

**FORMATION OF A CIVIL SOCIETY AND NATIONAL MOVEMENT
IN THE REPUBLIC OF KARELIA
(some problems of research methodology)**

It is now an indisputable fact: the emergence of the national movement was brought about by perestroika. Democratization in social and political life, bursting the fetters of communist ideology, has been swiftly filling the minds of various strata of society with new notions of freedom and personal rights. New ideas have replaced communist ideology, which preached the idea that intranational development and international relations were all clear blue sky and there were no clouds to be seen on the horizon. A new opportunity has appeared to openly discuss and write about the massive amount of accumulated national problems.

The mobilization of collective memory - national self-consciousness - began revealing itself as the most important factor in forming the organization of the national movement. I believe there is no need to explain why the intelligentsia is in the front ranks of those protecting the national interests of the people.

Lonely voices of those dissatisfied with national policy and concerned for the people's fate, discussions of certain problems of national life, the emergence of interest groups, the first conferences and consultations, folk festivals - these have been some of the achievements of the initial period of the formation of the national movement in Karelia.

The adoption of statutes and programmes, the registration of societies, have concluded the organizational period, 1987-1991. In the early 1990s the national movement has been the force that has most affected political life in the Republic. The effect of the national movement on the processes of democratization of social life can be expressed as follows: the factor of nationalism came to be the leading force in conjunction with the transformation of civil society.

The remainder of the period involved seeking ways to conclude and review the programme statement in order to resolve national problems. There is nothing surprising in the discordance of opinions. Can an eternal problem - the question of the role played by nationalism, its place and significance in public life - be solved in one day? However, despite a wide range of opinions, the expanding national organizations are becoming united, firstly, by admitting that all national republics (though to various degrees) are losing their ethnic identity. Secondly, the democratization of society is impossible without preserving and augmenting the national cultural heritage.

When claims for making sovereignty more significant in the regions are expressed strongly and nationalism intrudes ever more powerfully into the sphere of politics and nationalist values occupy an ever-increasing place in people's minds and no effective national policy exists, scientific research takes on, as never before, practical direction in stating both the general and specific in the ideology of national organizations and movements up-to-date. The boundaries of the verbal battles appear to be extending, blood is streaming, human losses increasing... The basic goal of nationalistic policy - developing civil society, in practice by meeting the national needs of ethnic communities and individuals - is still too far removed from the high road of democratic transformations.

What are the direction and the structure of the dominant ideologies, their constructiveness and non-constructiveness, their mass or non-mass nature, in nationalist movements in Karelia? While admitting that the problem is immense, profound and complex, I will restrict myself to comments of a general nature. The article strives to illustrate, using specific examples, the variety of national ideologies. The notion "nationalism" here, as with other researchers, does not attempt to appraise, but recognizes, the right of a national culture to social (in the broad sense of the word) protection (see e.g., Gellner, Lind, Guboglo, Drobizheva, etc.).

It is generally accepted that nationalism is dominated by a doctrine through which full national development can be provided only within its own national state. This idea, the classical idea of state nationalism, has never been stated by the "Karelian Movement", nor to be more specific, by its leader, A.S. Grigoriev. But the establishment of a national state is viewed differently: sometimes as the political

and economic independence of Karelia and the indigenous peoples (i.e. the Baltic-Finnish peoples) in the Baltic States. Sometimes it is viewed as a "sovereign Karelian republic," the essence of which is not clarified; sometimes as the unification of Karelia to Finland and the claim for the preservation of maximum independence within the boundaries of a different state or of a state confederation.

The Ingrian National Revival Movement (*Inkeri Virkoamine*) sees Ingrian ethnocultural development in the context of diaspora in Karelia as dependent on the re-establishment of an Ingrian national region (New Ingria) in the territory bordering on Finland, which would be organized and arranged by enacting a corresponding Russian law.

The Society of Vepsian Culture and the Union of Karelian People support the idea of creating national entities (national regions, national towns and village councils) in the areas where there are larger numbers of Vepsians and Karelians. The "Karelian Movement" strongly objected to that in the early 1990s, but later began to support the ideas of a Karelian national-territorial entity, having initiated the creation of the Savinov National Council. In its initial stages the Society of Vepsian Culture supported the idea of making the Vepsian national-territorial entity directly subordinate to administrative and governmental organs of the Russian Federation, and not to Karelian ones.

Thus, the idea of sovereignty was associated with various ethnonationalistic claims: the aspiration for complete national-territorial separation, for demarcation either within the limits of the historical and cultural borders of settlement or by changing their integrity, or finally, for a national-cultural revival within urban areas. The initial stage of national movements is also characterized by claims for raising the status of the Republic from autonomy to that of a union republic. In any case, the political factor was used as an important condition of ethnic reproduction.

While not going into a great depth, we should underline, however, that the overwhelming majority of Karelians, Vepsians, and Finns (Ingrians) remained cool to nationalistic-isolationist ideas, realizing how explosive they are.

Ideas of economic sovereignty, economic nationalism to be more precise, can easily be found in the programmes and speeches of the leaders of the Karelian and Vepsian movements. They have been expressed in various ways as claims for illimitable land use by the indigenous population alone, for granting ownership rights to the land and natural resources solely to the national-territorial entity, for providing the exclusive right to establish the concepts and basic trends of developing the regions mainly to the national (Vepsian and Karelian) population, and include a list of certain privileges.

There is no national movement in Karelia whose programme does not pay exclusive attention to the ideas of the so-called protective nationalism which seeks to revive, develop and increase the national-cultural heritage. This can be easily understood. The national-cultural fate of the Karelians, Vepsians and Finns evolved in such a way that they are threatened by ethnic extinction. According to 1989 census data only 37.5% of Vepsians, 40.8% of Finns and 51.5% of Karelians claimed their ethnic language as their mother tongue. Linguistic assimilation of the nations has resulted from an increased knowledge of the Russian language among the Vepsians, Finns and Karelians and a dissemination of information which caused them to recognize Russian as their natural language. The policy of ignoring national interests led to the destruction of traditional settlement areas and the loss of the distinctive features of their economic life. In fact, the national culture stopped fulfilling their socio-ethnic needs - the provision for ethnocultural continuity between generations. The critical cultural-linguistic situation facilitated the development of nihilistic sentiments, weakened the collective memory and the national self-consciousness of the peoples.

Therefore, national movements espouse a collection of measures starting with those which are most pressing and immediate and moving on to long-term ones as protective mechanisms. The problems of reviving the written language, teaching the national language in kindergartens, creating primers, dictionaries and other textbooks, introducing systematic broadcasting in national languages on radio and TV, etc. were raised as the urgent problems. Long-term problems included forming a system of protective mechanisms which would at least prevent the nations from ultimately losing their ethnocultural identity, if not guarantee a complete national revival. This means, primarily, the creation of a state programme for the revival of language and culture.

While the "Karelian Movement" or "Karelian Congress" are characterized by an orientation to

political aspects of national development, the Society of Vepsian Culture, the Union of Karelian People, the Ingrian Union or the Ingrian National Movement have concentrated on the problem of preserving national originality. In any case, the problem of ethnic survival, national-cultural rebirth, was considered, quoting S.V. Sokolovsky, as a challenge to ethnic mobilization.

It is important to note that all the nationalistic ideologies listed above are not, in their pure form, characteristic of the programme statement, nor of speeches of the leaders of and participants in the national movements. It is safe to speak of a complex set, and various combinations, of these ideologies. New times give birth to new ideas: assessments, requirements, approaches to solving certain problems, the attitude towards them change. Hence, comprehensive basis of information is essential to an all-round analysis of the contents and tendencies of the national movement. It must at the least reflect the views of the leaders, the active members of national movement, opinions and attitudes of the representatives of the national community rather than leaders whose interests are protected by the national movement or the views and reactions of other national movements and ethnic groups belonging to other nations or the positions and actions of various authority structures. In addition to analysing the documents of the national movements themselves it is important to study press materials.

There were republican newspapers that started to actively discuss the problem of the culture and language of the Baltic-Finnish nations, and the opportunities and prospects of constructing a national-linguistic entity even before the formation of a national movement. An analysis of the document adopted by legislative and executive structures at various levels seems important as well.

Clearly, to accomplish such research tasks one needs a system of indicators. The accumulation of a whole set of factors would allow us to understand the inner logic of forming positions both similar to and alternatively different from the ideologies of national movements, to make judgements of the dominant opinion and idea dynamics, their variability, attitudes towards them of various national social strata, and their constructive or destructive nature. If various methodological devices are used in the studies (document analysis, deep interviews, content-analysis, a sociological poll of various social and national groups), an opportunity to study a whole range of psychological aspects in the formation of civil society will emerge.

References

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