAY OF LIFE AND SPIRITUAL MAKE-UP OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE

The Soviet people has gone down in history and in the consciousness of progressive mankind as a great revolutionary and creative force, as the builder of socialism. At the same

time, it has shown the world that it is the *proponent of a new way of life and spiritual make-up*.

A way of life is a customary system of public and personal relations between people and their attitudes towards nature and society and its institutions and procedures. Though the way of life depends on society's economic system, it cannot be reduced to economic relations alone; it embraces relations in the political superstructure, the family and everyday life. The way of life also determines the way of thinking and forms the people's spiritual make-up, which in turn actively influences the way of life and its evolution.

Lenin wrote that "every new social order demands new relations between man and man, and new discipline".<sup>1</sup> This refers to the socialist social order to a much greater extent than to any other.

In a class-antagonistic society the relations between people and discipline depend on their property status, which inevitably creates inequality and a discipline of domination and subjection. Socialism breeds new human relations which radically differ from relations under capitalism and at the same time it moulds a new spiritual make-up.

The way of life and the spiritual make-up of the Soviet people sprang from the socialist system of production, under which there is no exploitation of man by man and no moral, ideological and political antagonisms between peoples and social groups. Like the entire existence of the Soviet people, its way of life and moral make-up have their history in the course of which their separate elements were formed in different succession but in close interaction.

The formation of the Soviet way of life and thinking began with the assertion of the *domination* of the working people.

Having overthrown the exploiters and established the rule of the people with the working class at its head, the Great October Socialist Revolution ushered in the era of full democracy. It awakened among the working and formerly exploited people a sense of human dignity and the realisation of their new position and their new role in social life. This was the awakening of the masses from their historical

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Fifth All-Russia Congress of Soviets", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 515.

slumber to their historical creativity. Dozens of peoples in Russia who had been the objects of history became its subjects. Vigorous participation of the multinational masses of the working people in managing the country became their demand, their political tradition. *Democracy* in socio-political life is an organic element of the Soviet way of life.

The Soviet people, who were the first in history to create a political organisation of society based on genuine freedom and equality are justly proud of their state and their Soviet citizenship.

At the same time, the Soviet man has an inherent sense of duty to the state and to society as a whole. A high sense of *civic duty* in the most profound meaning of this concept is an inalienable quality of his political life.

By abolishing the monopoly of the parasitical classes on material and spiritual values, the October Socialist Revolution turned them into the property of the whole people. It made the people realise that they were the masters, inheriting all the wealth created by the preceding generations.

The people received the right not only to dispose of the inherited riches as they saw fit, but also to create new material and spiritual values for themselves. This was one of their greatest historical achievements. Lenin proudly emphasised this, in the first months of the revolution. He wrote: "For the first time after centuries of working for others, of forced labour for the exploiter, it has become possible to *work for oneself* and moreover to employ all the achievements of modern technology and culture in one's work."<sup>1</sup>

The people took their destiny into their own hands. This revolutionary change gave them confidence in the future and an inestimable advantage over the toiling classes in the capitalist world. With profound understanding the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the USA Gus Hall observed in his speech at the 24th CPSU Congress: "How can you weigh the growing sense of insecurity, alienation and frustration, of not being involved, not being a factor, under capitalism, with that of being totally involved

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 407.

and relevant, of being able to determine the course of life, that flows from the inner nature of socialism?"<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet people have an inherent confidence in the future, an unflinching historical optimism. A feeling of hopelessness and helplessness is alien to them, for they constitute a life-asserting force, an inexorable force for progress. In 1913, four years prior to the October Socialist Revolution, Lenin wrote: "The working class is not perishing, it is growing, becoming stronger, gaining courage, consolidating itself, educating itself and becoming steeled in battle. We are pessimists as far as serfdom, capitalism and petty production are concerned, but we are ardent optimists in what concerns the working-class movement and its aims. We are already laying the foundation of a new edifice and our children will complete its construction."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet people has built the great edifice whose foundation was laid by the revolutionaries who fought in the despotic conditions of the tsarist regime. The experience of socialist construction shows beyond all doubt that people who forge their own happiness cannot be vanquished. The Soviet people derive their optimism from the fact that their lives become more prosperous and happy with each passing day.

Socialist optimism helps Soviet people to surmount difficulties and engenders a mighty creative energy enabling them to accomplish ever new feats in the building of communist society.

The bourgeois world is one of striking contrasts, for in conditions of capitalist private property there are two opposing ways of life—that of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, of the rich and the poor. That means that they have contrasting morals and customs, habits and norms of social behaviour, views on life and the way it is ordered. The socialist mode of production asserts a single way of life for all members of society and creates common social conditions. Naturally, this takes time and is achieved together with successes in socialist construction.

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<sup>1</sup> "Voices of Tomorrow", *A New World Review Collection*, New York, 1971, p. 145.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Working Class and Neomalthusianism", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, p. 237.

The first revolutionary changes in the USSR produced such striking results that they were bound to amaze anyone capable of objectively comparing them with the way of life in capitalist countries.

Theodore Dreiser, who visited the USSR in 1927-1928, wrote with admiration about the great changes which had taken place in Russia's social life in the first decade of Soviet rule. "Still another fact that I harvested in Russia and which I will never forget," he wrote, "is this—that via Communism, or this collective or paternalistic care of everybody—it is possible to remove the dreadful sense of social misery in one direction and another which has so afflicted me in my own life in America....

"But in Russia how different—the prevailing tone of cities and towns has something that has never been anywhere before, I assume. For where are the rich? There are none. And where the grovelling, feverish poor? Gone also.

"What has become of that old intense misery of the poor which you could actually feel, as opposed to the show and vanity and luxury of the meaningless rich? It does not exist.... But as for gauds and fripperies, the underdog, hungry and lying hopelessly, the wealth and show of the accidentally or wolfishly strong and savage victors in a brutal class struggle, that is out."<sup>1</sup>

This was written about the Soviet Union at the time when it was taking only the first steps in the formation of a new way of life, when there were still remnants of the exploiter classes, unemployment, socio-class distinctions between town and country, real inequality between the peoples and other manifestations of social distinctions. In the course of socialist construction fresh important successes were achieved in surmounting social distinctions and designing a single way of life for the Soviet people. Not all the distinctions in social life, including the distinctions between town and country, mental and physical labour, incomes and the living standard of the various professional and qualified groups, etc., have been erased thus far, and, of course, they leave an imprint on the way

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<sup>1</sup> Theodore Dreiser, *Dreiser Looks at Russia*, N. Y., 1928, pp. 252, 252-53, 254.



of life and give rise to some of its microstructural peculiarities. In the main, however, the Soviet people have a stable common way of life. In a developed socialist society and particularly as a result of the scientific and technological revolution there is an intensive approximation of the conditions of work and life of the urban and rural populations, rapid eradication of the distinctions between mental and physical labour and the levelling out of the material welfare of the population. The fulfilment of the Ninth Five-Year Economic Development Plan will be a major step forward in improving the common way of life of the Soviet people and furthering their equality.

In socialist society equality means social equality "and not by any means the physical and mental equality of individuals".<sup>1</sup> Socialism creates the most favourable conditions for the formation, perfection and the best possible application of the versatile abilities of individuals.

The experience of the formation of the socialist way of life and the spiritual make-up of Soviet people shows that socialism does not in the least level the people in their talents and abilities. On the contrary, it opens up broad prospects for the full flowering of the individual and the development of his talents and abilities. From this point of view, socialism itself creates its own distinctions and inequality. But this inequality is "nothing but a refracted form of equality".<sup>2</sup>

The rise and the development of the Soviet way of life are connected with the new role played by labour in the life of the people and society. Labour has become their sovereign. The Soviet way of life is, above all, a working way of life. Dedication in work and the cult of work are a characteristic feature of the vital activity of the Soviet people and their spiritual make-up.

The<sup>3</sup> plight of the working people and the exploited masses under capitalism is an inevitable result of the alienation of their labour and the products of their labour from the producers. And it is the private-ownership relations that

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "A Liberal Professor on Equality", *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, Bd. 1, Berlin, 1956, S. 115.

form the social and economic foundation of this alienation. If the product of labour, Marx explained, did not belong to the worker then it belonged to someone else who was not a worker. Labour is compulsory by nature; for the worker it is something external, it is external labour. Consequently, "the worker's activity is not his spontaneous activity. It belongs to another; it is the loss of his self."<sup>1</sup> Therefore, the worker feels free only outside working hours.

Socialism signifies a complete change in the attitude of man to work, for in work man discloses his inner self. "Man is made great by his work"—such is the formula of socialism and communism. The way of life under socialism is defined by the principle: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

The principal wealth of the Soviet man is his abilities, the way he displays them in labour, and only these abilities determine his prestige and his place in social life. In the Soviet Union the best workers occupy the highest rungs of the social ladder, enjoying the respect of the people and state.<sup>2</sup> Heroes of Socialist Labour are honoured throughout the country.

Recognition of labour's lofty role in the life of Soviet society is embodied in the formula written down in the Constitution of the USSR: "He who does not work, neither shall he eat." Parasitism is alien to the Soviet way of life.

Besides multiplying the material and spiritual values of Soviet society, selfless labour improves the relations between peoples and strengthens their unity. The 24th CPSU Congress underlined the need "to bring together the workers, collective farmers and the intelligentsia, all Soviet people, in their common labour effort".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Moscow, 1959, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> As far back as 1927 the Soviet Government instituted the title *Hero of Labour*, which was conferred on people who particularly distinguished themselves in production, research and state and public activity and whose service record was not less than 35 years. In 1938 the USSR Supreme Soviet instituted the title *Hero of Socialist Labour*, the highest distinction in the spheres of economic and cultural development. (Consequently, it stopped conferring the title of *Hero of Labour*).

<sup>3</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 226.

Yet another inalienable and vital feature of the Soviet way of life is expressed in the formula: *Society's concern for man and man's concern for society*. Working out the second Programme of the Communist Party and charting its principal trends, Lenin pointed out that socialism introduced a planned organisation of social production "to ensure the well-being and many-sided development of all the members of society".<sup>1</sup> The maximum satisfaction of society's material and spiritual requirements has always been the primary objective of the Communist Party and in its new, third Programme it was embodied in the formula: "Everything for the sake of man, for the benefit of man."

Labour and education, health and leisure are not only the private concern of individuals but of society as a whole. In this respect the Soviet state and the Communist Party proceeded from the premise that people are the chief wealth of society. Their concern for raising the material and cultural level of the Soviet people is reflected in the Directives of the 24th CPSU Congress for the Ninth Five-Year Economic Development Plan of the USSR. The Party considers that the main task of the plan is to ensure a considerable rise in this level on the basis of a high rate of development of socialist production.

The Soviet people reciprocate society's care for them. A Soviet citizen is aware that he is a part of the whole of society and that society draws its strength from the activity of all its members. The old rule "it is no concern of mine" which regulated the lives of people who looked only after their own interests is repugnant to a Soviet individual, who is vitally interested in social discipline and in multiplying the country's wealth. A Philistine indifference to shortcomings and violations of Soviet and Party norms in the life of society and in the activity of its leaders is alien to him. People manifest their concern for the future of society and its all-round development in many ways, including participation in the people's control system, which embraces millions, and by writing to newspapers, among which the central newspapers alone receive tens of thousands of letters daily.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the RCP(B)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 102.

The Soviet people's concern for the general well-being finds its most profound and forceful expression in their creative, innovatory initiative. "I give my all to the five-year plan, the five-year plan gives its all to me." This motto, proclaimed by the innovator Ivan Volobuyev, a milling-machine operator, precisely defines the relationship between society and the individual in the course of socialist progress, the harmonious unity of their interests and aims.

The CC Report to the 24th CPSU Congress underlines: "The responsibility of each to the collective and of the collective for each of its members is an inalienable feature of our way of life."<sup>1</sup>

The liquidation of private property and the assertion of social ownership in the means of production eliminated the socio-political basis of individualism and consolidated collectivism in the USSR. Yet it would be wrong to believe that proprietary psychology and individualism automatically disappear with the economic conditions that engender them. Like all the other backward elements of social consciousness, they persist even after the economic transformation of society.

Lenin wrote that, since the people comprised a part of capitalist society, it "is not free from the shortcomings and weaknesses of capitalist society. It is fighting for socialism, but at the same time it is fighting against its own shortcomings".<sup>1</sup>

The assumption of power by the proletariat marks the beginning of a new revolution which Lenin in his immortal work *A Great Beginning*, written in connection with the Communist *subbotnik*, described in the following words: "Evidently, this is only a beginning, but it is a beginning of exceptionally great importance. It is the beginning of a revolution that is more difficult, more tangible, more radical and more decisive than the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, for it is a victory over our own conservatism, indiscipline, petty-bourgeois egoism, a victory over the habits left

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<sup>1</sup> *24th Congress of the CPSU*, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the RCP(B)" *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 208.

as a heritage to the worker and peasant by accursed capitalism."<sup>1</sup>

It was not easy to get rid of petty-proprietor psychology and habits, particularly for the self-employed peasant, and, when he joined the collective farm, he did not leave them on the other side of the threshold.

At the early stage of mass collectivisation the Party pointed out that the "artel does not conclude, but only begins, the establishment of a new social discipline, the instruction of the peasants in socialist construction".<sup>2</sup> And it was only after long years of collective-farm development that the peasants finally acquired the discipline of collectivism.

With the complete victory of socialism collectivism and comradeship became the guiding principles in the life and work of the Soviet people and the sources of their successful creative activity.

Marx called communism the embodiment of real humanism. Naturally, socialist humanism took shape and is developing in the new, Soviet world. The October Revolution, which put an end to the exploitation of man by man and destroyed the predatory law of the antagonistic society "man is a wolf to man", awakened a sense of respect and fraternity in the consciousness of the working people. For the first time in history the people realised that "man is a comrade and friend to man", and that has become the immutable law of socialist society.

The "heart" of proletarian humanism is full of love, but at the same time it is filled with undying hatred for the rule of the exploiters, their lackeys, parasites, people with a petty-bourgeois outlook and those who betray socialism.

The sculptured figure of a Soviet soldier clasping a sword in one hand and holding a child in the other which rises over the common grave of Soviet soldiers in Berlin personifies the humanism of the Soviet man. It symbolises deadly hatred for the fascist monsters and love for the working people of Germany and her present and future generations.

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> *KPSS v rezolyutstakh...*, Vol. II, p. 604.

Engels once wrote: "Communism stands, in principle above the breach between bourgeoisie and proletariat, recognises only its historic significance for the present, but not its justification for the future: wishes, indeed, to bridge over this chasm, to do away with all class antagonisms. Hence it recognises as justified, so long as the struggle exists, the exasperation of the proletariat towards its oppressors as a necessity, as the most important lever for a labour movement just beginning; but it goes beyond this exasperation, because Communism is a question of humanity and not of the workers alone."<sup>1</sup>

Today, when the future Engels wrote about has become a reality in the USSR, universal humanism in the relations between Soviet people is an inviolable principle.

The way of life and the spiritual make-up of the Soviet people are pervaded by the ideas of Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism. In the practical activity and views of Soviet people patriotism and internationalism are organically fused.

Socialism has given patriotism a new character and broadened its meaning. National patriotism, love and affection for their people, its progressive traditions and achievements, the realisation of the role which their nation plays in the Soviet community, is a feature inherent in all Soviet people. At the same time, they all cherish *all-Soviet patriotism*, i.e., love for, and fidelity to, their single multinational Soviet homeland and its common traditions, achievements and ideals. Essentially, Soviet patriotism is international in character, for it expresses the community of fundamental interests and aspirations of all the nations and nationalities of the USSR. Soviet patriotism is a general expression of the unity of their socio-class and national interests.

In the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the people of all the Soviet nationalities have acquired a genuine homeland, and Soviet patriotism, which is profoundly international in character, is the expression of their loyalty to their country.

National nihilism is alien to Soviet people, just like national narrow-mindedness and conceit. The viability of

<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *On Britain*, Moscow, 1953, p. 332.

each Soviet people and its success in socialist development depend, above all, on the cohesion and might of the fraternal community of peoples, on the successes of the policy of internationalism. Naturally, the national patriotism of the Soviet peoples is secondary to all-Soviet patriotism and socialist internationalism.

In its nationalities policy the Communist Party of the Soviet Union follows Lenin's guideline that an internationalist should think not only of his nation and place its interests above the interests of other nations, their general freedom and equality, but in all cases he should fight against small-nation narrow-mindedness, seclusion and isolation and consider the whole and the general and subordinate the particular to the general interests.<sup>1</sup>

The Soviet people's internationalism has another, international (world) aspect. The Soviet people is in every way strengthening the community of the peoples of the fraternal socialist countries and promoting all-round co-operation with them. It is selflessly assisting the peoples of the newly liberated countries in their struggle for free development and full independence from the imperialist states. It expresses its solidarity and assists the proletarians and oppressed masses in the capitalist world who are fighting against imperialist exploitation and reaction, in order to attain social progress and socialism.

The spiritual make-up of the Soviet people rests on the *scientific world outlook and revolutionary ideology of Marxism-Leninism*.

For many thousands of years the majority of mankind was enslaved by false world outlooks and ideologies, and this is still the case in the capitalist world. In the past only a few individuals advocated a scientific understanding of natural and social phenomena. With the emergence of Marxism, however, a scientific world outlook and advanced ideology came within the grasp of a wide circle of advanced representatives of the intelligentsia and proletarians.

Yet it was only after the October Socialist Revolution in Russia that a scientific world outlook and revolutionary ideology acquired the significance of fundamental principles

<sup>1</sup> See V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 347.

of the spiritual life of the whole of society and came to determine the way of thinking of all working people. The leading role in the spiritual progress of Soviet society is played by a materialistic world outlook and socialist ideology, which have come to dominate the consciousness of the Soviet man.



## CONCLUSION

Speaking on the occasion of the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution on the 25th October, 1917, Lenin uttered the prophetic words: "From now on, a new phase in the history of Russia begins, and this, the third Russian revolution, should in the end lead to the victory of socialism."<sup>1</sup>

Lenin was confident that socialism would win in Russia above all because he profoundly understood the new situation and the new role of the masses, which the revolution inspired to active participation in shaping history. Life immediately confirmed Lenin's and the Communist Party's firm belief that the revolutionary awakening of the masses would fill them with fresh energy and give broad scope to their creative initiative. In an article entitled *The Chief Task of Our Day*, written four months later, Lenin described Soviet Russia's situation and her prospects for the future and arrived at the following conclusion which was of funda-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Meeting of the Petrograd Soviet of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, October 25 (November 7), 1917", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 239.

mental importance: "Our natural wealth, our manpower and the *splendid impetus which the great revolution has given to the creative powers of the people* are ample material to build a truly mighty and abundant Russia with."<sup>1</sup> (My italics—M. K.)

The Great October Socialist Revolution also inaugurated a radical change in the outlook of the broad masses, which Marx and Engels in *The German Ideology* called a general law of the revolution. This change proved in practice that a "revolution is necessary, therefore, not only because the *ruling class cannot be overthrown* in any other way, but also because the class *overthrowing* it can only in a revolution succeed in ridding itself of all the muck of the ages", of all the negative traits with which it had been inculcated by the dominant way of life and thinking in capitalist society, "and become fitted to found society anew".<sup>2</sup> The people was becoming a new historical community, a consciously active subject of history.

The enemies of communism and Soviet rule did not, and had no desire to, understand the historical fact that the working people were beginning to acquire new qualities, and approached the people and its social role with the old yardstick. That was why the overthrown exploiter classes thought that the workers and peasants of Russia would be unable to administer the state and organise its economic and cultural life and predicted the imminent failure of the "Bolshevik experiment". Lenin noted that at the beginning of the revolution the bourgeoisie jeered at the Bolsheviks, who had embarked on the allegedly reckless cause of asserting the rule of the people. They said that "Soviet rule would barely last two weeks" and tried their utmost to sabotage it.

Even the many people in the west who wished the "Bolshevik government" well failed to notice the radical changes that had taken place in the position and the role of the broad masses in Russia. Discussing Lenin's plan for the electrification of Russia, the English novelist H. G. Wells in his book *Russia in the Shadows*, which he wrote after visiting Russia in 1920, made the following observation: "But their applica-

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<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 86.

tion to Russia is an altogether greater strain upon the constructive imagination. I cannot see anything of the sort happening in this dark crystal of Russia...." Indicating the way to "save" Russia, he asserted that "the only possible Government that can stave off such a final collapse of Russia now is the present Bolshevik Government, if it can be assisted by America and the Western Powers". Wells concluded the book with the words: "So it is I interpret the writings on the Eastern wall of Europe."<sup>1</sup> In the writing on the Eastern wall of Europe, i.e., in Soviet Russia, Wells failed to see the greatest and decisive force of her socialist progress—the Soviet people, with its new social qualities and historic role.

Under the guidance of the Communist Party, the Soviet people, without assistance from America and the Western Powers and without any outside assistance whatever, not only averted Russia's economic collapse, but raised her from ruin and age-old backwardness and turned her into a mighty socialist power.

In December 1972 the Soviet people and all progressive humanity marked the 50th anniversary of the Soviet state. In a report on this occasion, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev said: "The half-century history of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is that of the emergence of the indissoluble unity and friendship of all the nations united within the framework of the Soviet socialist state. It is the history of the unprecedented growth and all-round development of the state which was born of the socialist revolution and which is now one of the mightiest powers in the world. It is the history of the growth to maturity of all the Republics that have united under the banner of the Soviet state, of all nations, big and small, which inhabit the country, and their attainment of true prosperity—economic, political and cultural."<sup>2</sup>

The Soviet people and the Communist Party have performed a great historic feat carrying through a socialist renovation of the country and building a developed socialist society in the USSR. It was all the more significant in that it was

<sup>1</sup> H. Wells, *Russia in the Shadows*, London, pp. 135, 147, 153.

<sup>2</sup> L. I. Brezhnev, *The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics*, Moscow, 1972, p. 5.

accomplished in the exceptionally complicated and difficult conditions attending the historical development of Soviet society. Three of these conditions were uppermost in the first thirty years. First, socialism in the USSR had relatively backward prerequisites. In view of the socio-economic, technical and cultural backwardness inherited from the Russia of the bourgeoisie and the landowners, the construction of socialism required a great deal of additional effort and time. While it was easier to start a proletarian revolution in Russia in view of specific historical circumstances, Lenin pointed out, it would be more difficult to continue it and to bring it to final victory, i.e., to the complete organisation of a socialist society. Second, the Soviet people and the Communist Party had to follow an unbeaten path when embarking upon the socialist transformation of society. "We had to take the initiative in the socialist revolution," Lenin wrote, and "this imposed unprecedented difficulties on us, and on our country".<sup>1</sup> The Soviet people had to do everything itself for there was no past experience to draw upon. Third, the Soviet people carried on socialist construction for thirty years in the world's only country of the dictatorship of the proletariat and subjected to a hostile capitalist encirclement.

Speaking on the first anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution, Lenin said that the revolution was launched in Russia in extraordinarily difficult and complex conditions, which no other workers' revolution in the world would ever have to face. And if, despite all difficulties, the Soviet people successfully fulfilled its historic mission as the founder of socialism, it is indebted to the working class and the Communist Party in the first place. Dwelling on the leading role of the working class, Lenin stressed: "Only this class can help the working masses unite, rally their ranks and conclusively defend, conclusively consolidate and conclusively build up a communist society."<sup>2</sup> Life itself has proved him correct. Marxism-Leninism makes the point that the proletariat will be able to fulfil its historic mission of putting an end to capitalism and building socialism only

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 112.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "The Tasks of the Youth League", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 292.

if it is guided by a revolutionary party. In the course of socialist construction the Communist Party leads the entire people and is the teacher and leader of all the working masses. The experience of socialist and communist construction in the USSR confirms the Marxist-Leninist teaching that socialist progress inevitably heightens the role of the Party as the political leader, organiser and educator of the masses.

The establishment of a socialist society in the USSR is a key event in modern history. The significance of this historic fact has transcended the national boundaries of the USSR to acquire world and international importance.

The Soviet people and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union are making an outstanding contribution to social progress and the building of communism. Pioneering the socialist remaking of mankind, they are blazing the trail to communism.

As an ideology and banner of the proletarian liberation movement, scientific communism appeared a century and a quarter ago. History entered a new phase. *The struggle between communism and capitalism became its chief content*, and the destiny of social progress depended on the correlation of forces between communism and capitalism and the changes which took place in it.

"The courageous and selfless struggle of the proletarians of all countries," the CPSU Programme declares, "brought mankind nearer to communism.... A tremendously long road, a road drenched in the blood of fighters for the happiness of the people, a road of glorious victories and temporary reverses, had to be traversed before *communism, which was once no more than a dream, became the greatest force of modern times, a society that is being built up over vast areas of the globe.*"<sup>1</sup>

Judging by the results of communism's titanic struggle against capitalism, and the objective trends in the further development of contemporary humanity, the outcome of the historic battle between these two social systems, between two worlds, is predetermined. At each new stage of history communism multiplies its forces and successes, while

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<sup>1</sup> *The Road to Communism* pp. 447-48

capitalism is irreversibly losing its foothold, weakening and surrendering position after position.

There are *two main stages* in the history of world communism. They differ from each other as regards the correlation of forces between communism and capitalism, the historical situation and the character of the struggle between them, the concrete achievements of the communist movement and its prospects, and also the historical conditions in which the theory of scientific communism and its creative development had been tested.

The year 1917 is the dividing line between these two stages, the year of the victorious socialist revolution and the birth of the Soviet socialist republic.

The first stage embraces seven decades, separating the appearance of scientific communism to the Great October Socialist Revolution. In this period communism developed as an idea, a scientific teaching. On the basis of a profound study of the laws of social development of class-antagonistic societies, and a scientific analysis of the historical experience of the liberation movement of the exploited classes, particularly the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat, Marx and Engels and then Lenin drew brilliant theoretical conclusions about the inevitability of socialist revolution and formulated the fundamental principles of socialism and communism as a social system which would replace capitalism. At the time, however, it was impossible to check these principles in practice, for communist society did not exist then. The problems of the laws and course of development of the socialist social system were only problems of theory, of scientific prediction. It was natural, therefore, that theoretical conclusions and ideas about communism could have only a general character and referred only to the fundamental questions of the life of the future communist society.

Nevertheless, thanks to their genuinely progressive nature and viability, the ideas of socialism captured the minds of millions of exploited and oppressed people and thus turned into a great material force. With the course of time the revolutionary class struggle of the proletariat headed by Marxist parties to an increasing degree weakened the mainstays of the bourgeois system.

At various times different European countries became the centres of the international revolutionary movement. At the beginning of the 20th century Russia became the centre of the proletarian revolutionary movement. Historical circumstances turned her into a weak link in the world imperialist system, and the Russian proletariat into the vanguard of the international working class. In a letter to American workers written in 1918, Lenin said: "We have seen two great revolutions in our country, 1905 and 1917, and we know revolutions are not made to order, or by agreement. We know that circumstances brought *our* Russian detachment of the socialist proletariat to the fore...."<sup>1</sup> Apart from objective factors, there were also important subjective ones, including the degree of organisation of the Russian proletariat and the fact that it had a *Leninist* party.

The Great October Socialist Revolution, which was a natural result of Russia's entire social development, opened a new, second stage in communism's forward movement, in its struggle against capitalism. It inaugurated mankind's transition from capitalism to socialism. *Socialism asserted itself as a concrete social system* in the person of the Soviet Union. It was built by the working class of the USSR, a class which successfully carried through the socialist transformation of the old world. Therein lies its first world-historic service to the whole of mankind.

Lenin wrote about this on the eve of Soviet rule: "When a country has taken the path of profound change, it is to the credit of that country and the party of the working class which achieved victory in that country that they should take up in a practical manner the tasks that were formerly raised abstractly, theoretically.... This experience will never be forgotten.... It has gone down in history as socialism's gain, and on it the future of world revolution will erect its socialist edifice."<sup>2</sup>

With the victory of the October Socialist Revolution capitalism ceased to be the sole all-embracing social system. Society separated into two opposing worlds. For the first time in history the age-old dream of the working people came

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First Congress of Economic Council", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 413.

true—a social system in which there was no exploitation and oppression of man by man came into being. Since then communism has opposed capitalism not only as an idea, but as an existing world opposes another real world. It can not only theoretically prove its advantage over moribund capitalism, but also demonstrate this advantage in practice.

Having won in a vast country, which covers a sixth of the world's land surface, communism dealt a blow of tremendous force at the capitalist system, and at the same time acquired new ways and means of influencing the course of social progress, and obtained fresh opportunities for giving it still greater impetus. Thanks to the revolutionary initiative of the Soviet working class and its allies, communism now is not only a moral, ideological and political force in the struggle for the interests and ideals of the working people: it has become a *mighty economic and state-political factor of world social development*. The USSR is a reliable bulwark of the world communist and progressive movement.

The victory of the socialist revolution in a number of countries in the post-war period and *the formation of the world socialist system* embracing a third of the world's population is a great milestone in the years that have passed since the October Socialist Revolution. A great change took place in the correlation between the forces of communism and capitalism, with communism vastly expanding its sphere and pushing capitalism from important positions in the world arena. Now capitalism has before it not just one socialist country, but a world socialist system.

This turn in world history took place as a result of *a new feat accomplished by the Soviet people*—their rout of German fascism, the most brutal and barbarous force of international imperialism. "One of the most important developments of the post-war period," wrote the President of the Czechoslovak Republic Ludvik Svoboda in 1970 in his article *The Soviet Union's Role in the Contemporary World*, "is the rise of the world socialist system. It appeared as a result of the dedicated struggle of the Communist and Workers' parties, the working class and broad sections of the working people. Yet it is also a historic fact that their efforts were successful only thanks to the fraternal co-operation with the Soviet Union, which played the decisive role in safeguarding



security and independence and ensuring peace and other conditions essential for the successful development of the socialist countries."<sup>1</sup>

Together with socialism, the Soviet experience of the socialist transformation of society has transcended the limits of a single country. Formerly the experience of the Soviet Union was merely a subject of theoretical analysis and assessment for the Marxist parties of other countries. Now many of them are translating it into practice. As was to be expected, the Soviet experience of revolution and socialist construction in its main points has been asserted as a general truth and has received universal recognition. The road paved by the Soviet Union is being followed by all the fraternal countries, where life is governed by the same general laws which operated in the USSR.

The leading place in the vast historical experience of socialist construction accumulated by the fraternal countries is occupied by Soviet experience. It opened the highroad to socialism to all the peoples of the world. Today the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, is paving the road to communism, which is open to all peoples, to all mankind.

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<sup>1</sup> *Pravda*, October 27, 1970.

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