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Remarks:			
<p>We might do an article in [] in this RR</p> <p>I think it would be good idea, esp. using Dzyuba book, which is excellent in using Lenin to defend U.S.</p>			
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Jubilee -

Please state comments on
attached and let me know
what you think. The idea
is fine, but I doubt
the Melodgers audience
would be very receptive.
add

10 February 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR: C/SB/POS
THROUGH : C/SB/PO/M
SUBJECT : The Communist Party of Canada Comments
on the National Problem in the USSR

1. The attached from the November 1968 issue of Viewpoint is in reply to the "Report of the Delegation to the Ukraine", which appeared in the January 1968 issue of the same publication, which is an official organ of the Communist Party of Canada.

2. The report carried in the January 1968 issue of Viewpoint was delivered by the delegation to the Ukraine (composed of Canadians of both Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian backgrounds) to the Central Committee meeting of the CPC held on 16, 17, and 18 September 1967. The delegation had been charged by the plenum to visit the Ukraine on a mission of "inquiry and discussion concerning the policy and the experience of the Communist Party and the Government of the Ukraine in dealing with the national question." The report submitted by the delegation on its return indicated that all was not well in the Ukraine concerning the national question, particularly with regard to the language issue.

3. In the course of a meeting with the delegation in the Ukraine, Peter Shelest, 1st Secretary of the CPU, stated that "some comrades have on occasion expressed mistaken ideas about what they call the merging of languages..."; and Mykola Bazhan (poet, chairman of the Ukrainian Union of Writers, and member of the CPSU) told the committee that the concept that all Slavonic languages will be merged with Russian was rejected, and that "together with the struggle against Ukrainian nationalism it is necessary to press the fight against Russian chauvinism." The members of the delegation considered Bazhan's reply very significant. "He indicated in a matter-of-fact way but quite definitely that there had been 'arguments', that is to say differences of opinion,

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concerning the future of the Ukrainian language. He stated emphatically that the question was settled by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and that this settlement of the question was underlined in the Writers' Congress".

4. The delegation's report to the CPC stated that the Soviet Embassy in Washington had published a statement that Russian is the state language of the entire USSR, and the delegation took issue with that statement. "It became evident in the course of our discussions (in the Ukraine) that there are real differences in the understanding of and approach to the language question at the various levels of party organization and amongst different leading comrades, even though they all believe themselves to be subscribing to the Leninist national policy...we found instances of gaps between declared policy and practice...For example, we were told of cases of bourgeois nationalism among writers and students, but in no instance could we get the specifics of the charges. Bourgeois nationalism was not defined. There has been a tendency in some quarters to brand as bourgeois nationalism demands for the greater use of the Ukrainian language in (Ukrainian) public institutions. Such carry-overs from the Stalin era do not help in correctly solving the language problem." In its conclusions the delegation stated that "The party and Communists working in the Ukrainian national group field in Canada have to go over to the offensive in describing the processes at work in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic and reassert ourselves more forthrightly as champions of the true national rights of the Ukrainian people and of Socialist internationalism...As soon as possible our report must be made public through meetings, press articles, interviews, etc. It cannot be treated as an inner-party question."

5. It is quite interesting that no refutation, at least none that we know of, to the delegation's report was attempted before the Viewpoint article attached - which comes almost a year later. And, of course, it was necessary to have a Canadian of "Ukrainian parentage" to make assurances that there was no national problem in the Ukraine, and that the delegation had only saddened and confused the honest Progressive people and "supplied poisonous innuendo to make reactionaries applaud with delight." Note also the reference to CIA on the last page of the report.

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November, 1968

On the delegation to the Ukraine

A letter from John Weir

As a Canadian of Ukrainian parentage who devoted over 40 years to the workers' cause and the Communist movement in Canada, including work in the progressive Ukrainian movement and press, I consider that I have the right and the duty to express my feelings and opinions on the Report of the delegation to Ukraine, which is incorrect and harmful.

The delegation was sent to study the experience of the Communist Party of Ukraine and the government of the Ukrainian S.S.R. in solving the national problem. The Report of that delegation has been joyfully acclaimed by the enemies of Soviet Ukraine and of the progressive movement in Canada. What makes me sick at heart is not just the fact of progressives supplying propaganda material to the enemy (although that too reveals an appalling irresponsibility, especially in view of the tense international situation), but that the "report" is simply not according to the truth.

The delegates were provided every facility to study the policy of the C.P.U. and the C.P.S.U. as a whole on the national question

and how it is being implemented in the Ukraine. The foremost people in public life, culture, education, etc., met with them, answered their questions and provided them with voluminous information. They toured several areas of the Republic and visited various institutions "to see for themselves." Some of that massive data is mentioned in the Report. There is no attempt made by its authors to disprove or deny any of those facts. Yet interspersed throughout the document and concentrated in its concluding section there is enough poisonous innuendo to make reactionaries applaud with delight and honest progressive people to be saddened and confused.

Please allow me to point out some of the errors in it.

The Problem and "Problems"

By its terms of reference the delegation was required to report on whether the national problem of the Ukrainian people has been solved and the experience of the Ukrainian C.P. in carrying out the Leninist policy on the national question.

The Report does not give a

forthright reply. It twists and hedges. The national problem has supposedly been solved, it says, but the delegation was told that problems arise, some people sometimes express incorrect views, and that means that the problem has not really been solved.

But that's equivocation based on sheer sophistry!

The truth is that the national problem in the Ukraine has been solved, as everything the delegates saw and heard testifies, and the Leninist policy on the national question is being consistently carried out.

Do problems arise from time to time? Do people express divergent opinions on one or another aspect? Are mistakes sometimes committed here and there? Of course! That is true in any field, whether in the Soviet Union or Canada. Such things are inevitable in real life. But to use those petty and passing trifles in order to call in question the fundamental and lasting fact of the solution of the national problem is impermissible for responsible people.

What's brought as "evidence" to in effect deny the solution of the national problem? In a piece in a newspaper a schoolteacher complained that some of his colleagues don't know the Ukrainian language as well as they should. A writer stated in a speech that sometimes foreign languages were taught better in higher schools than Ukrainian was. While the Supreme Soviet session was conducted in Ukrainian, some of its members were overheard conversing in Russian during intermission (!). Some unnamed person was supposed to have suggested that Ukrainian wasn't suited for use in science and engineering . . .

Please, comrades, is that serious?!

Deal With Wrong Problem

Secondly, while it is supposed to deal with the national problem, the Report only touches on it perfunctorily, but deals with the language question, which is only part of — and not the most important — of the national problem.

Foremost in the national question is the right to self-determination, national sovereignty, the right to be master in one's own home, the raising of the economic and cultural level to that of the form-

only ruling nation — freedom of national development and the creation of conditions where that freedom can be exercised. In a socialist nation it further means the shedding of nationalist prejudices and isolationism, the building of people's rule based on proletarian internationalism, the nurturing of the socialist content in national forms, the ideological and cultural drawing together of socialist nations and continual strengthening of the Union state.

The language question is important and the delegation would have done well to really study it as regards Soviet Ukraine and basic Communist policy. The comrades then would have understood that while providing freedom, facilities and encouragement for the use and development of the national language, the principled Leninist approach is that no person shall be compelled to use any language.

Communists are on principle opposed to a state language. Yet it is a little smile out of the Report that that is exactly what its authors were displeased with. They would have been satisfied if everybody in the Ukraine were compelled to speak Ukrainian only. Where this type of thinking leads is seen from a question put, according to the Report, by one of the delegates to the effect why "so many" Russians are permitted to live in the Ukraine. If that isn't sheer nationalism and separatism, what is?

Lenin insisted that every government office in the Ukraine should be a matter of dealing with people in the Ukrainian language, but he never suggested that only Ukrainian be spoken in the Ukraine — or only Russian in Russia. The Ukrainian people suffered and fought too long for the right to speak as they wish to now start denying that right to other people in the Ukraine! That's why there is no state language, and there are publications in other languages for those who want them, and where there exist compact communities of people speaking another language and the parents want their children to study that language in the elementary school, while at the same time teaching Ukrainian, such schools in Russian, Polish, Moldavian and Hungarian languages are established.

Back to the "Bund"?

Unable to make a case on the basis of information about the Ukraine, although continuing to intimate that there is such a case, the Report turns to something that was completely outside its terms of reference — the national policy applied in the Russian S.F.S.R. — and thereby fully exposes its non-Communist approach. If there are Russian schools in Kiev, it asks, why aren't there Ukrainian schools in Moscow? Aha! "Double standard!" "Russian chauvinism!" "Discrimination against Ukrainians!" Those are the suggested conclusions.

It is a pity that the delegation did not really study the national question in the R.S.F.S.R., for it would have learned how many schools in various languages there are in the Russian republic. And it's a pity it did not bother to read what Lenin wrote on that subject for it would not have disclosed either its astounding ignorance or its apostasy of Leninism.

Don't the comrades know that Lenin and the Bolsheviks fought that question out with the Bund and other nationalist groups (and the whole opportunist "cultural autonomy" program advocated by the Austrian Social Democrats) over 60 years ago? Don't they know that Communists are in principle opposed to splitting up workers according to nationality or language?

Don't they know that in the Russian S.F.S.R. or the Ukrainian S.S.R., children don't go to school according to the nationality of their parents; but according to the regional principle, i.e., the people in each area themselves decide what the language of instruction shall be in the school. There is no segregation according to nationality in the school system, just as there are no ghettos and no "apartheid" in regard to residence.

There are schools with many languages in the Russian S.F.S.R. not only in the national autonomous republics and regions (such as Yiddish in Birobidjan) but in smaller areas. There once were Ukrainian-language schools in some districts, but there no longer are areas compactly settled by Ukrainians (not even in Kuban and Zeleny Klin) and there is no demand for them. And of course there are

no Ukrainian or any other "Harlems" in Moscow or any other Soviet city. Ukrainians living scattered throughout the city together with people of all sorts of national origins don't want their children to be segregated in separate schools not because they're afraid, as the Report intimates, but because they aren't bitten by the nationalist bug!

How about Russian schools in Kiev? Not only is a considerable part of the population not Ukrainian in origin, but barely 50 years ago all schools were Russian. Now the great majority are Ukrainian and the percentage increases every year. Moreover, in each Russian (or Polish, etc.) school in the Ukraine the children are taught the Ukrainian language, history and culture. Is that "Russification"? Ridiculous! But there isn't any coercion and there can never be, since Communists and not nationalists are guiding the affairs of state.

Should Be Considered

I've briefly pointed out three areas of basic error in the Report: 1) the use of petty and passing questions to deny the fundamental fact of the solution of the national problem; 2) the substitution of the language question for the national problem; and 3) the smuggling in of the anti-Leninist "cultural autonomy" concept in regard to schools. The list could be extended, including such pertinent questions as interference in a brother party's inner affairs, uncomradely methods



of inter-party discussion, Wrong lessons drawn for the application of the national policy in Canada, etc.

I believe that the Report should be reconsidered. The information gathered by the delegation, even that of it that's quoted in the Report, when shed of innuendo based on prejudice and pettifogging, is sufficient for a clear-cut Marxist-Leninist analysis.

I think we should scrutinize the line of thinking behind the errors in the Report. Isn't it logically leading to separatism, to undermining the firm unity of the USSR? Doesn't it lead in the direction of the unspeakable John Kolasky's "opus," the counter-revolutionary Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalists, the CIA declared plans to disrupt the socialist camp from within with national-

ism as the main weapon? Isn't that why the anti-Sovieteers and reactionaries of all stripes were so pleased with the Report?

And isn't that line of thinking undermining the progressive Ukrainian Canadian movement? Does not it substitute nationalism for internationalism in approach to all aspects of the national question in Canada? Don't Communists always approach national questions from the class point of view? Aren't our efforts, including defence of national rights, always for the purpose of uniting the working people, not dividing them?

The solution of the national problems in the USSR, including the Ukraine, is a brilliant victory of the Leninist policy and an inspiration and model (in its essence, not necessarily in the very same

forms) for all Communists, for all true democrats and champions of freedom. An unbiased report cannot but come to such a conclusion.

I am sure that on further study and reflection the members of the delegation and the members of our Party as a whole will reconsider that ill-advised Report. And as for the Ukrainian Canadian workers, who for over six decades have held high the banner of proletarian internationalism, I am certain that they will not be swung into nationalist positions, suspicious of and hostile to Soviet Ukraine, but will continue to march as part of the vanguard of the Canadian working class, deserving of the respect and trust they have won both in Canada and in Ukraine.

John Weir