

The Renaissance of Nationalities and the Consolidation of Nations in the U.S.S.R.¹

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In his classical work *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, Comrade Stalin gave the following concise scientific definition of a nation:

"A nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life, and psychological make-up, manifested in a community of culture." (Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 8, International Publishers, New York.)

Comrade Stalin emphasized that the presence of but one of these essentials does not constitute a national formation; furthermore, that the absence of even one of these essentials means that the people under consideration are not a nation. Only the composite of all the attributes indicated by Comrade Stalin go to make a nation.

Comrade Stalin further showed that the formation and development of the modern nations are connected with a definite historical period, the epoch of the disintegration of feudalism and the victory of capitalism.

In the storm and stress of national wars and bourgeois revolutions, the medieval feudal principalities collapsed and the non-integrated nationalities began to evolve into nations. These struggles engendered and invigorated a patriotic national ideology, a national language and literature. There arose national states.

The basis for these national movements was the development of the productive forces and the striving for a unified national market, essential for developing capitalism. The victory of capitalist relationships created the conditions for the formation of nations.

Thus, the nation is a historical category. It is a product of the decomposition of feudalism and of the victory of the capitalist mode of production. The nation was already conceived in the womb of feudal society, but it is not typical of the epoch of feudalism. The nation is a product of the bourgeois epoch of social development.

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If, with Stalin's definition of a nation as criterion, we examine the mode of life of certain peoples on the borders of former tsarist Russia, it becomes absolutely clear that prior to the victory of the great October

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Socialist Revolution, many of these peoples were not crystallized into nations.

The policy of the Russian military-feudal imperialism aimed at strangling the culture of the oppressed peoples, at their enforced Russification, at preventing their development into distinct nations. A backward primitive economy, nomadic and semi-nomadic types of existence, vestiges of a tribal mode of life – this was the condition of the Tadjik, Turkoman, Kazak and Kirghiz peoples on the eve of the Socialist Revolution. It is clear that under such conditions they could not consolidate into distinct nations. The same must be said of the numerous other nationalities of tsarist Russia, the Udmurtians, Kalmuks, Komis, Chuvashes, Yakutians, etc., which were doomed under those conditions to extinction.

The German social-chauvinist Karl Kautsky asserted that a majority of the peoples of Russia, particularly the Ossets, Vogulis, Maris and Kalmuks, would never develop into distinct nations, but would be assimilated by other peoples.

The Socialist Revolution, having overthrown the power of landlords and capitalists and placed the proletariat in power, finally broke the fetters of social slavery and national oppression. The Revolution converted the former colonial border regions into independent and free Soviet Republics. It established the relations between the Russian people and the other peoples of the land "on the humane principle of equality, and not the serf principles of privileges, that humiliate a great nation." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, p. 101.) The proletariat in power discarded the ferocious national policy of the landlords and capitalists and inaugurated a new, Bolshevik policy – a policy of friendship and brotherhood of peoples.

The Soviet state made it possible for previously backward peoples and tribes, with the assistance of the victorious proletariat of Russia, to pass on to socialism by omitting the capitalist stage of development, and on this basis to develop for the first time into independent nations.

The most important prerequisite for the consolidation of diffused nationalities into integrated nations was the realization of Soviet regional autonomy – the creation of autonomous republics and regions.

Proponents of the chauvinist conception of a "Great State," opponents of the liberation of oppressed nationalities – the Trotskyites and Bukharinites – opposed the formation of national republics and regions and the consolidation of backward peoples into independent nations. They cynically contended that many peoples were at a very low level of culture, that they would be unable to take advantage of their autonomy, that such national consolidation would bring dissension.

The Party, led by Lenin and Stalin, mercilessly exposed and defeated these machinations of the enemy. Lenin and Stalin emphasized repeatedly that the working class took power precisely in order to secure for all the peoples of Russia true freedom; to secure for them the possibility of building their own autonomous Soviet republics and regions, and of developing into independent nations – the only sure road to true brotherhood and friendship of the peoples.

The Consolidation of the Turkmenian Nation

The bourgeois nationalist elements strove to direct the process of consolidating the nationalities, in order to convert national autonomy into a means for the oppression of the toilers of the given nationality.

Thus, the Pan-Islamists and Pan-Turkists opposed the consolidation of the various Turkic nationalities into distinct nations. They denied the necessity of consolidating the Uzbeks, Tadjiks, Turkomans, Kirghiz and Kazaks into distinct nations, counterposing to this the idea of a single Turkic nation.

Seeking to undermine the consolidation of these nations, the Pan-Turkists characterized the aspiration to national consolidation as a manifestation of national dissension, to eliminate which, they contended, it was essential for all these nationalities to merge into one Turkic nation.

Under the , pretext of combating national dissension, the Pan-Turkists defended the interests of the dominant sections among the Mussulman nationalities – the Uzbek and Tartar bourgeoisie, which strove to arrest the process of national self-determination of such weaker peoples as the Kazaks, Kirghiz, Bashkirs and Tadjiks, and to prevent the development of the class struggle within these nationalities.

Comrade Stalin exposed the aims both of the Trotskyites and the Bukharinites, expressive of Great-State chauvinism, and those of the various regional bourgeois nationalist elements, and demonstrated that the Soviet Government would help consolidate the formerly backward and non-integrated peoples into distinct nations, and that the process of consolidation would proceed under the leadership of the working class.

In his speech, "The Political Tasks of the University of the Peoples of the East" (Joseph Stalin, *Cited Work*, pp. 206-220), on May 18, 1925, Comrade Stalin indicated that one of the basic distinctions of the development and existence of the Soviet Republics of the East, in contradistinction to colonial and dependent countries, is that "they are developing and consolidating themselves as nations, not under the aegis of the bourgeois regime, but under the aegis of Soviet Government. This is a fact without precedent in history, but it is a fact." (*Ibid.*, p. 207.)

A striking example of the consolidation of a nation under the auspices of the dictatorship of the working class is the history of the development of the Turkmenian people.

In Turkmenistan there are about 1,400,000 inhabitants, of whom 72 per cent are Turkomans. Before the Revolution the Turkomans lived in the territory of the former Trans-Caspian region, as well as in the territories of Khiva and Bokhara. The Turkomans were conquered by tsarism in the 'eighties of the last century. They were then divided into separate Turkmenian tribes – the Tekintzi, Sariki-Suliri, Djafarbai, Akatbai, and others. Among these clans and tribes there went on for decades sanguinary warfare, which was fostered by the clan chiefs.

The basis of social life was the clan, headed by an exploiting group which was rapidly developing into feudal lords. Vestiges of a clan society remained among the Turkomans up to the time of the national delimitation of Turkmenistan in 1924 and the introduction of the land and irrigation reform in 1926.

Each county was populated by a clan that had settled down; each village by a gens. Such clan organization was clearly reflected in the system of land and irrigation relationships in the so-called land commune – *sanashik* – under the rules of which the right to land and water was possessed only by men who were married. A poor man, unable to pay the purchase price for a wife, remained landless, an eternal slave of the bey.

After the subjugation of Turkmenia, its toiling masses suffered double oppression. The extortionist policy of the Russian landlords, capitalists and bureaucrats was aggravated by the oppression on the part of the local patriarchal-feudal elements. The policy of the tsarist government was constantly directed towards fomenting inter-clan strife.

As a result of the ferocious exploitation of the Russian military-feudal imperialism and of local feudal beys and usurers, the toiling dekhans were gradually dispossessed of land, water and cattle. By the time of the Socialist Revolution, a considerable part of the land and cattle found its way into the hands of beys and usurers. The Revolution found the Turkomans as disunited as they had been at the start of the Russian conquest; it found the same feudal-clan system, tribal and clan enmity, and barbarism.

Artificially sundered between Russian Turkestan and Bokhara, the Turkomans had no territory of their own and possessed neither common language nor common culture. In essence, there did not exist a united Turkoman people; there existed a large number of kindred clans and tribes having distinct peculiarities in language, mode of life, etc.

The national delimitation of Turkestan, effected in 1924, signified that the parts of Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan which had been artificially sundered under Russian imperialism were reunited, forming independent national states and thus accelerating the unification of the toiling masses of these countries and the completion of their national consolidation. In the national delimitation there was manifested the deep urge of the Turkomans and other peoples for national consolidation; the urge to have their own organs of power that would be close and familiar to them; the urge to develop a culture, national in form and socialist in content. This national delimitation created the basis for accelerated crystallization of a Turkmenian nation, on the basis of the Soviet order; it gave the Turkomans the primary requisite of a nation – their own territory.

The national delimitation of Turkestan clarified the national relationships in Central Asia, hastened the process of class differentiation and the development of class consciousness among the toilers, strengthened the struggle of the dekhans against the beys, creating the conditions for the development of the economic life on the basis of its transition to socialist forms of economy.

The land and irrigation reform effected in 1926 had tremendous significance for the peoples of Central Asia. It definitely eliminated the clan land commune and with it the power of clan chieftains and the clan distribution of water, changing the Turkmenian village from a clan subdivision into an economic and administrative unit.

In Turkmenistan, 32,000 landless and almost landless households were provided with land and water through the abolition of the feudal tenures. This reform created the prerequisites for drawing the masses of dekhans into cooperatives and collective farms. The great help of the Union Government during the fifteen years of the existence of the Turkmenian Soviet Republic has made possible tremendous agricultural achievements. During the two Stalinist Five-Year Plans alone, investments in Turkmenian agriculture totaled 391,800,000 rubles. On the eve of the Socialist Revolution there were only 64 plows in the basic regions of old Turkmenia. At present there are in Soviet Turkmenia over 4,000 tractors, approximately 200 combines and thousands of the most complicated agricultural machines. Dozens of machine and tractor stations have been established. Collective farms comprise 95.4 per cent of dekhan households and there are about forty large state farms.

The important problem of irrigation, on which depends the development of Turkmenian agriculture, is now being solved successfully. Large irrigation constructions have been completed, and the total arable acreage has markedly increased. The gross cotton crop

has increased three times as compared to the pre-War level. Cattle breeding is developing rapidly. From 1936 to 1938 the number of heads of cattle increased by 63 per cent, reaching 2,344,000 heads. During the last three years the income of the collective farms of the republic grew from 63,000,000 rubles to 420,000,000 rubles.

Comrade Stalin has often stressed the primary importance of developing industry in the erstwhile oppressed border regions in order to end their economic and cultural backwardness. In Turkmenia, along with the advance in agriculture, industry is developing at a rapid rate. New industries fostered here include raw silk production and silk weaving (with three raw silk and two silk weaving plants). A sulphur plant has been built in Kara-Kum. Other new plants include the largest cotton factory in the U.S.S.R., a wool-washing mill, a flour mill with an elevator, a candy factory, a number of canning plants, a large window glass factory, a large general printing plant, a meat-packing plant and a fish-packing plant. The construction of a gigantic chemical combine at Kara Bughas is being completed. The oil industry based on the Nebitdag oil field is growing. As a result, industrial production in Turkmenia in 1936 was seven times that of 1913. Agrarian Turkmenia has become an industrial-agrarian country. In 1937, industrial production formed nearly 66 per cent of the total production of the Republic.

This industrial development brought a marked increase in the ranks of the Turkmenian working class. While in 1925 there were 44,500 workers and employees in Turkmenia, by 1934 there were 103,500, including 13,700 Turkomans, and in 1936 the number of workers and employees rose to 136,000. In 1924 there were only 72 women working in large enterprises; in 1936 the number reached 31 per cent of the total number of workers.

As a result of all this, the process of national consolidation embraced the entire country.

At the time of the national delimitation of Turkestan, there was as yet in reality no common literary language in Turkmenia. There existed many tribal dialects.

In the struggle for the creation of a common Turkmenian language, the Bolshevik Party firmly pursued the policy of developing and improving the spoken language of the Turkmenian masses, rejecting the nationalist tendency in favor of one Turkic language. In 1928 the first Russian-Turkmenian dictionary of 20,000 words was published. Now the literary Turkmenian language is being successfully developed and rooted in the national literature. While during the fifty years of colonial domination by tsarist Russia not a single literary work appeared in Turkmenia, now members of the writers' union of Soviet Turkmenistan

have produced quite a number of literary works. At present there are in Turkmenia 1,377 primary and secondary schools, 38 factory and technical schools and four institutions of higher learning. The total number of students has grown from 7,000 in 1914 to 233,000 in 1939. Since the inaccessible Arabic alphabet has been replaced first by the Latin and now by the Russian alphabet, the toiling masses of Turkmenia now have the opportunity of mastering all the accumulated knowledge of mankind. The Republic also has now its national theater. There are in Turkmenia five state-owned theaters, six theaters owned by collective and state farms, 22 moving picture theaters, and 606 clubs and traveling libraries.

There are 36 newspapers published in the Turkmenian language. Of the total budgetary appropriations of the Republic and localities, 40 per cent is devoted to cultural needs. Turkmenia, once backward, has now become a flourishing Socialist Republic within the great Soviet Union.

Thus, in the Soviet period there has been formed an independent Turkmenian nation. This nation has acquired a common territory; a common economy based on a unified socialist system of production; a new Turkmenian culture, national in form and socialist in content; and a common Turkmenian language, familiar and understandable to the broad masses regardless of regional or tribal distinctions.

Literature, the theater, art, imbued with socialist content, are raising a once backward people to a high level of development, educating the masses in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, thus contributing to the further strengthening of the multi-national Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

The Rebirth of the Tadjik Nation

The process of national consolidation under Soviet power is characteristic of many national groups, particularly those inhabiting the border regions of the U.S.S.R. What has been stated in regard to Turkmenistan is fully applicable to Tadjikistan, which, prior to the Revolution, was as backward as Turkmenistan.

The territory of present-day Tadjikistan was formed of the eastern part of the former Khanate of Bokhara and of the mountainous part of Russian Turkestan.

The Tadjiks are a people with a very rich historical and cultural past. One thousand years ago they had a rich literature. In their language wrote Firdusi; Saadi, the famous poet of the thirteenth century; and the great scientist, encyclopedist and poet of the tenth century, Avicenna.

Subjected to double oppression, on the one hand by the Emir of Bokhara and his officials and beys, and, on the other hand, by the

Russian military-feudal imperialism, the disunited tribes of Tadjiks were degraded to the level of most backward nationalities. Literacy among the population of Tadjikistan scarcely reached one-half or three-quarters of one per cent, limited as it was to the mullahs and officials.

The October Revolution liberated the Tadjik toilers from colonial oppression, and in 1920 a revolt of the toilers, assisted by the Red Army, ended the power of the Emir of Bokhara. Bokhara became a Soviet People's Republic. In 1924, with the national delimitation of Turkestan, the Tadjiks received a united territory, forming the autonomous Tadjik Republic within Uzbekistan. In 1929, Tadjikistan was reconstituted into a Soviet Socialist Republic, affiliated directly with the U.S.S.R.

Guided by the Bolshevik Party, the toilers of Tadjikistan smashed the enemies of the people, the bourgeois-nationalists, and have achieved remarkable progress.

Instead of the several small semi-handicraft shops that existed in the past, Tadjikistan now has large-scale industry, including a machine factory, a number of canning plants, several silk-weaving factories, a sewing plant, a silk combine in Hodgent, and nine large, technically well-equipped cotton-cleaning factories. Production in 1938 was 195 times that of 1913; the number of workers rose from 204 in 1913 to 23,000 in 1939.

Under Soviet power, 140 kilometers of railroads were built in Tadjikistan. To indicate the tremendous changes that have taken place in the economy of Tadjikistan in the last few years, it will suffice to cite a few figures on the great irrigation system in process of construction: the volume of excavation work – 26,000,000 cubic meters; the total length of the irrigation network – 13,000 kilometers; engineering constructions – 10,000 units.

This network will assure irrigation to tens of thousands of hectares of land, to be used for cultivation of high-grade Egyptian cotton. In 1914, irrigated land in Tadjikistan amounted to 173,000 hectares,² and in 1937, to 242,000.

Agriculture in Tadjikistan has been converted into large-scale mechanized collective agriculture. Of the dekhan households, 97 per cent are in the collectives. On the collective fields there now operate more than three thousand tractors, and thousands of combines and complex thrashing machines.

In cultural development, the achievements of Tadjikistan are outstanding. In 1914 there were only 400 pupils in Tadjikistan; by 1939 the number reached 328,000, or increased 820 times.

2 A hectare = 2.471 acres – *The Editor*.

In 1938 the literate population exceeded 70 per cent of the total. Forty-two newspapers were published in the Tadjik language in 1937. In the decade 1924 to 1934, budgetary expenditures for education rose from 170,000 rubles to 53,472,000 rubles, *i.e.*, 314 times. A Tadjik intelligentsia has developed. In 1914, for all of Tadjikistan, there were only thirteen physicians; by 1938 the number had grown to 440. The number of teachers alone has reached 10,414.

There are at present in Tadjikistan two teachers' colleges, a medical school, an institute for gardening and fruit growing, an agricultural institute, and 29 technical secondary schools. There has been created a State Tadjik national theater. A national Tadjik literature is developing. Tadjik culture, national in form and socialist in content, is developing vigorously.

On the foundation of socialist construction, the erstwhile disconnected Tadjik tribes have merged into an independent nation. In the old dictionaries, the word "Tadjik" was defined as "the name of a once extant tribe." Now the Tadjiks are not only in existence, but constitute a politically organized, independent people, offering an example of powerful economic and cultural progress.

In 1925, in greeting the Communists of Tadjikistan, Comrade Stalin, pointing out that the Tadjiks have had a rich history, that their organizational and political abilities of the past were known to all, wrote as follows:

"Workers of Tadjikistan! Lift the culture of your country, develop her economy, assist the toilers of town and village, rally the best sons of the Fatherland and demonstrate to the entire East that you are the most worthy descendants of your ancestors, that you are holding firmly in your hands the banner of liberation."

Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of Comrade Stalin personally, the Bolsheviks and all the toilers of Tadjikistan have converted their young country into an exemplary socialist Soviet Republic, into a steel outpost of the Soviet Union on the border of the enslaved colonial East, pointing out to all the oppressed peoples of the East the road to their liberation from the imperialist yoke.

The National Rehabilitation of the Gypsies

Let us consider further that most backward and hapless people under capitalism – the Gypsies. The language of the Gypsies has a considerable similarity with the ancient Hindu language, Sanskrit, and is also quite

close to Hindi, the most widespread language in modern India. This justifies the assumption that the Gypsies at one time came from India. The Gypsies appeared in Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and on the territory of the U.S.S.R. in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The oppression of the Gypsies is, probably, the most savage, the most bloody in the history of all peoples. Loathed and hounded by all kinds of religious and bourgeois cliques, they were oppressed in every possible fashion in capitalist countries and even subjected to extermination. In Western Europe they were victims of persistent persecution, of exile to desert islands, of death penalties in every form.

In tsarist Russia the Gypsies, primarily a nomadic people, were under special police surveillance as criminals. In accordance with special regulations of the tsarist government, Gypsies were excluded from all populous centers, especially from cities. Gypsies were forced into special battalions, used for particularly hard labor. Whole camps of Gypsies were subjected to the vilest persecutions on charges of witchcraft, thievery and cannibalism.

Condemned to dire ignorance, poverty and filth, the Gypsies wandered through the endless open spaces of tsarist Russia, seeking the longed-for "Gypsy good fortune." Born to squalor in dirty, ragged tents, they grew up only to drag out an existence of endless privation and suffering. And the "good fortune" was not in sight.

This was their condition prior to the October Socialist Revolution. Only the great Socialist Revolution placed in the hands of the Gypsies the key to happiness. It opened to them the doors of factories and workshops, of collective farms, and schools; it opened to them the opportunity of honest, productive labor; it thus opened to them the road to national renaissance.

Despite the complex arrangements required to introduce the Gypsies to steady productive labor, considerable progress has already been achieved in their economic and cultural development. Out of the eighty thousand Gypsies inhabiting the U.S.S.R., over one-half have already been transferred to a settled mode of life. Scores of Gypsy collective farms have been organized in various regions of the Union, comprising thousands of Gypsy families. Thousands of Gypsies are engaged in industry, and in producers' cooperatives. There are Gypsy Stakhanovites. There are Gypsy skilled workers, technicians and engineers. There are quite a number of Gypsies who have qualified as Party and Young Communist League functionaries. Gypsy schools established by January 1, 1936, included one pedagogical school, one junior high school, and twenty-five primary schools. In Moscow there is

a Gypsy club. The Gypsy nationality, very gifted and musical, could not under the conditions of tsardom unfold its great artistic abilities. The Soviet Government has provided the opportunity to the Gypsies to develop their talents. Moscow has the only Gypsy state theater in the world, "The Romain."

Alfonse Goldsmidt, prominent French cultural figure, gave a glowing account of the first performance at the "Romain," which he attended while visiting Moscow.

"The excellent Gypsy Theatre in Moscow," he wrote in 1937, "distinctive, mercurial, colorful, and vital, serves as evidence of the effectual and just national policy of the U.S.S.R. Endowed with high artistry, singularly effective, many-sided and monolithic in its expressiveness and purposefulness, the Moscow Gypsy Theater has aroused in me the desire to present this great achievement to the bourgeois world as well. Let the Theater appear in Paris, Berlin and London. Let it demonstrate what real art can do for a liberated people."

In 1926, for the first time in the history of this people, a Gypsy alphabet was created in the U.S.S.R. Since then there have appeared in the Gypsy language literary works, textbooks and other publications. From among the Gypsy youth there are now coming forward writers, poets and artists. A Gypsy national culture, socialist in content, is developing. Thus the bourgeois and Philistine prattle that Gypsies are unfit for toil or civilized life has been completely disproved.

The Gypsies thus offer another example demonstrating that the Socialist Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat bring new life to all nationalities, even the most down-trodden and backward, and draw them into the fraternal union of free peoples that are building the socialist society.

What is the ultimate fate of the Gypsy nationality in the U.S.S.R.? Will it develop into a distinct nation or will it be assimilated by other peoples? This depends on a number of circumstances. The Gypsies are not in possession of a common territory. They are scattered through the territory of the U.S.S.R. in small groups.

According to the census of 1926, the number of Gypsies in our country has increased since 1897 by 88.8 per cent, but the increase of those speaking the Gypsy language was only 22.9 per cent. This indicates that the Gypsies adopt the languages of those nationalities among whom they live, and gradually forget their own language. The aloofness and clannishness of the Gypsies are steadily disappearing. As they are drawn into activities on collective farms and in industry, they

come into closer relations with other peoples. Lately young Gypsies in quite a number of cases have rejected Gypsy schools in favor of Russian schools, preferring to study in the Russian language.

It is therefore probable that the majority of Gypsies will be assimilated. In his speech to the students of the School for Toilers of the East, Comrade Stalin said:

"Undoubtedly, certain nationalities may, and even certainly will, undergo a process of assimilation. Such processes have occurred before. But the point is that the process of assimilation of certain nationalities does not preclude, but rather presupposes, the opposite process of reinforcement and development of a number of powerful nationalities, for the partial process of assimilation is a result of the general process of development of nationalities." (Joseph Stalin, *Cited Work*, p. 211.)

The Rejuvenation of the Northern Peoples

Let us turn, by way of further example, to the position of the peoples of the Soviet North, who were among the most hapless and downtrodden under the tsarist autocracy.

The small nationalities of the North occupy 47 per cent of the territory of the Soviet Union. Scattered over this vast land, living lit its forests, tundras, and taigas, are twenty-five nationalities and tribes, but with a total population of only 160,000.

The Evenks (Tunguses), numbering about 40,000 persons, are the most numerous of these Northern nationalities. The Evenks are a sociable and very capable people with pronounced artistic propensities. Even in the old days they were therefore known as the "Frenchmen of Siberia." But these "Frenchmen" were nevertheless subjected to the same oppression as the other peoples of the North. The more easily to rob the Northern peoples, as was its policy with all other nationalities, the tsarist government invariably kept them in darkness and ignorance.

Thus, in the Turukhan area, now the national region of the Evenks, the annual appropriation of the tsarist government included: 5,619 rubles for local administration; 2,729 rubles for the upkeep of the clergy, and – 87 rubles for education! As a result of this policy, prior to the victory of the Socialist Revolution, not one of the Northern nationalities had its own script, and illiteracy was universal. Fantastic stories were even current in which the Northern nationalities were called "Samoyedi" – "self-eaters" (cannibals).

Only under Soviet Power have the nationalities of the North received the opportunity of free and equal development together with the other peoples of the Soviet Union. From among their midst, groups of active workers have arisen who now provide leadership in the national

districts and regions, the initial form of autonomy of these nationalities. In 1935-36 the peoples of the North had 466 schools and five teachers' colleges. There are also special subdivisions at their disposal in technical schools, as well as the facilities of the Institute of the Peoples of the North, located in Leningrad. A history of misery and oppression has thus become a realization of cultural and economic efflorescence.

Far-off Chukotka includes the Chukotsk national region. Let us consider one of its typical districts, the Chaun district. In 1933 there was not one literate person among the adult Chukchi. Vestiges of barbarism and patriarchal modes of life had persisted tenaciously. The entire native population lived in nomadic huts. Polygamy and group marriage persisted even among the youth. These conditions were fostered by the shamans. In the short six years that have elapsed, Soviets of representatives of the native population have been established; producers' associations have been formed. So rapid has this development been that by 1937 this district had eleven schools, seven radio stations, a moving picture theater, a hospital, a dispensary, and three medical stations. The toiling population now has at its disposal tractors and tugboats. Instead of the nomadic huts, modern European cottages have appeared, and in five settlements these cottages are equipped with electricity. Similar progress has been achieved in the other national regions and districts.

In the northern part of the Omsk Province is the Ostyak-Vogulsk national region, inhabited by two nationalities: the Khanti und the Mansi. This is a region of 610,000 square kilometers, exceeding the combined territories of France and Germany; but its population is only 90,000. The region has existed for seven years as a national unit.

In the spring of 1937 the Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R. approved the decision of the Council of Nationalities to introduce a new alphabet for the Khanti and Mansi peoples. In conformity with the desire of these peoples the alphabet consists of Russian characters. In 1937 this region had 173 grammar and high schools with 13,000 pupils, and two special junior colleges, one pedagogical, the other medical. Previously the Khanti and Mansi knew nothing of agriculture. In 1936 they had 10,000 hectares under grain cultivation and were served by two machine and tractor stations: By 1937 the collective farms comprised 67 per cent of the total number of households.

This region is now being served by a network of 91 medical institutions, while under the tsar medical practice was confined here to one lone feldsher who spent more time in drinking than in treating patients.

Owing to the successful application of the Leninist-Stalinist policy on nationalities these people are experiencing a renaissance. Whereas, formerly, the population was steadily decreasing, there is now a high rate of increase – in the four years from 1933 to 1937 the Khanti and Mansi increased by 10 per cent.

In the Khabarovsk province there is the national Nanaisk region. In the past doomed to extinction, this people has attained, under Soviet Power, a new and happier life. There are in this region eleven collective farms and fourteen village Soviets comprising Nanaiti and managed by them.

In the past the Nanaiti were a nomadic people. They did not engage in agriculture and were altogether unacquainted with vegetables or even with potatoes. Now they are raising both grain and vegetables. Previously the Nanaiti did not know of milk; they had never even seen a cow. Now every collective farm has dairy products for sale. In the village Naichino there is a prosperous fisherman's collective, "The New Path." In 1938 its cash income reached 1,150,000 rubles and the net profit 226,000 rubles. The collective was able to put 136,000 rubles into the reserve fund. Naichino has already built one house with twelve apartments, a steam bathhouse, a creche, a vegetable storehouse, and a workshop for fishermen's nets. This year a large club house is in construction.

The collective farm, "Nanaisk-Partisan," comprising 252 households, has receiving and transmitting radio equipment. Its members have built a clubhouse costing 28,000 rubles and have a large library. "Nanaisk-Partisan" has a maternity ward and two steam bath-houses. It has a power plant. Its seven-year grammar school is attended by 300 children. Formerly there were very few literate people among the Nanaiti. Now all the Nanaisk children of school age attend school. The region possesses 31 grammar schools, seven junior high schools, one high school, 21 reading rooms, three libraries and 12 traveling libraries.

In recent years there have been built three hospitals and seventeen medical stations with maternity beds. (Before the Revolution there was only one feldsher for the entire Nanaisk region.)

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Peoples who were backward in the past owe their rebirth to the Leninist-Stalinist policy on nationalities, to the fatherly care of Comrade Stalin. These examples reveal that in the Soviet Union, on the basis of the dictatorship of the working class, there is in process a magnificent renaissance of numerous nationalities, the rise of the economic power

and national cultures of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. Blasted are the spurious theories of "superior" and "inferior" races, of the inability of peoples formerly oppressed and backward to develop into independent nations and to create their own statehood.

A consolidation of nations, unheard of in history, is successfully being accomplished, not under a bourgeois regime, but under the aegis of the dictatorship of the working class.

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It is clear that the consolidation of nations proceeding in the U.S.S.R. differs in principle from national consolidation under capitalism. The consolidation of nations in the epoch of rising capitalism proceeded under the leadership of the bourgeoisie and on the basis of the bourgeois social order.

The consolidation of nations in the U.S.S.R. proceeds under the leadership of the working class, on the basis of the Soviet socialist order.

The merging of disunited nationalities in the capitalist epoch produced maximum possibilities for the development of capitalism and led to the enslavement of the toilers by their own national bourgeoisie.

Under Soviet Power the unification into independent nations of peoples heretofore backward and disunited facilitates the drawing of their toiling masses into the political and economic work of socialist construction; it facilitates the realization of the tasks of socialist construction.

The bourgeoisie, exercising hegemony in the consolidation of nations during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, sought to indoctrinate the masses with nationalist-patriotic ideology and to deceive them with catchwords of "a united nation" and "national liberty." From the very beginning the bourgeoisie preached chauvinistic ideas of the superiority of its nation over others, and fostered national inequality, antagonism and oppression.

The working class, in assuming leadership of the process of consolidation of nations, educates the toiling masses in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, in the spirit of equality and brotherly cooperation of free peoples.

The dictatorship of the working class undermines the foundations of national strife, inequality and oppression. Internationalism is inherent in the very nature of Soviet Power. Soviet patriotism, a new kind of patriotism, is an expression of this internationalism; Soviet patriotism is international, manifesting itself in the fact that all the peoples of the Soviet Union, irrespective of nationality, be they Turkomans, Tadjiks, Ukrainians, Chuvashes, or Tartars, regard as their fatherland, not only

their autonomous region or republic, but the entire multi-national Soviet Union, and are ready to defend it with their lives.

Under capitalism every nation, as Lenin said, consists of two distinct nations – the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. There can be no national unity under capitalism because there is a bitter struggle between the classes forming the nation. The bourgeoisie strives to represent its class interests as the interests of the nation, but it invariably betrays the national interests whenever its own are at stake.

In the U.S.S.R. each nation is a unit; it is not split into classes with antagonistic interests, since there are no longer any exploiting classes, and society is composed of toilers of the city and countryside whose interests are identical.

In the U.S.S.R. each nationality has achieved genuine unity. Reared in the spirit of proletarian internationalism, all nations, national groups and nationalities of the U.S.S.R. are unified politically and morally. They are united by the spirit of Soviet patriotism.

In unrelenting struggle against deviations in regard to the national question, against Great-Russian chauvinism and sectional nationalism, the Bolshevik Party has helped and will continue to help in the rejuvenation of the formerly backward nationalities and their consolidation into independent nations. The Party regards this process as a historically necessary step on the road towards complete abolition of the last remnants of inequality among the peoples of the U.S.S.R., which will create the conditions necessary for the complete fusion of nations in the world Communist society.

Socialism Assures Liberty of Nations

The victory of the Leninist-Stalinist policy on nationalities, the realization, under the dictatorship of the working class, of the historically unprecedented consolidation into distinct nations of hitherto disunited and backward peoples; the unexampled blossoming of national cultures, socialist in content, and, finally, the unbreakable friendship of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. – these achievements are of world-wide historic significance.

Shattered are the "predictions" of the renegade Kautsky, that the majority of nationalities in the Soviet Union would not develop into nations, but would dissolve among other peoples. Life has demonstrated that all peoples and tribes in the U.S.S.R., even those formerly most backward and resigned, have come back to life under the Soviet power and are now flourishing under the Stalinist Constitution.

The practice of socialist construction has left not a single stone intact of the "theory" that alleged the innate incapacity of backward peoples for cultural development and statehood.

The Bolsheviks, faithful to the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, have always asserted that the backwardness of this or that people was not a consequence of their inherent racial peculiarities, but was a product of the historical environment in which this people existed. The backwardness of colonial peoples, said the Bolsheviks, was the result of the imperialist policy of the so-called great powers, which condemn these peoples to perpetual backwardness.

The example of the Soviet Union demonstrates conclusively that, once freed of the colonial yoke, and with substantial help extended by the more developed Russian working class, even those peoples formerly most backward are now catching up with the more advanced peoples in all fields of social and political life and cultural endeavor.

"It was formerly the 'accepted idea' that the world has been divided from time immemorial into inferior and superior races, into black peoples and white peoples, the former of which are unfit for civilization and are doomed to be objects of exploitation, while the latter are the sole vehicles of civilization, whose mission it is to exploit the former. This legend must now be regarded as shattered and discarded. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it dealt this legend a mortal blow, by showing in practice that the liberated non-European nations, once having been drawn into the channel of Soviet development, are no less capable than the European nations of promoting a *truly* progressive culture and a *truly* progressive civilization." (J. V. Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 254.)

The solidity and permanence of the achievements of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. in their national rehabilitation and development are based first of all on the victory of socialist construction in all the republics of the Soviet Union.

In his report to the Twelfth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on the nationality question Comrade Stalin pointed out that: "the whole East regards our Union of Republics as an experimental station." If we solve the nationality question correctly, if we are able to establish truly fraternal collaboration of peoples, then the entire East will see in our country the advance guard, in whose footsteps it must follow. "...and that," said Comrade Stalin, "will be the beginning of the collapse of world imperialism." (Ibid., p. 148.)

The experiment of solving the nationality question on the basis of socialism through creating national state formations (autonomous regions and republics), the best form of fraternal collaboration among peoples, has proved a complete success. The Soviet Union represents an example of a world of nations, never witnessed under capitalism and inconceivable under the dominance of the bourgeoisie.

"It was formerly the 'accepted idea' that the only method of liberating the oppressed nations was that of *bourgeois nationalism*, the method of separating nations from each other, the method of disuniting them, the method of accentuating national animosity between the toiling masses of the various nations. This legend must now be regarded as disproved. One of the most important results of the October Revolution is that it has dealt this legend a mortal blow, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of the *proletarian, international* method of liberating oppressed nations, as being the only correct method, by demonstrating in practice the possibility and expediency of a *fraternal alliance* between the workers and peasants of the most diverse nations based on the principles of *voluntary consent* and *internationalism*. The existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which is the prototype of the future amalgamation of the toilers of all countries into a single world economic system, is but a direct proof of this." (Ibid., p. 254.)

The experiment of forming a multi-national state on the basis of socialism has proved a complete success. The multi-national Soviet state has weathered all the trials and is the most solid state in the world. The peoples inhabiting it, liberated forever from the chains of capitalist slavery and national oppression, are united in unbreakable friendship and fraternal solidarity. This is attested by the latest mighty patriotic wave, which swept the entire country in the historic days when the Red Army crossed the western border in order to extend its protection to the life and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia. The entire country reacted as one man to the speech of Comrade Molotov, demonstrating the unity of the people, the government and the Red Army.

In the camp of capitalism we find an entirely different picture. Again and again life substantiates the penetrating words of Comrade Stalin, that national enmity and national clashes are inevitable and unavoidable as long as capital is in power, and, conversely, peace between nations

and national liberty can be regarded as assured, if the dictatorship of the proletariat is assured.

In the course of scores of years the bourgeoisie has made attempts to solve the nationality question on the basis of strengthening the power of capital. But all attempts to coordinate the development of nationalities with the system of exploitation of man by man proved sterile, they were doomed to failure.

Only twenty years ago, in the conflagration of the first world imperialist war, the Austro-Hungarian "patch-work" empire fell to pieces. The oppressed minorities – Czechs, Slovaks, Ruthenians, Croats, Serbs and others – did not choose to remain within a "united" Austro-Hungarian state. The experiment of forming a multi-national state on the basis of capitalism failed.

This is quite understandable, since the fundamental reason for national animosity in the multinational bourgeois states is rooted in capitalism itself. The initiators of the intra-national dissension and strife are the exploiters, the capitalists, kulaks, landlords. It is precisely they who implant in the peoples the feeling of mutual distrust and foment nationalistic passions.

We are witnessing at present how the knot of national contradictions is becoming increasingly tangled up, threatening the very existence of capitalism. The multi-millioned masses of toilers, crushed under the burden of class and national oppression, do not want to bear this yoke any longer. With ever greater determination they are turning their eyes toward the great land of socialism, where peoples flourish under the Stalinist Constitution.

The most striking evidence of this are the recent events in Poland.

As a result of the Polish-German war, the complete inner bankruptcy of the Polish state was revealed. The multi-national Polish state fell to pieces as a house of cards in the course of an incredibly short time. The collapse of the Polish multi-national state furnishes added proof that the bourgeoisie was powerless to bring about the cooperation of peoples, it was completely bankrupt in the solution of the national question.

The Polish state arose in 1918-19. Into it were forcibly included the territories of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, populated by Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians. Out of some thirty million of Poland's total population, eleven millions were Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians, and Jews numbered about three millions. National minorities thus formed over 40 per cent of the population of Poland.

What was the position of the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians in Poland? The Polish bourgeoisie and landlords not only did not grant them even administrative autonomy, but they deprived them of most

elementary rights. The national policy of the ruling classes of Poland recreated the most repulsive features of the policy of Russian tsardom. The Polish capitalists and landowners converted Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia into their internal colony, and the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians into colonial slaves.

At the time when the peoples of Soviet Ukraine and Soviet Byelo-Russia were experiencing a great economic advance and a mighty rise of culture, national in form and socialist in content, the peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, handed over for pillage to the Polish gentry, were doomed to cultural decay.

Polish administrators took away the land from the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian peasants and handed it over to Polish military colonists. The entire state apparatus in Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia was in the hands of the Poles. People of non-Polish nationality had no access to government positions. The use of the native language was subject to persecution in all state institutions. The Polish language dominated. Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian schools were closed.

The Polish ruling groups prosecuted a policy of forcible Polonization of the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians. The Polish rulers cynically boasted that "ten years hence one will not find a single Byelo-Russian even with a candle."

Gross, shameless exploitation by the Polish landlords and kulaks, suppression and oppression, such was the lot of national minorities, particularly of the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians, in gentry Poland.

The toiling masses of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, inspired by the example of their brothers, living in the Soviet Union, waged an incessant struggle against their oppressors.

With fire and sword the Polish lords suppressed the slightest attempts to protest against the oppressive regime which they had instituted in Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia. But they did not succeed in breaking the determination of the Ukrainian and Byelo-Russian toilers to fight for their freedom.

These conditions constituted insurmountable difficulties to the task of developing internal unity and consolidation of forces of the multi-national Polish state. The war between Germany and Poland was the first serious test for the Polish state. This test it could not pass. From the first days of the war lack of internal unity of the multi-national Polish state became apparent. The national minorities, oppressed by the Polish gentry and deprived of national rights, did not and could not serve as a reliable bulwark for the Polish state. They had no desire to fight for its hateful and unjust regime. This determined the military weakness of the Polish state and its inglorious end.

In the course of some two weeks of war Poland lost all of its industrial districts as well as most of its large cities and cultural centers. The irresponsible rulers of Poland abandoned the population to its fate and fled to Rumania. All connections of the Polish general headquarters with the army were broken. The Polish state and the Polish government virtually ceased to exist.

Thus history itself once more demonstrated that national inequality, suppression and oppression inevitably engender centrifugal forces, which doom the state to extinction.

The collapse of the Polish state, and the anarchy and disorder which reigned in Poland, opened the way for all kinds of incidents which could have created a threat to the U.S.S.R. Under such circumstances, it is clear, the Soviet Government could no longer remain neutral with regard to the situation that had arisen »in Poland. Nor could it remain indifferent towards the fate of the kindred peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, abandoned by the Polish Government, and handed over to the mercy of the demoralized and infuriated horde of gentry officers.

The Government of the Soviet Union decided to extend a helping hand to its blood-brothers, the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians.

The Soviet Government, declared Comrade Molotov in his broadcast to the Soviet people, had instructed the general headquarters of the Red Army to order the troops to cross the border and take under their protection the life and property of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia.

The Red Army crossed the border in order to fulfill its international task – to liberate the Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians from the cruel oppression of the Polish gentry and together with that "to deliver the Polish people from the unfortunate war into which they were plunged by their stupid leaders, and to enable them to live in peace." (V. M. Molotov.)

The peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia received the detachments of the Red Army with indescribable joy and jubilation.

The Red Army has accomplished its historic task. Millions of our brothers in Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia are for all time liberated from the lordly yoke. They have become masters of their own destiny. The peasants, Ukrainians and Byelo-Russians, received the land taken away from the landlords, and their children in the schools are beginning to receive instruction in their native tongues.

In the elections to the People's Assembly of Western Ukraine, carried out on the basis of the most democratic franchise, 4,433,997

voters out of a total electorate of 4,766,275, or 92.83 per cent cast their ballots. In the elections to the People's Assembly of Western Byelo-Russia, 2,672,280 voters out of a total electorate of 2,763,191, or 96.71 per cent, went to the polls.

The elections demonstrated a high degree of political interest, single mindedness and unity of will on the part of the population of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, which gladly cast their votes for the candidates nominated by the people.

The People's Assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia, reflecting the irresistible will of the peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia to belong to the friendly family of peoples of the U.S.S.R., petitioned the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. to merge Western Ukraine with the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and Western Byelo-Russia with the Byelo-Russian Soviet Socialist Republic. The Extraordinary Fifth Session of the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. approved this petition.

Henceforth the severance of the Byelo-Russian people is ended. The Ukrainian people are also reunited.

The liberation of the peoples of Western Ukraine and Western Byelo-Russia from the yoke of the Polish gentry and the creation of conditions for their free development, for their economic and cultural growth, are an event of tremendous historical significance, singularly great in its revolutionizing effect. Millions of people the world over have been convinced by deed that the Soviet Union and its Red Army bring freedom, progress and culture to oppressed peoples.

The Leninist-Stalinist nationality policy is victoriously being fulfilled, bringing ever new victories. The eyes of oppressed peoples throughout the world turn towards the U.S.S.R. The mighty beacon of the Soviet land illuminates the road forward, towards freedom and happiness of all humanity.