

Emil Niederhauser

The Slogan of the French Revolution in the East Europe of the 19th Century

Liberty, equality, fraternity—this has not only been the inscription of the coat of arms of the Republic of France since the Great French Revolution, but also a formation of keywords of political thought from which far-reaching consequences derived in the form of schools of ideas, political parties, and theories.

Today, the interpretation of the first two parts of the slogan is rather evident. Moreover, it is clear as well that after some pondering over them, the incompatibility of the two becomes explicit. The third word is a harder nut to crack. There exist a disrespectful opinion that the third notion was hooked up to the first two to obtain the traditional triple unity. In a more respectful manner, it is a custom to point to solidarity, the compassion of men, mutual respect, and even other moral norms of similar meaning.

Naturally, we can also think that beyond the three-word slogan, the epoch of the French Revolution has two magic words, which can be used with many kinds of meanings just the same and on the basis of which many—and a number of future—movements can be explained. These two words, nation and home are basically cognate ideas and it is believed on many occasions that the two are even interchangeable. From another approach, the two concepts diverge sharply.

As we have indicated in the introduction, real movements, ideologies, and parties were born from the abstract notions. To put it very simply: liberalism from liberty, socialism from equality, and nationalism from nation (or just like from home). It is obvious that today even liberalism itself is a polysemic phenomenon. Differing, and sometimes opposing schools considered or are considering themselves liberals. The term itself comes from the first years of the 19th century: it appeared in Spanish politics and spread throughout the world from there.

Socialism became a generally known concept somewhat later—and we know it by today—with a variety of meanings: it ranges from the original utopian ideas to communism and its Soviet realisation. However, also current western socialism is attached to the name, if not for else, at least out of reverence toward its own past.

Already these two notions have made and still make many kinds of interpretations possible. Nationalism has an even more intricate composition. Since, first of all, it postulates the existence of the nation. And nation is again a word from among those, which have various kinds of interpretations. There are some, who talk about nations already with respect to antiquity (this conception was not far from the founding fathers of Marxism either, whose 'child' made a very nice career); according to others, it is connected to capitalism (this became the later standard Marxist dogma); still others consider it irrespectively of this to be a social model existent since the French revolution; again others believe it to be only an imaginary community, an invented group; and there are also those who interpret it as a phenomenon of modern ages, but discover its certain antecedents in the early mod-

Minorities History

ern times or even in the Middle Ages. And this is still only the notion of the nation, which was undoubtedly frequently remembered in East Europe in the 19th century. Nationalism, too, can have many possible interpretations. Here, however, we have to identify two of these, which are fundamental. One understands merely national identity by nationalism, that is, the consciousness that somebody declares him/herself to belong to a nation. The other is the concept of the nation as a unity with its claims to some advantageous position, rule over others, territorial conquest, and the oppression of others. This latter should obviously be classified as a clearly negative, while the first one as a neutral motif. The two kinds of interpretations (with many other possible meanings) have been living together next to each other up to the present day and have been given cause to many debates because the disputing parties have applied differing interpretations.

No matter whether we consider the three-word slogan of the Revolution itself or the explications deriving from it, the Western European—mostly French and German—origin cannot be doubted. The slogans, notions, and interpretations reached also East Europe. And, practically every part of it, thus, even Russia and the Balkans, that is, the Ottoman Empire. The antecedent of this process is that also the currents of the ideas of Enlightenment got as far as East Europe as opposed to the previous, intellectual trends of western origin like Romanticism and the Baroque, which reached only those areas of East Europe, which bordered the West and had a similar structure. Also the expression 'reach' has to be expounded: slogans and trends reach the leading elite, the intellectual and political elites of the East European societies. It is the development of much later periods when the wider lower strata can get to know them and they can spread through the primary school network, which becomes general sooner or later.

Similarly to Enlightenment, eastward expansion came about through books and the press in this case as well; moreover, through the travels when either the Easterners went to the West, or the Westerners visited these places. Travel, and in cases studying at the universities of the West has become a well-known notion by those times. The novelty of the 19th century is that in its beginning (if—as is due—we count it from 1789), the first quarter of a century belonged to the Revolution and to Napoleon, when the ties suddenly grew very tight. One reason for this is that French soldiers got to East Europe several times during the Napoleonic campaigns; the farthest, as it is widely known, in 1812. However, French officers went to the Balkans with political mandates, not only to train the Ottoman army, but also to gather intelligence. On the other hand, East European soldiers arrived as far as Paris as they were chasing Napoleon at the end of his quarter of a century. This was even more important from the point of view of the Russian soldiers than in case of the armies of the Habsburg Empire. Naturally, primarily officers, but actually also common soldiers could get to know the situation in the West, the everyday life of the people, which revealed to them a much higher standard of life than what they had left at home. One of the Russian generals remarked it too that it would be the best to drown the returning soldiers before they could have disembarked because they would spread utterly strange news back at home. However, this kind of massacre had not yet been so 'modish' back then, so all the officers and common soldiers arrived home and could narrate what they had seen and experienced.

4 MINORITIES RESEARCH

Minorities History

So far, we have talked about ideas, slogans, and theories, which reached East Europe. But what does East Europe exactly mean in that revolutionary quarter of a century? Three empires: that of the Habsburg, the Romanovs, and the Ottoman dynasties. Three empires, which possessed a few similar characteristics in that period. One is the absolutist form of government. It is not worth is to start meditating at this point on whether or not we can talk about absolutism in case of the Ottoman Empire in the European sense of the word. From the point of view of our train of thought, the point is that society—not even its higher circles—has no or scarcely a little say in the direction of the politics of the empire. The other important common trait is that many kinds of ethnic groups live in all three empires and it was exactly those times when the process started, which today we call national renewal, awakening, or revival—but many ethnic groups referred to the phenomenon like this already back then. We can divide the ethnic groups into two major types on the basis of their social structure. This has a great significance exactly as far as their reaction to the western influence is concerned. The first type is the one, in which the ethnic group has its own political elite (we have to call them like this even if there exist no political forum where this political elite could appear). The second type is the one lacking such a political elite. We can find practically only these kinds of ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire with the exception maybe of the Greeks. There are quite a few groups with their own elites within the Habsburg Empire and the central authority, Vienna knows about them and keeps their presence in evidence. Although the empire has an absolutistic arrangement at the top, in Vienna, there are (more or less) functioning feudal representations, which provide for a certain political forum for the given ethnic group in the various countries and provinces of the empire. Those political elites ended up in the sphere of vision of the government, which presented themselves at these fora. The government did not pay attention to those, who could not participate at all because their group did not have an elite. As only Russian political elite existed in Russia which, of course, did not have an independent feudal organisation, the government took note only of them. The Ukrainians and the Byelarussians could easily be considered Russians, while the ethnic groups of the colonial territories were 'of another race'—they were kept on record officially like this—thus, they really did not matter.

Let's take a closer look and find out what the ideas which reached East Europe could mean in the three empires in the first part of the 19th century. Having regard to the rudimentary state of their societies, the primitive level of their economic life (as compared to the West of the period), it becomes clear that the question of socialism could not come to the limelight just then. And the original slogan, equality, either. The feudal differences within the society were so self-evident and accustomed that the notion of the equality of individuals did not even occur. Did not, in spite of the fact that the dominant religions, both the Christian denominations and the Islam, preached in some form or another the equality of the people. The issue of the equality of ethnic groups, that is, nations, receives a completely different interpretation and enters consciousness in relation to liberty.

This is the slogan or notion, which has a meaning, a message for East Europe already in that period. Liberty has clearly come to depict some political freedom, parliamentari-

Minorities History

anism within the State, individual rights, elections, and political parties. Above all: constitutional system of some sort. As this has its antecedents in the feudal system and thus, in the countries and provinces of the Habsburg Empire as well, it was in this circle that the idea of constitutionalism as a political objective was formulated and for the sake of which, one would have to go to war. The feudal institutions provided a certain scope for action in this war. The attainment of constitutionalism in a revolutionary manner, as it happened in Paris in 1789, did not emerge for long. The Jacobin dictatorship rather discredited the violent revolution in the eyes of the upper strata, while the lower ones did not know anything about it. Devotion towards the upper classes could be regarded as general.

There were no feudal institutions at all in the other two empires (the German institutions of the Baltic provinces were negligible in relation to the whole of the Russian Empire), so there was no available legal forum for any kinds of political fights. The government strictly prohibited even the mentioning of the issue. Thus, constitutional transformation of the Russian and the Ottoman Empires did not arise in those times.

Yet, if the slogan of liberty does not mean anything or is not conceivable in the dimensions of the whole of the empire, here is the slogan of the nation, nationalism, the issue of national identity or, more precisely, national renewal mentioned already in the first decades of the century. This motif raises, if you would like in a national relation, the issue of equality as well. Liberty in multinational empires means also the liberty of nations, what is more, means primarily that and not the liberty of individuals. From this respect, strictly speaking, nations are equal; liberty is the due of all.

The declaration of the principle of national liberty was achieved almost everywhere in East Europe in the first part of the century. But who were its preachers? Those few dozen persons, mostly intellectuals, or where there was one, some members of the political elite with a vision, who meditated about the solemn idea among intimate friends and possibly behind close doors. In the Habsburg empire, it was exactly because of the feudal structure that national liberty did not seem an object to be reached for the political elite, for it might have appeared that they actually possessed it. The situation was different in case of the nations lacking the political elite but these were still so weak (both in political and economic sense) that they could not think about starting any movement against the actual power, the empire. After all, the question of individual liberty was not resolved either but no movement tried to go against this. Not even in the revolutionary 25 years: the Polish uprising of 1974 was the consequence of the preceding events, the repartition of Poland. Although the Polish asked for help from Paris, they did not get any and not only because it would have been physically impossible, but because they did not do anything about the bondsmen.

The situation changed in 1848 in one of the sub-regions of East Europe, which comprised more or less of the Habsburg Empire and the Polish territories outside it and under Prussian and Russian authority. In reality, the Polish began their movement with a revolt started in Krakow somewhat earlier, in 1846. In those times, Krakow was a free town according to the decree of the congress in Vienna because no agreement had been reached about where it should belong. Thus, it could be considered the only free

4 MINORITIES RESEARCH

Minorities History

Polish territory. The emigration would have wanted to start a revolt from here, which would have extended to the entire Polish territory (which meant the country before the repartition in their opinion). The Austrian forces quickly quelled the uprising. Even the bondsmen turned against their landlords although these promised liberation to them.

At last, this proved to be only an episode. However, the movements, which broke out in various capitals of the Habsburg Empire after the revolution in Paris, produced a revolution on the whole. The revolution, which established constitutional freedom, eliminated serfdom, in other words, brought liberty according to the liberal conceptions. Brought liberty, but for whom? To the peasants without doubt, who ceased to be preoccupied about the events after the conditions of socage had been eliminated. It yielded liberty neither to the nations in general nor to the single nations. In reality, they did not even want some kind of complete liberty. The Czech historiographer and politician, the recognized leader of the nation, František Palacký answered in an open letter to the preparatory commission of the German national assembly in Frankfurt, which invited him too as one of the representatives of the former Holy Roman Empire. Palacký declined the invitation because, quoth he, he was Slav, Czech, and not German. He elaborated on the fact in length that many small peoples live between the Russians and the Germans, that these separately cannot resist none of these two, and that Russia was the more dangerous neighbour because it wanted to create a universal empire. For this reason, these peoples would have to unite and Vienna was the natural centre of unification. If Austria did not exist, it should be invented. Finally, the single little nations sided with the Austrian government because it had proclaimed the equality of nations. The Hungarian political elite could not reach this decision even though originally it took the side of the empire. At last, the Hungarian army was defeated in armed conflict, which unfolded in the summer of 1848. Hungarian national liberty was lost but also that of the nations siding with Vienna, given that the constitution proclaimed in the summer of 1849 never entered into force. Absolutism returned for a while and both the contemporaries and posterity liked to forget about the fact that the basic change had indeed occurred: the feudal order had been eliminated.

In the Balkans, the attainment of national freedom seemed rather difficult against the Ottoman Empire. And especially so during the reign of the Holy Alliance in the first part of the century. Its system sided always with the legitimate sovereign and in the Ottoman Empire this sovereign was the sultan. However, he differed from the other legitimate sovereigns of Europe in one respect: he was not Christian. Yet, the peoples of the Balkans were indeed Christians, which this gave a peculiar tint to the situation. The Serbs started to fight already in 1804: first only against the brawling janissaries (on the side of the sultan), and then against the Ottoman rule. Their timing was perfect: the ongoing Russian-Turkish war made their temporary victory possible. Then came an armed suppression, after which they obtained the autonomy of the Serb territory within the Empire with another armed uprising (it meant the smaller part of the current Serb territory). This, naturally, could seem to belong to the internal affairs of the Ottomans.

On the other hand, the Greek insurrection started in 1821 led at last—even if it took many years and heavy fights—to the complete liberation of part of the Greek territory. In

Minorities History

a first moment, the powers of the Holy Alliance all turned against the Greeks as they were regarded as rebels fighting their legitimate sovereign. The Holy Alliance was forged exactly for these occasions. However, the English government realised it soon what a great strategic importance the Greek peninsula had and at the end it was the European powers to secure the full liberty of the Greek state, exactly ten years after the beginning of the revolt.

If it was not clear in case of the Serb uprising, the Greek incident made it obvious: certain ethnic groups could count upon the obtainment of their sovereignty against the Ottoman Empire if at least one, but preferably more great powers supported their claim. Later in the century, this was realised in this sense, too: the independent Serb, Romanian, the—though much later—Bulgarian, and in the last moment, in 1912, also the Albanian states were established. This happened in each case with the assistance and according to the instructions of the great powers. They even donated sovereignties to the new states from one of the smaller dynasties. Only the Serbs kept theirs for they had as many as two, who ruled taking turns.

The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 brought a great change after many years of preparation and various conflicting tries. It brought permanent constitutionality, the disappointment of the Austrians—because they were left out of the German Empire which had been unified—the victory of the Hungarians—because most of their national claims were realised—and the autonomy of a certain level to given nations (Croatians, the Polish in Galicia, in a certain sense even the Czechs). The others had to contend themselves with general liberal rights, sort of a realisation of the first French slogan at least with respect to individuals.

The Compromise consolidated the situation for some time, which brought about quick economic development. However, the dualist system hindered the further expansion of national liberty because it did not make the federative transformation of the empire possible, it did not provide for the national liberty of the majority of its nations. This was problematic anyway in case of those nations, part of which was living in an independent foreign country neighbouring the Monarchy, like the Serbs or the Romanians. The rigid system of dualism sooner or later turned most of the nations against the state or, at least, alienated vast masses notwithstanding the fact that in reality everybody got used to the patriarchal rule of Francis Joseph. This state seemed to be firm as a rock and tolerable in the short run until 1914.

The Russian system seemed unbearable even for the Russians for a long time, even after the semi-constitutional changes brought about by the revolution of 1905. The government made sure that independent statehood could not be placed on the agenda despite this semi-constitutional system either. Thus, liberal individual rights asserted themselves roughly everywhere by 1914: the constitutional era came about even in the rest of the Ottoman Empire in 1908. However, the liberty of the nation—in effect with the exception of the Russians—might have seemed only some distant idea—except in the countries of the Balkans. However, these were constrained to position themselves under the protection of one of the great powers.

4 MINORITIES RESEARCH

Minorities History

After all this, let's see what was going on with the slogan of equality. With the extent of the spread of the liberal system in East Europe, it could seem to many that also equality was attained. It did come about formally; everybody became equal in the eyes of the law. Naturally, after the revolutionary quarter of a century passed, it turned out in the West that this was not so. Real equality would still have to be created. Economic development brought modern capitalism and the working class as it was expanding from England toward the East. And also those restless intellectuals who, in their doctrinaire manner, called upon European development to account for real equality, which exactly the creation of liberty rendered impossible. In the West, first utopian socialism was born from this, then the organisations of the people, relief societies, and then the movement of the restless intellectuals, which will be named Marxism after its most influential representative. This engendered the discovery of class struggles, a completely different vision of society than what has started to be realised on the basis of the first slogan. The prophets of equality either calmed down as time passed or began political organizations (this is how the workers' parties were born), or resorted to terrorism. However, none could solve the problem of equality. Equality was not realised in the West either before 1914 in the way it had been imagined at the beginning of the century, after the revolutionary quarter of a century.

It is natural that the accomplishment of the second slogan started only later than the first one in East Europe. One reason for this is that in conformity with the economic situation of the East Europe of those times, working class evolved much later and more slowly. Sure, no numerous working class was organized in the Western European countries either; it remained only a minority. And much more so in the East. Although it is true that here it grew to be much more concentrated than in the West because of the belated and peculiar development. Within the Habsburg Empire, in the Czech provinces, and in a few territories of Russia (the two capitals, the Polish territories, the surroundings of the Ural and the Don-Donets), this often created such vast masses of workers in small areas and in the dimension of plants, which was rare even in the West. By the turn of the century, the majority of Russian working class gathered in great plants, in which the number of workers surpassed even the five hundred persons. Here, but in the Monarchy as well, the working class had the special trait that it was ethnically heterogeneous, that is, from the point of view of the national community of Marxism the situation was downright ideal. Naturally, the similarly exploited workers would turn against their exploiters together, independent of their outdated ethnic differences.

Before elaborating on this subject, we have to touch upon the countries in the Balkans. Here, economy was at such an underdeveloped stage that, in reality, it was hardly possible to talk about a working class at all. One hand was enough if one wanted to count the few factories operating in Belgrade, capital of one of the independent states around 1900.

Of course, this did not make any difference with respect to the fact that they had those restless intellectuals too, who wanted to organize the movement. This movement was, first of all, only a hobby of the intellectuals here in the same way as it happened in the West in the beginning. As the workers' parties had already been organized by the end of the century in West, the intellectuals believed that although they did not unite the whole

Minorities History

of the workers for the time being, East Europe must fall behind. (The historian can add posteriorly that naturally they did not think in terms of East Europe.) That is, if there existed an English, a German, and a French (actually, here there were even two sometimes), then these parties could have to be created here too.

The constitutional order of the Habsburg Monarchy made the foundation of formal political parties possible at last. The significant resistance of the authorities had to be overcome but the worker's party was born by the 1890s. According to the directives of the 2nd International, one party could be formed in a country, that is, one Austrian and one Hungarian separately. However, a Croatian was created as well because of the autonomy of Croatia, the social background of which was just as scarce as in the countries in the Balkans.

One country—one party; this formula fulfilled the expectations in the two parts of the Monarchy for a while. It went more easily in Hungary with the separation of the Croatians because the working classes were living in Budapest and in some other cities or mining districts and accordingly, natural assimilation had its results quite soon. Although the leaders of the Social Democratic Party had never declared it, in reality they believed this was the natural way of things. It occurred to them only before the First World War that ethnic sections could be created and as this would not spoil the principle of one country—one party, it could be considered a right aspiration.

The situation was surely different in the Austrian border areas. Here, a Czech party was formed parallel to that of the workers of German mother tongue. The Polish one was created only later, since there was hardly any industry in Galicia; however, their intellectuals were bustling and demanded their own workers' party. Thus, the national motif came into prominence and, although the Austrian Social Democratic Party did not dissolve, national parties were formed within its body: the Czech Slav (giving a wink to the Slovaks), the Polish, and, of course, a Slovenian as well. The congresses of the Austrian Party recalled almost the congresses of the International but they surely were not conveyed very often. Also the leaders of the party were conscious about the significance of the national motif and they tried to solve it by raising the possibility of cultural autonomy—which would have solved the problem of mixed settlements—instead of territorial autonomy. (Lenin will be very angry with this.)

No matter how weak, not to say more, was the working class in the Balkans, the intellectuals there just could not lag behind the others in activity. Although a bit later, social democratic parties were formed here as well. The role of the Romanian Social Democratic Party illustrates it well that this was merely a fashion among intellectuals. It had been founded by intellectuals at the beginning of the 1890s and was terminated a few years later with the majority of the party leaders joining the liberal party. Here, the slight strengthening of real labour movement will lead to the formation of the workers' party right before the war, naturally, on the foundations laid down by the spontaneous precedents and, in reality, trade-unionism. Therefore, the role of the intellectuals in the creation of workers' parties is even more obvious in the Balkans.

It is clear that Russia was in a situation similar to that of the countries in the Balkans in many respects in spite of the aforementioned strong concentration of the working

4 MINORITIES RESEARCH

Minorities History

class. It was evident that the intellectual class started to organize the movement here as well. However, this (Russian) intellectual stratum could look back upon more significant antecedents than the one in the Balkans: its ancestors came from among the nobles, who could not find their place in society, who were 'unnecessary' men. Accordingly, and as they could perceive it clearly that the peasants (they had been liberated from serfdom after 1861 but could not yet become completely independent and free) formed the overwhelming majority in the Russian Empire, the intellectuals tried to realise the early movement among the people, that is, among the peasants.

It is often remembered too that Russian nobility had been liberated from the obligatory service of the state in 1762 and this was replaced by the service of the people, namely some kind of a political movement among more modern conditions for the attainment of liberty and equality. The beginning of the movement was connected to the negative aspects of the 1861 reform of servitude, the retainment of power over the peasants, and the proprietorship of the village community (obshchina) instead of individual property. The movement received the name 'Narodnik'. It derived from the word 'narod' which means people in Russian as opposed to the other Slav languages, in which this word means nation in the modern sense of the word. They had a slogan as well, formulated first by Ogariov: what does the 'narod' wants? Land and freedom (zemlia and volia respectively). The movement found some prophets soon, who referred to the responsibility of the nobility with respect to the people who maintained them. They declared themselves to be under the influence of utopist socialism, to be socialists. Not much later, this involved Marxist theory as well.

'Going to the people' became the slogan of the movement and people meant naturally the peasants and their living area. The movement came to its height in the mid-1870s when students learned even professions to help the peasants that way too. However, their fine hands often betrayed that they did not belong among the people and it happened not once that the peasants themselves reported them to the police. The movement split into two in 1878. The one, which remained attached to anarchist methods and terrorist attempts, called itself 'narodnaja volja' (people's will) and it had a great future until 1914. The other one chose the 'black repartition of lands' name. This meant on the one hand illegality (black) and on the other the claim to obtain full peasant property. Both parties continued to look upon Marx as their master.

Several attempts were carried out against Alexander II but without success. Finally, they managed to kill him with a bomb at the beginning of 1881. Only that the system did not crumble at that. What is more, the retorsions became even more terrifying. At this point, the narodniks turned to Marx asking that if socialist transformation could begin only among capitalist circumstances it would be their task then to promote that capitalist development? Marx pondered over this for long, as he did not want to disillusion his followers. He drafted around a dozen answers, sometimes very long ones. At the end, however, he sent to them one of the short ones with the Dodonian answer that if the socialist revolution won in the West, then the transformation could be accomplished on the basis of the obshchina in Russia. Many regarded the obshchina, that is, the village community as the basis of socialism in Russia.

Minorities History

The leaders of black land distribution, among them Plekhanov, opted for Marxist socialism before long and in conformity with this, they sharply condemned murderous attempts and anarchist tactics. Of course, they could not found a legal workers' party before 1905 with the conditions in Russia and they were forced into underground existence. They were active abroad as well, especially in Switzerland where emigrant revolutionaries gathered from every country. Another illegal party was formed from the followers of 'People's Will' the party of Socialist-Revolutionaries (their name came from the initials: 'eSeR'). Naturally, this movement considered itself Marxist as well although nothing could deter it from continuing the attempts. It did not make a difference between peasant and worker exactly because of the small size of the working class. It managed to build up a great basis of supporters; the military officers of peasant origin all took the side of this party and they made up the majority of the officer corps by the turn of the century.

The socialists—abroad of course—split into two in 1900. The radical minority received a majority with respect to one of the items of the agenda of the congress and they called themselves Bolsheviks thereafter in order to assert their majority and superiority. When the organising activities became allowed, their opponents, who accepted the Menshevik attribute because they were less concerned about social psychology than Lenin, were still in majority. Similarly to the social democrats of the Habsburg Empire, who continued to regard themselves as militant revolutionaries (although, in reality, they had begun to follow the western social democrat and socialist parties), they could not start to change either because of the even more archaic conditions. This wing still seemed militant in its declarations but not in its deeds. It had become a sleek parliamentary party. What is more, it gained majority at the last elections of the Imperial Diet before the war. The development started somewhere here. It would help them realize temporarily their objective—the social welfare state—after many bypasses and World War II. Also the social democrats of the Monarchy hit this road.

We can encounter peasants' wars reminiscent of those of the Middle Ages in the Balkans even after 1900. The intellectual leaders clung to the conceptions of the parties of the West, for what could have they done about the slogans of socialism otherwise? But they persisted in being socialists. Thus, the objective remained the realisation of the second word of the French slogan.

Let us remark, so to say, in addition, that we have mentioned the claims and activities of various social classes but the peasantry was overlooked in this inventory for the most part. We might as well say that the narodniks represented them. However, them too, and also their successors, the eSeRs regarded themselves socialists, that is, Marxists. The peasants' parties appeared almost everywhere by the turn of the century. The Bulgarian Agrarian National Union was the most characteristic one among them. It was very consciously peasant and it claimed a right to the government on the basis that the overwhelming majority of the country was made up of peasants. The eSeRs fulfilled the role of a peasants' party to a certain extent. Notwithstanding all this, significant political activity would evolve only in the period between the two world wars.

4 MINORITIES RESEARCH

Minorities History

Thus, it was still the workers' parties, which considered the slogan of equality theirs. We have talked about that this working class, regardless of the fact whether we look at the Habsburg Empire or Russia, was multiethnic, that is, it was of mixed nationality. This seemed undoubtedly an advantage from the point of view of internationalism announced by the founding fathers. As it turned out, it was not at all. National division took place within the Austrian Social Democratic Party in Austria (soon also within the trade-union movement, that the leaders must have had acknowledged shaking their head). The parties, which had been created in the Balkans, were much more the parties of intellectuals than of workers. They soon fit themselves into the national environment, they acted for national missions, and sided with the interests of their nation state more than once.

The situation was somewhat different with the Soviet labour movement. Neither the Mensheviks were listening to national slogans with pleasure, for it was enemy bourgeois chatter, nor the Bolsheviks, who were capable of fighting to the outmost against any nationalism and declaredly primarily exactly against Russian nationalism. However, it happened to be the head of the Bolsheviks, Lenin (who denounced any chauvinism so vehemently and tolerated the national motif in the Balkans at most during the war there—because every war served the victory of the revolution), to declare it more and more often in view of victory that national right to self-determination was naturally very important, a fundamental thing, but still, it ought to be subordinated to the interests of the revolution. And revolution would require the largest possible state because the revolution of the working class could evolve in such a country. That is—the Russian Empire would have to be held together because then revolution could prevail. They succeeded in holding it together a few decades after the revolution, but the insurrection had been victorious beyond question.

If we look through everything outlined here above frankly, we have to reach the conclusion that also the labour movement of East Europe started out somewhere toward the idea of the nation state. If we go back to the original question, it is doubtless: it managed to get to liberty (naturally, to national liberty) from equality. This was the modern in it.

The attempts, the murder of Alexander II, having a bomb tear Grand Duke Sergei, governor-general of Moscow, to pieces, and then, at the end of the period, the death of Francis Ferdinand—these events point directly to the 21st century except that these attempts had not yet been directed against complete outsiders.

The slogans of liberty and equality have lived on, while there was still nothing one could do with the third one. World War I changed the preconditions of further development fundamentally. A new period started also in the afterlife of the French slogans: the period of an ever-greater misuse of the original content of the words. However, this is another story.