

**NATIONAL CHALLENGES TO DECENTRALIZATION:
AUTONOMY AND FEDERATION IN THE RUSSIAN LIBERAL
DISCOURSE, 1900-1914**

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A DISSERTATION

in

History

**Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Budapest, Hungary

2014

Supervisor of Dissertation

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Abstract

The dissertation is devoted to the analysis of the political debates on autonomy and federation between the Russian liberals and the representatives of the Finnish, Polish and Ukrainian national movements in late imperial Russia. Looking for the allies among the national movements the leadership of the Constitutional Democratic Party was open to discuss the possibility of decentralization of Russia. However, the Kadets' initial plan for Russia's reorganization was challenged by various national discourses regarding autonomy and federation. Moreover, the meaning of these terms essentially differed from what the Kadets initially understood by them. The main reason for the failure of an alliance of the Kadets with the national movements was a principal incompatibility of the initial assumptions of all the participants of a dialogue. This, however, did not exclude the possibility of finding a compromise, yet it could only be tactical, and did not presuppose the principal convergence of the programs regarding Russia's reorganization.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Professor Alexei Miller for his constant scholar and moral support in the course of my entire intellectual endeavor. His realism and strict discipline were crucial to finishing my work in time. I owe a great intellectual debt to Professors Alfred J. Rieber and Mikhail Dolbilov, who have considerably enriched my research perspective. I am also deeply thankful to Professors Balázs Trencsényi, Susan Zimmermann, Marsha Siefert, Maciej Janowski, and Karl Hall for their interest in my work and care. I would like to thank Professor Henrik Stenius for inviting me into the Finnish intellectual environment. His comments and advice helped me a lot to fathom the complexities of the Finnish case. At the same time, I am very grateful to Professors Martin Schulze-Wessel, Martin Aust, Jana Osterkamp, and Jens Kersten who welcomed me at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich and whose rich and inspiring consultations were very helpful at the final stage of my work. I would also like to express my warmest appreciation to Viktor Taki, Andrei Cusco, Franziska Davies, Irina van der Vet, and Piotr Głuszkowski for their willingness to listen and help in any time. Generous grants of Gerda Henkel, Center of International Mobility, as well as the Center of the Polish-Russian Dialogue and Reconciliation enabled my library and archival research. I owe a great debt to my parents and to my family, who were always supportive of my undertaking, and to whom I dedicate this work.

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Introduction

In April 1917, Max Weber published an article “Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism.”¹ Commenting on the perspectives of peace between Germany and Russia, Weber emphasized the chauvinism of Russian bourgeoisie and Russian liberal intelligentsia.

This imperialist legend, and especially the Greater Russian claim to dominance within Russia itself, remained alive even in the bourgeois intelligentsia, and even during the heyday of the whole Liberation Movement. Before the slightest guarantee of the achievement of liberty, which was supposedly the only goal, as early as 1905 almost all the leading personalities of the Union of Liberation (though *not* the unjustly maligned Mr. Peter Struve) had turned their gaze towards Constantinople and the Western border.

They disputed the existence of a Ukrainian identity, and acknowledged Polish autonomy only with the view to creating external friends for a future expansion of Russia, and they proclaimed the “liberation” of every imaginable nation as the task of Greater Russia, whilst at home everything remained to be done towards the achievement of “liberation.” Meanwhile, the little group of ideologues belonging to old Dragomanov school, who were striving for the transformation of Russia into a genuinely equal federation of nationalities, were, even then, either deceivers who had themselves been deceived or completely without influence and in constant fear of arousing of Greater Russian chauvinism of their comrades.²

The representatives of Russian right-wing parties, who saw federalism as identical to separatism, would have recognized in Weber’s words a biased perspective of a German scholar, who sought to weaken Russia and compel it to concede the German claims. Nevertheless, Weber’s view of Russian liberal intelligentsia deserves a greater attention.³ Weber, who published in 1906 two serious works on Russia, had close connections with a few Russian liberal activists.⁴ Bogdan Kistiakovsky, an

¹ Max Weber, “Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism” Idem. *The Russian Revolutions*. Edited and translated by Gordon C. Wells and Peter Baehr (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 241-260.

² Ibid., 243-244.

³ Curiously enough, that Max Weber’s position regarding the national minorities inside Germany was no less chauvinistic. In particular, Weber developed a rigid anti-Polish stance in his evaluation of the agrarian situation in Posen. Gary A. Abraham, “Max Weber: Modernist Anti-Pluralism and the Polish Question” *New German Critique* 53 (1991): 33-66.

⁴ Two Weber’s works on Russia in 1906: Max Weber, “Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism” Idem. *The Russian Revolutions*. Edited and translated by Gordon C. Wells and Peter Baehr (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 148-240; Idem, “On the Situation of Constitutional Democracy

immediate Weber's disciple was, allegedly, the representative of that "little group of ideologues belonging to old Dragomanov school," which his German professor referred to.⁵ Anyway, Weber was sceptic about the perspectives of those participants of the liberal movement, who were willing to discuss the ideas of federalism and autonomy as a means of Russia's liberation.

Was the German professor right in his evaluation? At the moment, when he was writing this article in 1917 he reviewed the outcome of the evolution of the Russian liberals from the beginning of the first Russian revolution to the beginning of the second. However, considered carefully, especially in its original phase, the evolution of the Russian liberal discourse did not necessarily exclude the possibility of Russia's reorganization along the principle, other than unitary. In my dissertation, I will demonstrate that the Russian liberals did really strive to preserve the unity of the political space of former Russia in the course of its transformation towards the constitutional order. The only exception they admitted, was regarding Finland (and only a small group for Poland). Yet, at the same time, the Russian liberals expressed a commitment for certain concessions to national movements in the borderlands, as they saw these movements as important allies in the general struggle against autocracy. In the end, a common understanding with national movements was gained only in the Finnish case, while in the case of Poland only a tactical agreement was possible. However, already in the case of the Ukrainian movement such an alliance was under the question, besides one of the influential liberal intellectuals was ready to doubt the

in Russia" Idem, *Weber Political Writings*. Edited by Peter Lassman and Ronald Speirs) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁵ For a detailed scrutiny of scholar connections of Max Weber, Kistiakovsky and Peter Struve see: Susan Heuman, *Kistiakovsky: the Struggle for National and Constitutional Rights in the Last Years of Tsarism* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1998).

very existence of the Ukrainian nation.⁶ However, contrary to the view of Weber, it is important to note, that such a negative result of interaction with nationalists was not a consequence of certain chauvinism, initially present in the mindset of Russian liberals. To think so would mean to equate the position of liberal intelligentsia gathered around the Constitutional Democratic Party and the position of the right wing of the political spectrum (the Union of October 17th). I will demonstrate that it was not the chauvinism that hampered the convergence of the political agendas of the Russian liberals and representatives of the national movements, but rather incompatibility of general principles of Russian liberalism with the claims of participants of national movements that gradually became apparent.

This fundamental ideological cleavage between liberals and nationalists was not obvious in the beginning, but gradually evolved in a series of attempts to interact in a common political struggle prompts to consider these political debates in detail, where each of the sides of the dialogue gradually clarified their positions. Before I expose the methodology of analysis of these debates, which I will use in particular chapters devoted to various cases – those of the Grand Duchy of Finland, Kingdom of Poland and the Ukraine – I will provide a general description of a historical context, which framed these debates. And here again, I will refer to a view of “foreign,” but very attentive observer Max Weber.

In the article of 1906 “Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-constitutionalism,” in which he analyzed current developments in Russia, Weber noted that those developments could be described as transition from a traditional monarchy to a

⁶ Peter Struve, “Obshcherusskaia kul’tura i ukrainskii partikuliarizm. Otvet Ukraintsu” *Russkaia mysl’* 1 (1912); Richard Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right, 1905-1944* (Harvard, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London : Harvard University Press, 1908), 213-219.

“modern state.”⁷ However, it is important to understand, what the German professor meant, when he used this term. Weber argued, that constitutional restrictions, which were supposedly introduced by the Manifest of October 17th and successive laws, were pseudo-restrictions in practice. The constitutional rights of the representative institutions, formed as a concession to a society were severely restricted from the very start, while the real authority remained in the hands of bureaucracy. However, the question was, whether this would be a modern rational bureaucracy, which would function according to strict rules, or it would be a network of conflicting *satraps*, whose influence would depend on changeable mood of the tsar. In other words, the transition towards a “modern state”, for Weber meant, the transition from arbitrary rule toward a regularly functioning state machine, toward the power of bureaucracy that would realize the idea of a *Rechtstaat*.⁸ Weber is skeptic about the power of a traditional monarch: “dynastic vanity if inflated self-esteem... lead the monarch towards personal ambitions which cannot, without serious harm being done, be reconciled with the reality of the modern state, where there is no place for the dilettantism characteristic of Renaissance rulers.”⁹ Yet, a transition to a modern bureaucracy faces, for Weber, with distrust of society towards traditional servants of autocracy.

The whole of the rest of Russian society stands as one man precisely against the development of the old autocracy into a modern rational bureaucracy... The Red Terror may temporally scare the wealthy into seeking shelter beneath the bureaucracy, but... even this is not able to force Russian society to submit to the system of “enlightened” (i.e. bureaucratically rationalized) absolutism, a system, which is the logical consequence of the technology of modern bureaucratic work.¹⁰

⁷ Weber, “Russia’s Transition to Pseudo-Constitutionalism...”, 179.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 180.

Within the newly emerged system of “pseudo-constitutionalism,” according to Weber, the tsar was a hostage of bureaucracy, namely the Council of Ministers, because “ministers, with a shadow parliament fabricated by their administrative machinery and bereft of any securely based influence of the law, would simply do as they pleased.”¹¹ Only true constitutionalism, completely reified in law, could save the monarch from this snare, because then “the bureaucracy could be dependent on the Monarch against parliament and would have a common interest with him.”¹²

Thus, for Weber, the main substance of the historical process, which took place in Russia, was the formation of *Rechtstaat*, based on bureaucracy, subjected to law and controlled by representative institutions. The position of Weber relied on and in certain ways modified the German tradition of *Staatsrechtslehre*, and particularly the ideas of its famous representative, Weber’s close friend Georg Jellinek.¹³ According to German state-legal theory, in a modern state the sovereignty belongs neither to a monarch nor to the “nation” (“people”) but to an impersonal “legal order,” which constitutes the essence of the state.¹⁴ Such a theory was close to many theoreticians of Russian liberalism. Some of them studied in Germany and recognized the ideas of German professors as the last word in contemporary legal scholarship.¹⁵ Generally, the idea of sovereignty of law was one of the core elements of the doctrine of Russian liberalism.

¹¹ Ibid., 178.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ A brilliant analysis of Weber’s theoretical borrowings from Jellinek and their common attempts to conceptualize modern state is a book Duncan Kelly, *The State of the Political: Conceptions of Politics and the State in the Thought of Max Weber, Carl Schmitt and Franz Neumann* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). chapter 3.

¹⁴ Georg Jellinek, *Allgemeine Staatslehre* (Berlin: Verlag von O. Häring, 1905), 461-468; Idem, *Obshchee uchenie o gosudarstve* (St.Petersburg: N.K.Martynov, 1908), 347-352.

¹⁵ A recent work on the influence of German theoreticians on the Russian liberal thought Andrei Medushevskii, *Dialog so vremenem: rossiiskie konstitutsionalisty kontsa XIX – nachala XX* (Moscow: Novyi Khronograf, 2010).

At the same time, the ideologues of Russian liberalism were influenced by the idea of “sovereignty of people,” which had to be accomplished by means of properly elected representative assemblies. Such an understanding of the idea of sovereignty implied that the Constituent Assembly would become a source of law. The initial idea of the Kadets, who won the elections in the first Duma, was to alter it into a constituent assembly. Aware of such intentions of the Kadets, the government published the “Fundamental Laws of the Russian Empire” in advance, a few days before the convocation of the Duma. This act was meant to frame the tsar as the only master of the “constitution,” accepting the role of a constituent power.¹⁶ Of course, it was not a constitution in the true sense, but at least it made an impression of a unitary legal order. In Weber’s terminology, there was a partial transition towards a “modern state.” One could accept or deny its real implementation in the Fundamental Laws, yet the liberals could not reject the very idea of *Rechtsstaat*. Such a situation opened a possibility of a conflict between the two principles – the principle of supremacy of law and the idea of sovereignty of people. In the German theoretical debates such a collision was resolved on the level of abstraction of a “natural” legal order, which was supposed to be an expression of the state spirit of the nation.¹⁷ Yet, in practice, the positive law of the Fundamental Laws, aimed at preserving the autocratic regime, could be in opposition to the claims of voters, whose interests had to be represented by the parties that won the elections.

Nevertheless, even “pseudo-constitutionalism” implemented in the Fundamental Laws, created new legal framework for defining the political space of

¹⁶ Nikolay Tagantsev, *Perezhitoe. Uchrezhdeniie Gosudarstvennoi Dumy v 1905 – 1906* (Petrograd: 18-aia Gos. Tipografiia, 1919), 185-187. Witte’s suggestion was to bring in an article into the body of the Fundamental Laws, that they could be altered only by the tsar, which would entirely link the new constitutional order with the person of a monarch.

¹⁷ Michael Stolleis, *Public Law in Germany* (New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2001), 322-352.

the Russian empire. The discussions on the first article of the Fundamental Laws show, how the collision between the principle of a traditional monarchy and the idea of *Rechtstaat* was resolved in ministerial cabinets of the Russian government. The initial version of this article suggested the definition of the Russian empire as composed of all its supreme possessions (*nakhodiashikhsia v ee derzhavnom obladanii vladenii*).¹⁸ It conformed to an understanding of empire as a conglomerate of regions, united above all by the person of a monarch. At the same time, the absence of references to the monarch was missing, resulted in a strange formula whereby the Russian empire possessed its own regions. Finally, this initial version of the article ended with a phrase that the Russian empire was “united and indivisible.”¹⁹ The final variant of the article just contained the statement that “The Russian state was unite and indivisible.” Moreover, the following article defined the Grand Duchy of Finland as “inseparable part of the Russian state.”²⁰ A systematic replacement of the word “empire” with the term “state” in the final text of the laws was intended to avoid the traditional formula of the Russian empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland as two distinct possessions of the crown. And, finally, the older article, mentioning the Kingdom of Poland as a separate possession of the Russian tsar, did not find its place in the new Fundamental Laws.²¹

Thus, on the one hand, one can see a terminological transition from the concept empire (linked with the notion of an emperor as an owner of empire’s

¹⁸ RGIA (Russian State Historical Archive). f. 727. op. 2. item. 56. p. 13.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ “Rossiia. Osnovnye Gosudarstvennye Zakony 23 apreliia 1906” *Sovremennye konstitutsii. Sbornik deistvuiushikh konstitutsionnykh zakonov* (St.Petersburg: “Pravo”, 1907) vol. 2., 567.

²¹ The article 4 of the former Fundamental Laws “The thrones of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland are inseparably connected with the Imperial All-Russian throne.” *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi imperii, povelaniem gosudaria imperatora Nikolaia Pervogo sostavlennyi* (St.Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia Tipografiia, 1892). part 1., 2.

regions) to a notion of impersonal state, where a certain land is treated as a constituent part. On the other hand, due to such a formula, the Fundamental Laws completed a de-jure incorporation of formerly distinct borderlands into a unitary legal space of an “indivisible” state. Homogenization of the Russian political space in the Fundamental laws was accomplished by abolishing of special legal regimes for particular Russia’s regions with distinct cultural and ethnic features. (Only Finland was provided the right to have special legislation).²²

Approaching to an idea of “modern state” also consisted in the fact that the notion of “subjecthood” was invested with a new juridical meaning due to providing the imperial “subjects” with certain civic rights. Thus, the Russian “subject” acquired certain rights of a “citizen.”²³ Particularly, it was declared that the Russian subjects had basic rights of personal inviolability and political participation. The universality of these rights, however, was compromised by certain exemptions that were to be regulated by special laws.²⁴

²² Lazarevki N.I, *Zakonodatel'nye akty perekhodnogo vremeni. 1904-1908*. (St.Petersburg: “Pravo,” 1909). Such a homogenization, however, did not do away with “legal pluralism” at the local level, a comprehensive review for which see Jane Burbank, “An Imperial Rights Regime: Law and Citizenship in the Russian Empire” *Kritika* 7: 3 (2006). It rather unified a broad variety of the regions in terms of their formal legal status.

²³ Recent accounts on citizenship in the Russian empire tend to consider, how the notion was crystalized through a broad range of practices, for example immigration, naturalization etc. See: Eric Lohr, *Russian Citizenship from Empire to Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012); or as a varying set of norms applied to different groups of population in the empire: Alexander Morrison, “Metropole, Colony, and Imperial Citizenship in the Russian Empire” *Kritika* 13: 2 (2012) Both studies, however, neglect the significance of a legal transformation of the concept of citizenship in 1906 as an attempt to create a likeness of an all-inclusive civic nation in Russia. Various attempts to accommodate the diversity within the civic community are discussed in: Alexander Semyonov, ““The Real and Live Ethnographic Map of Russia”: The Russian Empire in the Mirror of the State Duma” in: Ilia Gerasimov, Jan Kusber and Alexander Semyonov (eds.) *Empire Speaks Out: Languages of Rationalization and Self-Description in the Russian Empire* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009); Tatiana Khripachenko, “Modernizing Heterogeneous Empire: the Fundamental Laws of 1906 and the Incorporation of the Grand Duchy of Finland” in: Kelly L. Grotke, Markus J. Prutsch (eds.) *Constitutionalism, Legitimacy, and Power: Nineteenth-Century Experiences* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

²⁴ “Rossiia. Osnovnye Gosudarstvennye Zakony 23 apreliia 1906...”, 580-582.

As the Russian empire embarked on the path of transition towards a modern constitutional state, there emerged a legal space, if not for political action, than at least for political debates. Those political forces that already existed before the revolution illegally or in emigration acquired a legal ground for mobilizing their electorate during the elections. Therefore, they needed to formulate clearly their programs.

A the group of liberals whose programmatic statements distinguished them from their neighbors on the “right” and on the “left,” formed a core of the future Constitutional Democratic Party. Their core ideological principles were based on the ideas of constitutionalism, priority of individual rights and freedoms over the interests of collective entities and the ideas of supremacy of law. To a certain extent, the leadership of the Kadets shared the principles of New Liberalism and emphasized the ideas of common good for the entire civic community (which was rather inclusive), making no preference for particular groups.²⁵ They supported the possibility of involvement of the state in the regulation of property relations in order to ensure a more fair distribution of wealth in the society.²⁶

Contrary to liberals, the left-wing parties, though with varying political views, proclaimed themselves as expressing the interests of the “people,” instead of the “nation.” By “people,” they meant an “exploited majority,” which was opposed to “exploiting minority” and the existing state. Meanwhile, the state was perceived as representing and protecting the interests of exploiters. Thus, in the opinion of socialist

²⁵ Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism. An Ideology of Social Reform* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) p. 25-70. Paul Miliukov in his memoirs mentioned about the influence of the new (socially oriented) trends of British liberalism on his own political agenda. Pavel Miliukov, *Vospominaniia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1991), 153-156.

²⁶ In a certain way these principles were reflected in the position of the Kadets on agrarian question and also the working legislation. For the program and party discussions see: *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii, 1902 – 1905* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 170-218; *S'ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticeskoi partii* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1997). v. 1, 19-40.

leaders, the legal order formed and maintained by the existing state was an instrument of oppression and could not be regarded as a positive value. The revolutionary people had to create a new just order that would be radically different from the old one. At the same time, collective interests of the “working people” had to have a priority over the rights of individuals. The support of the liberals for the latter was perceived as an attribute of a “bourgeois” nature of liberalism.²⁷

Those parties and movements that took a right-wing position in the political spectrum (next to the liberals) did not recognize the idea of sovereignty of the “people” as it was developed in the socialist discourse. Yet, it would be wrong to see the right-wing politicians exclusively as traditional monarchists, who supported the idea of sovereignty of a monarch, based on the divine right. Many of the right-wing activists adhered to a peculiar version of Russian nationalism. The latter represented the monarch as united with the “Russian people,” as the “leader of the Russian nation” (*derzhavnyi vozhd' russkogo naroda*). According to the doctrine of the right-wing politicians, the Russian people had to be a “master of the Russian land,” contrary to the claims of other nations (“*inorodtsy*”).²⁸ There were other variations of the right-wing ideology besides this nationalistic version. Closest to Russian liberals was the conservative part of the *zemstvo* movement, who also shared the ideas of a “legal

²⁷ See, for example, Vladimir Lenin, “Proekt i ob”asnieine programmy sotsial-demokraticheskoi partii” *Pervyi s’ezd RSDRP. Mart 1898 goda. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958); *Partiia sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1996) v.1-2; The programs of Russian socialist parties: *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii konets XIX – nachalo XX vv.* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1995), 40-52, 136-147; A general overview of the socialist ideological tradition before 1917: Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution. Second Edition.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-31.

²⁸ *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii...*, 419-455. Such a version of Russian nationalism was developed in the newspapers *Novoe Vremia* (edited by Alexei Suvorin) and *Okrainy Rossii* (an organ of a Regional branch of Russian Assembly. Since 1908 Russian Borderland Society). Historical accounts on nationalism of Russian conservative intellectuals: Milhail Lukianov, “Conservatives and “Renewed Russia” 1907 - 1914” *Slavic Review* 61: 4 (2002); Don C. Rawson, *Russian Rightists and the Revolution of 1905* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

order” and certain civic freedoms. Yet they stood for preserving a strong monarchic power as a pivotal core that had to keep Russia from “anarchy” and “disintegration.”²⁹

One of the issues that divided the conservative wing of the *zemstvo* movement from the future Kadets, was the question on the possibility to provide autonomous rights to certain regions of the empire (the discussions referred above all to providing autonomy to the Kingdom of Poland).³⁰

First of all, it is important to understand that this division was not about details (greater or lesser discretion of certain borderlands), but rather reflected a fundamental difference in the understanding of the nature of national movements in Russia. The participants of the Union of 17th October understood the relationship between Russians and other peoples in the empire within the framework of “realism,” and believed that any concessions to other peoples weakened the Russian statehood. In their view, autonomy and federation were synonyms of separatism.³¹ The only aim of each people, according to their logic, was in the long run to create its own state. Therefore, any concessions to “*inorodtsy*” could only encourage their national feelings and radicalize their claims. The only way to preserve the Russian statehood from disintegration in these conditions was to demonstrate the might of the “Russian people,” united with the throne and readiness to withstand any attempts of “separatism.”³² Moderate Octobrists, however, recognized civic rights for all the population of the Russian empire, irrespective of their nationality. Yet, due to the

²⁹ *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii...* p. 339-350; *Partiia “Soiuz 17 Oktiabria” Protokoly s’ezdov i zasedanii TsK* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1996) v. 1-2.

³⁰ *Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Rossii...*, 482-495.

³¹ *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii...*, 343.

³² *Ob avtonomii Pol’shi. Izdanie Soiuz 17 Oktiabria* (Moscow: “Pechatnia S.P. Iakovleva,” 1906), 1-7; N.Ia. Drel’, *Raznitsa mezhdru russkim osvoboditel’nym dvizheniem i sovremennym pol’skim i avtonomiia Pol’shi po dannym pressy* (Warsaw: Tipografiia okruzhnogo shtaba, 1906).

composition of their supporters in the borderlands, the major focus of the Octobrists was on protection of the rights of Russian minority in the national borderlands.³³

Contrary to the representatives of the moderate right, the liberals treated the relationship between nations in the empire from “idealist” positions. They assumed that coexistence of nations in a common state could be mutually beneficial for all sides, while the tendencies towards separatism were an exaggerated, yet quite an understandable reaction to repression of national cultures and violation of individual rights on the national basis. In the view of the majority of the Kadets, the equality of all citizens irrespective of their nationality and understanding of common interests (economic, international etc.) would completely “cure” nationalists from their tendency towards separatism.³⁴ Thus, there existed an opportunity of preserving Russia’s unitary political space along with realization of reasonable interests of all the nationalities.

At the same time, the Kadets believed that nations in the Russian empire would be able to find a reasonable compromise without opposing their particular interests to the needs of the entire state. The new constitutional order in Russia had to become a guarantee for the realization of such a compromise. Meanwhile, an appropriate law had to be elaborated by an empire-wide representative assembly, which would be composed of properly elected representatives of all the nations.

This understanding of a possible compromise between the peoples of Russia relied on the concept of “civic nation,” which would be an association of free citizens

³³ *Partiia “Soiuz 17 Oktiabria”*..., 11, 157-158.

³⁴ Fedor Kokoshkin, *Oblastnaia avtonomiia i edinstvo Rossii* (Moscow: Tipografiia O.L.Somovoi, 1905), 2-13; Vladimir Gessen, *Avtonomiia, federatsiia i natsional’nyi vopros* (St.Petersburg, 1906), 1-45; Nikolai Lazarevskii, *Avtonomiia* (St.Petersburg, 1906), 3-24..

as individuals, rather than representatives of particular nationalities.³⁵ From the very beginning the liberal theory contained a tension between the notion of individual and collective rights.

To explore this tension further, I will consider the difference between the liberals and left-wing parties in their approaches to the national question. At the same time, it is important to notice the lack of unity in regard to the national movements among the left-wing parties themselves. For instance, the Social Democrats promoted a Marxist idea of proletarian internationalism or an association of the working people (*trudiashchiesia*) of all the countries and nations in a common struggle against exploiters.³⁶ From this viewpoint, nationalism was an attempt of bourgeoisie and landholders to instil in the exploited people of their nations a sense of commonality of their interests, irrespective of their class. Thus, they assumed that the ideology of nationalism was an artificial construction to deceive the people which the Social Democrats had to combat.³⁷ At the same time, the national liberation movements in the borderlands were regarded as potential allies in the struggle against the autocracy, therefore Lenin made a “dialectical” distinction between the “chauvinistic” nationalism of the Great-Russians and the “progressive” nationalism of oppressed nationalities and posed a claim of the “rights of nations for self-determination up to a complete separation.”³⁸ Meanwhile, the grand ideal of the Social Democrats was a

³⁵ Fedor Kokoshkin, “Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro s’ezdu zemskikh i gorodskikh deiatelei po voprosu o pravakh natsional’nostei i detsentralizatsii upravleniia i zakonodatel’sтва” *Pravo* 40 (1905), 3331.

³⁶ Joseph A. Petrus, “Marx and Engels on the National Question” *The Journal of Politics* 33: 3 (1971): 801-811.

³⁷ See, for example, Vladimir Lenin, *Theses on the National Question* (1913) The article is available at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1913/jun/30.htm#fwV19E085>

³⁸ Vladimir Lenin, “O prave natsii na samoopredelenie” Idem, *Izbrannye proizvedeniia* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1970), 569-621; Idem. “O natsional’noi gordosti velikorosov” Ibid., 629-632.

union of free socialist republics. This ideal did not presuppose the division of republics into minor territories along ethnic lines. Instead, it presupposed larger units that would be economically sustainable. Yet, this part of the program was not developed until the Revolution of 1917.³⁹ Other socialist parties, from the Socialist Revolutionaries to the anarchists expressed less clear views, though they used the notion “federation” more often than did the Social Democrats. Moreover, the term had a semantic origin in Bakunin’s tradition.⁴⁰ These socialist groups developed different views in regard to national movements, yet it is noticeable that in the borderlands the exponents of socialist and nationalist ideas were often the same people.⁴¹ The Jews were an important group in the left-wing parties. Among them were both the advocates of centralism and the supporters of an idea of exterritorial federation, formulated by Otto Bauer and Karl Renner.⁴² In general, the left-wing parties were more receptive than the liberals to the idea of priority of collective rights (including the rights of peoples) over the individual rights.⁴³

Yet, it would be unjust, to present the Russian liberals as adherents of a classical liberalism with a strictly individualist agenda. Moreover, even such a

³⁹ Jeremy Smith, *The Bolsheviks and the National Question, 1917-23* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), 1-28.

⁴⁰ Compare, for example: Mikhail Bakunin, “Federalism, sotsializm i antiteologizm” Idem, *Filosofiia, sotsiologiia, politika* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Pravda,” 1989), 19; “Proekt programmy partii sotsialistov-revoliutsionerov” *Politicheskie partii Rossii* (Moscow, 1906), 18.

⁴¹ *Protokoly konferentsii rossiiskikh i natsional’no-sotsialisticheskikh partii. 16-20 apreliia 1907* (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia Prokhorova, 1908).

⁴² Karl Renner [Pseudonym: Synopticus], *Zur Österreichischen Nationalitätenfrage: Staat und Nation* (Wien, 1899); Otto Bauer, *The Question of Nationalities and Social Democracy* (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); For the reception of the ideas of Austrian Marxists see: “Programma Evreiskoi sotsialisticheskoi rabochei partii (SERP) (1906)” *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii...*, 205-206; *Protokoly konferentsii rossiiskikh i natsional’no-sotsialisticheskikh partii...*, 55-79.

⁴³ Ephraim Nimni expressed similar opinion comparing liberal discourse with the ideas of Austrian Marxism: Ephraim Nimni, “Nationalist Multiculturalism in Late Imperial Austria as a Critique of Contemporary Liberalism: the Case of Bauer and Renner” *Journal of Political Ideologies* 4: 3 (1999): 290-312.

“classic” of British liberalism as John Stuart Mill had rather sophisticated view on the possibility to reconcile the national rights within an overarching civic community.⁴⁴

The drama of the Russian liberalism was that it emerged right at the time, when the classical liberal theory was in the demise, and the majority of liberal movements in Western Europe had to recognize the importance of collective rights. The evolution of the Western liberals was easier, provided that in such countries as Great Britain and France, the basic individual rights were already protected by the law. At the same time, such a transition was indicative, because as the result of a widened franchise larger groups of population became involved in politics, while the socialist, liberal and conservative parties had to win over the hearts of common voters. To survive in the struggle with the left wing parties, liberalism had to shift its focus from protection of individual rights and freedoms to the question of social justice.⁴⁵ At the same time, the competitors of the liberals on the right often appealed to national and even chauvinist instincts of masses. This also encouraged the liberals in different countries to integrate into their programs the elements of imperialist or nationalist rhetoric.⁴⁶

In this respect, the Russian liberals were not an exception from a European tendency. Yet, in the Russian case, the situation was more complicated due to the fact that the goal of securing the rights of individual and the rule of law was still not

⁴⁴ John Stuart Mill, “Considerations on Representative Government” Idem. *On Liberty and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). chapters 16, 17.

⁴⁵ Jan Werner Müller, *Contesting Democracy: Political Ideas in Twentieth-Century Europe* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2013), 9-16; Michael Freeden, *The New Liberalism...*, 25-70.

⁴⁶ How the liberal rhetoric eventually conflated with national, racial, and imperialist languages in European empires: Peter M. Judson, *Exclusive Revolutionaries: Liberal Politics, Social Experience and National Identity in the Austrian Empire, 1848 – 1914* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005); Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of the World Order, 1860-1900* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2009); Michael B. Gross, *The War Against Catholicism: Liberalism and Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2004); D. George Boyce and Alan O’Day (eds.), *Gladstone and Ireland: Politics, Religion and Nationality in the Victorian Age* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

achieved. Therefore, in an attempt to attract hesitant voters on the left and on the right, the Russian liberals tried to put forward a set of ideas that was in the core of their ideological preference. This exactly was one of the reasons for unwillingness of the leaders of the Kadet party to concede, when the logic of tactical alliances with various groups required compromises in programmatic statements.

The key idea in the Kadets' vision of reorganizing Russia's political space was decentralization. On the one hand, commitment to decentralization reflected the connection of the liberal groups to the *zemstvo* movement, which emerged within the framework of all-estate institutions of local self-government, introduced in the course of Great Reforms.⁴⁷ The political expedience and the practice of these institutions became reflected in the works of Russian theoreticians of law Alexander Lokhvitsky, Alexander Vasil'chikov and Alexander Gradovsky.⁴⁸ For example, Gradovsky believed that intermediate levels of association of citizens were necessary to reduce the tensions between the state as an embodiment of a uniform coercive order, necessary for a common good, on the one hand, and a particular individual who was an expression of freedom and private egoistic interest on the other. At these levels, the civic pursuit towards common good of all the members of the association is in unity

⁴⁷ A selected list of literature on political and ideological context of functioning of *zemstvo* institutions includes: Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich (eds.), *The Zemstvo in Russia. An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); S.Frederick Starr, *Decentralization and Self-Government in Russia, 1830-1870* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972); Thomas Earl Porter, *The Zemstvo and the Emergence of Civil Society in Late Imperial Russia, 1864-1917* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1991); Mary Schaeffer Conroy (ed.), *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia: Case Studies on Local Self-Government, and the State Council before and during World War I* (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1998); Thomas Pearson, *Russian Officialdom in Crisis: Autocracy and Local Self-Government, 1861-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

⁴⁸ Aleksander Lokhvitskii, *Guberniia, ee zemskie i pravitel'stvennye uchrezhdeniia* (St.Petersburg, 1864); Aleksander Vasil'chikov, *O samoupravlenii. Sravnitel'nyi obzor russkikh i inostrannykh zemskikh i obshchestvennykh uchrezhdenii* (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia Pratz, 1872) v. 1-2; Aleksander Gradovskii, *Sistemy mestnogo upravleniia na zapade Evropy i v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia V.Bezobrazova, 1878)" Idem. "Gosudarstvo i provintsiia" Idem. *Sochineniia* (St.Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 2001).

with the organizing power of the state. This, in the long run, involved local forces into a civic life, provided that they were more informed of the state of affairs in their particular region. At the same time, state control subjected these strivings to a unified legal order and did not allow them go beyond the limits, where they would be dangerous for the unity of the state.⁴⁹ Thus, Gradovsky supported an idea of administrative decentralization and delegation of authority from the center to the local institutions. At the same time, he wanted those institutions of local self-government to perform an axillary function as regards to the central authority and to prevent any arbitrary action on the part of local administration.⁵⁰

Strictly speaking, such a viewpoint, did not comply with the framework of classical liberalism.⁵¹ Gradovsky in fact criticized such liberalism, referring to the theory of a German conservative thinker Wilhelm Riehl. In his work “Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft” (1851) Riehl suggested an idea of a hierarchical “volkish” society that enabled organic development of specific historical features of society. It was opposed to abstract administrative schemes that, in the view of Riehl, were detached from actual life of society.⁵² At the same time, Gradovsky denied the “political” role of local self-government. In other words he was against transformation of local self-government into “autonomy.” For Gradovsky, investing local institutions with “state” functions would be an illegitimate interference of society into the functioning of the state. He considered that such federative states as Switzerland or the United States of

⁴⁹ A. Gradovskii, “Gosudarstvo i provintsiiia...,” 196-198.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 199.

⁵¹ Jan Palmowski, “Liberalism and Local Government in Late Nineteenth-Century Germany and England” *The Historical Journal* 45, 2 (2002) p. 386-391.

⁵² Wilhelm Riehl, *Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1851); Russian translation: Vil’gel’m Ril’, *Grazhdanskoe obshchestvo* (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia A.E.Landau, 1883).

America emerged in specific historical conditions and that these models could not be applicable to Russia.⁵³

Such a conflation of liberal and conservative principles matched the worldview of Russian *zemstvo* activists. Among them, there were many “progressive” landholders, who did not trust the bureaucrats in the capital and believed that people in the localities were more competent in the matters of local economy, infrastructure, and education.⁵⁴ At the same time, these people shared conservative beliefs. In their view, only “educated” and well-established persons could make decisions regarding the development of the regions.⁵⁵ The suspicions of the advocates of constitutional and parliamentary centralism (i.e. concentration of the political life in the center) were thus justified: decentralization could impede “progressive” reforms, inasmuch as it provided the local authority to the representatives of conservative elite.⁵⁶

Written in 1880-ies the works of Gradovsky offered an original theoretical framework for further discussion among the members of liberal and *zemstvo* circles. Meanwhile, the idea of providing certain discretionary power to local elective institutions was a common place of these discussions. Russian liberals could disagree only about the volume and the nature of the competences of those institutions as well as the necessity to extend self-government in the borderlands, where the *zemstvos* were still absent.⁵⁷

⁵³ A. Gradovskii, “Gosudarstvo i provintsiiia...,” 178.

⁵⁴ Dmitrii Shipov, *Vospominaniia i Dumy o perezhitom* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2007), 110-111.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 201-203.

⁵⁶ Bogdan Kistiakovskii, “Oblastnaia avtonomiia i ee predely” *Moskovskii ezhenedel'nik* 4 (1907): 18-19.

⁵⁷ A. Gradovskii, “Gosudarstvo i provintsiiia...,” 295-296; *Liberal'noe dvizheniie v Rossii*, 93-96.

At the same time, the liberal thinkers argued that certain regions required larger discretion due to their historical development and national composition, or remoteness from the center.⁵⁸ However the question of whether autonomy or federation could be a reasonable alternative for Russia remained unresolved. Generally, the liberals assumed that such a discussion required a careful examination of local needs, which would only be possible after a properly elected representation was established. Otherwise, general schemes of intellectuals threatened to become unpractical and irrelevant to the needs of the population of the regions concerned.⁵⁹

Thus, at the moment, when an intensive interaction with the peripheral national movements began, the Russian liberals did not have a clear position regarding the possibility of transforming local self-government into a more complex form of state organization. The emergence of public political space further complicated the situation. It led the liberals to abandon abstract theories and relate their programmatic assumptions to the claims of national movements. At the same time, the authors of the liberal program had to realize the importance of convincing wider groups of electorate, not limited to a bounded group of likeminded intellectuals in the center, but also in the borderlands.

My dissertation will consider how the leaders of Russian liberalism reacted to these challenges. It will examine how the liberal program crystalized in the dialogue with the representatives of various national movements. Thus, an abstract idea of

⁵⁸ Mikhail Dragomanov, *Politicheskaia programma obshchestva "Zemskii Soiuz"* (Genève: "Vol'noie slovo," 1882); A general review of particular political projects: Dimitry Von Mohrenschildt, *Toward a United States of Russia: Plans and Projects of Federal Reconstruction of Russia in the Nineteenth Century* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1981). chapters 6-7, 10; Mark von Hagen, "Federalisms and Pan-movements: Re-imagining Empire" Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev (eds.) *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: 2007), 502-506; Lev Dameshek, Anatolii Remnev (eds.), *Sibir' v sostave Rossiiskoi Imperii* (Moscow: NLO, 2007). chapter.9.

⁵⁹ Kokoshkin, "Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...", 3338.

decentralization gradually acquired specific meaning. Moreover, it varied from one national context to another.

In the case of Finland, which will be considered in the second chapter, the Kadets encountered the political groups that advocated similar ideas. The major discussions on the “Finnish question” took place already after the Revolution, when Stolypin’s government launched an “attack” on the special status of the Grand Duchy of Finland.⁶⁰ The major question was whether to preserve a special Finnish “constitution” or integrate the Grand Duchy into the framework of the new Russian constitution. The debate provoked a heated theoretical argument, namely, whether it was appropriate to consider Finland a separate state with its own constitution, united by a real union with the Russian empire, or it was only an autonomous province of the Russian state. In the latter case, the Russian State Duma could restrict the competence of the Finnish autonomous institutions by a unilateral decision. In these circumstances the Kadets were the advocates of preservation of the Finnish special rights. However, they did so not because they recognized that Finland was in a real union with Russia, but because they believed that preservation of the Finnish constitutional order would enforce constitutional order in Russia proper. In this case, both the Russian liberals and the advocates of the special status of Finland referred to the principle of supremacy of law, and in fact to the theory of a single scholar, Georg Jellinek.⁶¹ Therefore, there was no sharp contradiction between the initial assumptions of the both sides.

Regarding the Polish case the Kadets were in a more complicated situation. In the third chapter, I will demonstrate, that Kadets had to deal with the political group

⁶⁰ Osmo Jussila, *Velikoe Kniazhestvo Finliandskoe, 1809-1917* (Helsinki: Ruslania Books, 2009), 725-734; Matti Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia* (St.Petersburg: Izdatel’skii Dom “Kolo,” 2005), 512-530.

⁶¹ Georg Jellinek, *Allgemeine Staatslehre*; Idem, *Ueber Staatsfragmente* (Heidelberg, 1896).

that adhered the idea of priority of national interests, understood in a realist way. A close ideological ally of the Kadets, the Progressive Democrats, lost the elections. As the result, the Polish delegation in the Duma was reluctant to regard the Kadets as a strategic partner. On the one hand, it was because the Poles preferred to discuss the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland with the government, rather than to look for support among the Russian opposition. On the other hand, the National Democrats did not count on the sympathy of the Russian liberation movement to the Polish cause, because they believed that each nation had to pursue its own egoistic interests.⁶² They denied the possibility of a reciprocal strategic compromise with Russians, while a tactical alliance, in their view, was meaningless, because they initially treated liberals as weak and non-influential party. Despite their “national egoism” and the adherence of the sovereignty of the nation, the National Democrats referred in their rhetoric to legality, or rather to the historical rights of Poland, bolstered by international agreements. However, such references were instrumental. Besides, the question was complicated by the fact that after the restitution of the historical status of the Kingdom of Poland, a substantial Polish minority would still remain beyond the borders of the Kingdom. Meanwhile, the Polish delegation the Duma claimed that it represented the interests of the entire Polish population in the Russian empire. Therefore, unlike in the Finnish case, the Polish claims of a special status could not rely on the existence of a special Polish constitution. Contrary to the Finns, the Poles had to participate in the Russian parliament, where they assumed the role of a balancing power between the right and left-wing parties.

⁶²Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate. Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 190-219.

The Ukrainian case will be regarded in the fourth chapter. Unlike in the two previous cases, the Ukrainian national movement was just emerging as a loose association of small circles of intelligentsia.⁶³ Besides, the majority of the Ukrainian activists were strongly attracted to socialist, rather than liberal ideas. Moreover, instead of forming their national political party, the representatives of the Ukrainian movement opted for an electoral alliance with the Russian-wide parties, mostly the Kadets. The Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party failed to put their slogan of Ukrainian autonomy on the agenda of the Duma discussions. Partially, this was because the party had only a few deputies in the Duma and had to rely on the support of the Kadets and the latter were reluctant to regard any idea of any regional autonomy, with the exception of the Kingdom of Poland. The theoretical assumptions of the Ukrainian groups (above all the Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party) had their origin in the ideas of Mikhail Dragomanov and Mikhail Bakunin.⁶⁴ They presupposed a federation, organized from the bottom up, from local communes to regional autonomies. The Kadet idea of autonomy implied delegating authority from the center to local institutions. Therefore the agreement on common theoretical ground seemed impossible. At the same time, many of the Kadets in Little Russia sympathized with the Ukrainian movement. Due to this, the question of the Ukrainian autonomy, even in a remote perspective, was crucial for both the unity of the Kadet party and its electoral perspectives in the region. An additional circumstance that motivated the discussions on autonomy was that Little Russia was an arena for the political competition between the Kadets and Russian right-wing nationalists, who formed the

⁶³ V.V. Strilets', *Ukrains'ka Radikal'no-demokratychna partiia: vytoky, ideologiia, organizatsiia, diial'nist' (kinets XIX stolittia – 1939 rik)* (Kiev, "Kyivs'kii universitet, 2002), 11-40; S.P. Donchenko, *Liberal'ni partii Ukrainy (1900-1919)* (Dniprodzerinsk, 2004), 43- 78.

⁶⁴ Mikhail Bakunin, "Federalism, sotsializm i antiteologizm...; Mikhail Dragomanov, "Vol'nyi soiuz" – "Vil'na spilka." *Opyt ukrainskoi politico-sotsial'noi programy. Svod i ob'iasneniia programy* (Genève: Tipografiia "Gromady," 1884).

Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists.⁶⁵ Therefore, an alliance with the Ukrainian nationalists, if only a tactical one, had a political significance for the Kadets. Meanwhile, within the Kadet party there was a group of adherents of the idea of the “All-Russian nation.”⁶⁶ The leader of this group, Peter Struve denied to the Ukrainians the right to be a distinct nation, because, as he assumed, they were an integral part of the all-Russian culture. He questioned not only the idea of the Ukrainian autonomy, but also the very existence of the Ukrainian culture.⁶⁷ Although the leadership of the Kadet party did not approve of such a viewpoint, Struve’s position brought in additional complications in the uneasy dialogue of the Ukrainians and the Russian liberals.

As the Kadets formed their programmatic position, they faced the task of defending their theory against the attacks of the right-wing activists. The fifth chapter will demonstrate how the Russian liberals tried to prove to those who hesitated in their choice between the Kadets and moderate Octobrists that their program did not lead to disintegration of Russia, but, on the contrary, contributed to strengthening its internal unity. After 1905 the Kadets’ position on the national question acquired a deeper theoretical foundation. In general, the Kadets shifted towards greater centralization, yet this did not exclude the polarity of the opinions inside the party. An additional challenge for the Kadets’ leadership was to diminish inner disagreements regarding the autonomy in order to prevent a split within the party.

⁶⁵ Anton Kotenko, Olga Martyniuk, Aleksei Miller, “Maloross” Aleksei Miller, Denis Sdvizhkov, Ingrid Schirle (eds.) *“Poniatiia o Rossii.” K istoricheskoi semantike imperskogo perioda* (Moscow: NLO, 2012), 427-433.

⁶⁶ The evolution of the concept of “All-Russian nation” in the imagination of Russian nationalism: Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question. The Russian Empire and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest, New York: CEU Press, 2003).

⁶⁷ Struve, “Obshcherusskaia kul’tura i ukrainskii partikuliarizm...”: 66-70; Pipes, *Liberal on the Right, 1905-1944*, 213-219.

Chronological boundaries of my research could be defined as a period from the beginning of intensive public debates (approximately 1903) to the beginning of the World War I. The war dramatically changed the setting that framed the dialogue between the liberals and peripheral nationalists. Not only it aggravated many “national questions,” but also affected moving borders of controlled territories between belligerent empires.⁶⁸ Moreover, the situation developed in such a sweeping pace that both the liberals and nationalists reacted with delay. For example, the idea of providing autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland lost its significance, after the German troops occupied the territory of Russian Poland, while the situation in Ukraine depended on the gains and losses of Russia at Austrian front.⁶⁹ Therefore, I will limit my research to the debates of the preceding period, when each side had been formulating its theoretical position that would guide their future actions.

Within this general chronological scope, each chapter regards a separate case with its distinct chronology. The debates on each of the “national questions” intensified and faded away rather asymmetrically, in accordance with their own dynamics. For example, the climax of the debate on the “Finnish question” took place already after the revolution, when the question of the Polish autonomy had already lost its significance, because of mounting reaction. The “Ukrainian question” became topical in the beginning of the revolution, yet the discussion reached its peak at the outset of the World War. All these chronologies become united by a framing narrative of the chapters, devoted to the evolution of the discourse of the Russian liberals.

⁶⁸ Eric Lohr, *Nationalizing the Russian Empire: The Campaign against Enemy Aliens during World War I* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Mark von Hagen, *War in a European borderland: Occupations and Occupation Plans in Galicia and Ukraine, 1914-1918* (Seattle: Herbert J. Ellison Center for Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies, 2008); Aleksandra Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii: gosudarstvennoe upravlenie i natsional'naia politika v gody pervoi mirovoi voyny (1914 – 1917 gg.)* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2004); Mark Ferro, “Voina, revoliutsiia, imperiia: Vremennoe pravitel'stvo i problema natsional'nostei” *Ab Imperio*, 4 (2001).

⁶⁹ Bakhturina, *Okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii*, chapter 1; Mark von Hagen, *War in a European borderland*

The methodology of the dissertation is based on the study of functioning of political ideologies in a particular context. Following the definition of Martin Seliger, I consider ideology as a set of ideas and beliefs that express certain vision of future and also a notion of what steps are needed to accomplish this future. According to Seliger:

An ideology is a group of beliefs and disbeliefs (rejections) expressed in value sentences, appeal sentences and explanatory statements... It is designed to serve on a relatively permanent basis a group of people to justify ... the legitimacy of the implements and technical prescriptions, which are to ensure concerted action for the preservation, reform, destruction, or reconstruction of a given order.⁷⁰

It is useful to apply the Seliger's distinction between fundamental and operative ideologies. Fundamental principles, as he argues, "determine the final goals and the grand vistas on which they will be realized, and which are set above the second dimension and are invoked to justify them."⁷¹ Usually fundamental beliefs involve moral prescriptions. Operative beliefs refer to the technical side of the politics and concern the norms of prudence and efficiency.

I approach to ideologies above all through an analysis of particular uses of concepts and rhetoric strategies. Unchangeable meaning of the concepts reflects hidden presuppositions, which are linked with fundamental beliefs of the participants of the discussion, united by common ideology. For example, the concept of "decentralization" suggests a notion of a decisive role of the state as a force that organizes the society. At the same time, the analysis of varying uses of the concepts in particular historical situation allows defining particular tactical aims of the participants of the discussion. The convergence of the notion of "autonomy" with the concept of "local self-government" reflected the intention of the liberals to defend

⁷⁰ John B. Thompson, *Studies in the Theory of Ideology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 79.

⁷¹ Ibid.

themselves from the attacks of right-wing journalists. The latter tended to identify “autonomy” and “federation” with “disintegration” of Russia. They tried to convince the voters that any support of the liberals would lead to “disentanglement” of the state.

Moreover, the concepts could be used to accomplish a rhetorical compromise with the partners in the dialogue or, conversely, to fix the ideological boundaries with the latter. For example, trying to reach a concordance with the Poles, the Russian liberals tended to agree on “autonomy” and did not emphasize the different meanings of this word. When the Kadets needed to defend their position against the right-wing parties, they suggested a definition of “autonomy”, which was incompatible with the meaning, which the representatives of the national movements invested in the word.

My approach to the analysis of the concepts relies on the methodology of *Begriffsgeschichte*.⁷² Yet, unlike the former, I analyze the evolution of the concepts during a relatively short chronological period. In accordance with the theory of *Begriffsgeschichte* the concepts are understood as contested notions. By contrast, my dissertation pays more attention to those particular groups, who use these concepts as a part of their rhetorical strategy. Interpretation of particular aims of the participants of the dialogue is an essential part of my analysis. This brings my approach close to the methodology of Quentin Skinner who approaches the use of the language as an act of political communication.⁷³ Thus, the major question to the text is not only *what* the author said, but also *why* and *for what aim* the author said exactly in this way, and no other. The answer to the last question requires an analysis of the world vision of the

⁷² Reinhard Koselleck, “Begriffsgeschichte and Social History” Idem, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004); Khans Bedeker, “Razmyshleniia o metode istorii poniatii” Idem. *Istoriia poniatii, istoriia diskursa, istoriia metaphor* (Moscow: NLO, 2010).

⁷³ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) v.1, 103-128.

participants of the political dialogue as well as an interpretation of their rhetorical strategy in the context of the aims and methods of political struggle.

An analysis of an intellectual context of the political statements and programs plays an important role in my approach. A particularly prominent place in the analysis of the liberal discourse belongs to the theories of German legal scholars. The discussion of political programs of the Ukrainian parties traces their intellectual indebtedness to the ideas of Bakunin and Dragomanov.

The main aim of my analysis is to consider the evolution of the meaning and the evolution of the uses of the key concepts in the liberal discourse related to national question. I also seek to link this evolution to the changes in the political situation and the character of the debates with different partners of the dialogue.

Chapter 1.

The Blindfolded Alliance: Russian Liberals in the Search of Support in the Borderlands

The interaction of Russian liberal activists with the representatives of national movements in the borderlands can be described as gradual evolution from the hope of creating a strong alliance for the struggle with autocratic regime to a more pragmatic position. Initially, liberals had very scarce information about the situation in the borderlands, which they acknowledged themselves. Yet they were convinced that when autocracy was abolished and replaced by constitutional order, it would be enough to provide all the citizens with equal political rights so that the claims of the nationalities in the borderlands become milder. However, the liberals denied the principle of “victory by any means” professed by the representatives of revolutionary parties even at cost of separation of borderlands. At the same time, the liberals believed that certain decentralization, such as for example regional self-government in the regions with specific economic, geographical, ethnographical conditions, would also decrease the tension in the national borderlands, if not solve them. In general, the liberals, as opposed to the right-wing ideologues, tried to prove that political concessions to borderlands would not prevent the strengthening of the ties within the empire. On the contrary, the development voluntary connections, such as these based on mutual economic interests, would be more effective than the attempts of forced Russification and repression of separatist sentiments in the borderlands.

In this chapter, I will try to demonstrate, that the encounter with organized national movements in Finland and Poland made the liberals modify their initially

optimistic assumptions. In the course of discussions with the representatives of these movements it became clear that although the latter were ready for certain compromises and concessions, their final aims did not coincide with the political agenda of the Russian liberals. It would be more appropriate to speak about “national egoism” and the desire to acquire more autonomy in exchange of support of the Russian constitutionalists in their struggle against the autocracy. Therefore, the alliance of these groups with Russian liberals could only be tactical.

In this situation the liberals had to decide about the limits of their possible concessions. However, the liberals stuck to their principles not so much in the interests of the Russian statehood, as by the necessity to respond convincingly to the critics from the right-wing ideologues. At the same time, they did not want to alienate moderate nationalist groups of the Russian society.

Principles Declared

Sporadic contacts between the organizers of the future Russian liberal party and the representatives of non-Russian national movement took place long before the journal *Osvobozhdenie* was founded, but these were mostly private contacts. Yet, the very fact of launching *Osvobozhdenie* provoked the editors to make these contacts more systematic, particularly in order to inform the readers about the state of affairs in the borderlands. The editor’s address published in the first issue of the journal remained rather vague about aims of the liberals regarding the national question. On the one hand, Peter Struve, who authored the editorial, did not want to alienate possible allies among the representatives of national movements. On the other hand, he sought to retain the moderate zemstvo circles, which were sensitive of the critics

from the right and their accusations towards the liberals of their intention to disintegrate Russia. In particular, in the the first issue of *Osvobozhdenie* Struve wrote that “[all] the nationalities (*natsional’nostiam*) of our multinational state (*raznoplemennogo gosudarstva*) should be provided with equal rights and the opportunity of a free and distinctive development of their national features.”¹

It is notable, that the author did not speak of equality of individual rights of representatives of various nationalities, but rather the rights of nationalities as collective entities. At the same time, Struve attacked official nationalism, when he noted that: “the government – for the sake of its own self-preservation – cynically exploits the very Russian nationality, justifying and blessing with it a brutal policy of suppression and depriving other nationalities of their individual character.”²

To the repressive nationalism of the authorities Struve opposed another type of Russian nationalism, based on the idea of political nation. He did not directly formulate the substance of this nationalism, yet he constantly used the word “*natsional’nyi*” (*national*) in such expressions as “wide national movement (*shirokoe natsional’noe dvizhenie*),” “national liberation (*natsional’noe osvobozhdenie*),” “national hero (*natsional’nyi geroi*) of the new Russia” (Leo Tolstoy). Regarding the latter Struve wrote: “The national significance of Tolstoy is not in the entire contents of his teaching. It consists in the fact that the great artist reached the soul of the Russian people (*russskogo naroda*) deeper than others; he fathomed the Russian landlord (*pomeshchik*), the peasant (*muzhik*), and the Russian intellectual

¹ Peter Struve, “Ot redaktora” *Osvobozhdenie* 1 (1902): 1.

² Ibid.

(*intelligent*)... [and] expressed a burning national striving to freedom.”³ Struve called liberation “the major task of our time”.⁴

This rhetoric is ambiguous. On the one hand, the struggle with the autocratic bureaucratic regime was declared as common national goal, which potentially concerned all the citizens of the free Russian state disregarding their ethnic belonging. On the other hand, Tolstoy emerges in the Struve’s article as a Russian national writer, as the bearer of the high Russian culture. As a result, it was not possible to say that Tolstoy understood either the Polish landlord or Finnish peasant. Thus, already in this period, Struve’s rhetoric suggested a peculiar conflation of civic nationalism with adherence to the high (Great Russian) culture, which might alienate the representatives of other national movements.

Struve’s editorial introduction was followed by the “Address of the Russian Constitutionalists.” Initially written by Miliukov, this address was later on edited by the group of zemstvo-constitutionalists.⁵ Central to this declaration was a list of programmatic claims, which according to the authors, “were placed in the foundation of free social life in all cultural states a long time ago”⁶

These claims included “1. personal freedom, guaranteed by independent justice... 2. legal equality, and as a consequence, abolition of all exclusions and exemptions on a national, estate, and religious basis.”⁷ The latter claim presupposed the abolition of “restrictions in the sphere of personal and property rights regarding

³ Ibid., 3.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 164.

⁶ “Ot Russkikh konstitutsionalistov” *Osvobozhdeniie* 1 (1902): 9.

⁷ Ibid.

the Jews and Poles.”⁸ As one can see in this document, the authors were more consistent in advocating individual rights, while the rights of nationalities were defined in negative terms as the lack of legal restrictions on a national and religious basis. Such an understanding was closer to classical liberalism with its preference of individual over the collective rights.

The authors of the declaration refused to suggest any definite solutions for particular rights and needs of various social and national groups. The first issue of their practical agenda was the convocation of popular representation, which would have to propose a specific solution to these questions.⁹

Thus, already in the first issue of *Osvobozhdenie*, one can see the beginnings of the two tendencies in the ideology of the future Constitutional Democratic Party. One of these tendencies consisted in linking the Russian national tasks to a specifically Great Russian meaning. The other tendency consisted in preoccupation with the idea of individual rights and freedoms, which proceeded from the civic understanding of nation. At the same time, Russian liberal approach to the nationality issues through revealed a negative meaning of freedom as legal equality regardless of ethnicity (as well as religion and estate).

Opening up the Borderlands

Osvobozhdenie was not Struve’s personal enterprise. It was founded on the agreement of zemstvo-constitutionalist group in St. Petersburg. Struve envisioned this journal as continuation of Herten’s *Kolokol* or Dragomanov’s *Vol’noe Slovo*. The

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.,10.

journal was not designed as a mouthpiece of one particular group, but rather as a forum of opinions of various groups, including national ones, which shared the goal of abolishing the absolutist police regime and establishing a new free order. This was an attempt to unite diverse forces of the Russian opposition, help them to learn more about each other, and eliminate mutual prejudices. In practice, this applied only to some oppositionist movements, since the Social Democrats lead by Lenin and Plekhanov refused to co-operate with the “bourgeois” journal.¹⁰

Naturally, national groups in the borderlands were also supposed to become the participants of this forum. Moreover, there was a technical side as well. In particular, the transfer from abroad of the issues of the journal to Russia was carried out through Finland by channels, controlled by the representatives of the Finnish opposition.¹¹ Therefore inviting its representatives for publication in *Osvobozhdenie* was not only the result of ideological choice, but also a consequence of tactical agreements.

However, apart from the purely technical issues there were certain political factors that allowed the Russian liberals to perceive the struggle of the Finns with the administrative arbitrariness as a symbol of their own struggle with autocracy. In this sense the editorial from the 8th issue of 2nd October 1902 is important. In this editorial Struve wrote:

Under open repressions, under open violation committed of the law by the St. Petersburg government, all the disputes on the juridical nature of the relationship between Finland and Russia have to calm down in this peaceful cultured country... Using physical advantage... [the government] robbed the law from a peaceful and loyal cultured people. And

¹⁰ Richard Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Left, 1870-1905* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1970), 318-319.

¹¹ William R. Copeland, “Relations between the Finnish Resistance Movement and the Russian Liberals, 1899-1904” Charles E. Timberlake (ed.) *Essays on Russian Liberalism* (University of Missouri Press, 1972), 99; Ariadna Tyrkova-Villiams, *Na putiakh k svobode* (Moscow: Moskovskaia Shkola Politicheskikh Issledovani, 2007), 152-156.

this juridical robbery was committed on behalf of Russia. The mute and suppressed country, where the government supports itself by all kinds of violence... this unhappy country was dishonored by incredible violation of law, committed on its behalf. Yes, the violence of the St. Petersburg bureaucracy against Finland is a national shame for Russia and the Russian people. More and more does Finland falls more and more under the yoke of unprincipled and shameless bureaucracy, under which the whole Russia is suffering.¹²

Struve further wrote about Viacheslav Plehve and Nikolai Bobrikov's activity in Finland:

Indeed, what is the goal of the activity of these masters in Finland? They seek to establish there the rules, against which a conscious and natural indignation grows more and more in Russia proper. Reining in Finland by means of bare violence, bureaucratic autocracy becomes more and more hateful for the Russian people.¹³

The article concluded by the following statement:

In Russia, unfortunately, there is no such civic consciousness, which Finland can be rightfully proud of. Yet instead the St. Petersburg government does not have another Russia against Russia in reserve, and when Russia unequivocally shakes the bothersome bureaucracy off its neck, then, then... gentlemen, you will have to go away seriously.¹⁴

There were several interesting passages in this text. Whereas the government tried to present the introduction of all-Russian laws on the territory of Finland as a struggle between the Russian and the Finnish (or Swedish) national principles,¹⁵ Struve tended to reframe this issue as a parallel struggle of the Finnish and Russian nation against common enemy – “the St.Petersburg bureaucracy.” Consequently, the struggle of the Finns against interference in their national issues was regarded as a struggle between “legality” and “arbitrariness.” At the same time, Struve emphasized the peaceful and cultured character of the Finnish nation. The latter, according to him, was only defending its violated rights. Struve also mentioned civic legal consciousness, which allowed treating the example of Finland as a model for the Russian society. Struve indirectly argued with those, who blamed the Russian people

¹² *Osvobozhdenie* 8 (1902): 113.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 115.

¹⁵ Tuomo Polvinen, *Derzhava i Okraina. N.I. Bobrikov – general-gubernator Finlaidii 1898 – 1904 gg.* (St.Petersburg: “Evropeiskii Dom,” 1997), 31-36.

for repressions against Finland. For Struve, the Russian nation was partially guilty because it did not object openly to the actions of its government (hence the expression of a national disgrace of Russia). However, this was because the Russian nation had not yet awakened from its political sleep. The position of progressive activists had to prove that the situation was changing and that the opponents of bureaucratic arbitrariness were able to act as a united front.

The informative articles in *Osvobozhdenie*, written by the Finnish authors can be perceived in the same way. Thus, the article “Sila i pravo Finliandii” (“Force and the Law of Finland”) in the third issue of the journal highlighted the struggle caused by the introduction of the statute of military conscription in 1901.¹⁶ In the following issues Struve published a number of articles under the title “Finnish Question” subtitled “From our correspondent from Helsingfors” and signed by F. The author of these articles was Arvid Neovius, one of the prominent figures of the Finnish constitutionalist opposition, who belonged to a moderate group of the Finnish peaceful resistance movement. Between 1903 and 1905, he was in exile in Stockholm, where he edited the journal *Fria Ord* (Free Word) castigating the Bobrikov regime.¹⁷ The position of Neovius did not quite fit Struve’s approach to the Finnish question. One of potentially burning issues was the question of the state language. When he objected to the introduction of the Russian language in the Finnish institutions (instead of the Swedish language), Neovius was aware that he was addressing Russian readers and therefore he chose the words of the Russian lawyer Boris Chicherin to express his viewpoint. I quote the original citation indicated by the author.

¹⁶ “Sila i Pravo v Finlandii” *Osvobozhdenie* 3 (1902): 42-43.

¹⁷ William R. Copeland, *The Uneasy Alliance: Collaboration between the Finnish Opposition and the Russian Underground, 1899-1904* (Helsinki: Suomalainen tiedeakatemia, 1973), 163.

Here, for the masses... the official language is like Chinese grammar and instead of facilitating the business of administration, it creates complications at every step. It is even worse, when a reigning nationality imposes its language as a sign of its domination. Nothing offends the defeated so uselessly as demonstrating one's own superiority, especially if it goes along with restriction of freedom and humiliation of what is precious to people.¹⁸

Cautiously expressed with the words of Chicherin, Neovius's position did not coincide with the position of Struve, as the former spoke about dominant nationality, which imposed its language, rather than central bureaucracy, which oppressed both nationalities. In other words, Neovius seemed to be offended exactly by "dominant nationality," rather than by the central bureaucracy.

The deviation from the purely legal view on the Finnish question appears in the author's reflections on the situation with the Russian peddlers. The author wrote:

Hawking or selling from hands was prohibited by the Finnish laws since time immemorial. According to the law on trades in 1879, such hawking is allowed only to the native Finns... Meanwhile, in Finland there were always a significant number of the so-called "Russians" – precisely Karelian hawkers from Olonets and Arkhangelsk provinces. The population treated them friendly until 1879.¹⁹

However, according to Neovius, the attitudes of the population changed after the Manifesto of February 1899.

A huge wave of unprecedented Russian peddlers rushed into Finland. They were not so much engaged in trade, as in spying. They praised the supremacy of the "Russian laws" and spread false rumors about the allegedly forthcoming distribution of the lands of the property-holders among the poor on by an edict of the Russian government.²⁰

The author regarded these peddlers to be the agents of Bobrikov, so he wrote:

In order to eliminate the impediments on the way of his agents, the hawkers and peddlers, and their unlawful and shameless, yet almost unsuccessful agitation, Bobrikov began to forge the alteration of the Finnish law on trades... Meanwhile the Bobrikov's protection... made the Russian peddlers an object of social suspicion and disgust. Honest peddlers do not praise the heaven for Bobrikov's friendship.²¹

¹⁸ F. "Finliandskii vopros" *Osvobozhdenie* 14 (1902): 242.

¹⁹ Ibid., 242.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

At this point Struve could not help noting that “in *principle* we believe that any restrictions on the trade of peddlers to be undesirable.”²²

In view of Struve’s, later ideas about the natural process of assimilation of the borderlands due to development of stronger economic connections with Russia²³ it is possible to assume that the Russian liberal hardly shared the suspicions of the Finnish correspondent about the links of these peddlers with police. At the same time, in his attitude to this question Neovius demonstrated his own national and social convictions. For example, the former “good” peddlers from Arkhangelsk and Olonets provinces were regarded as Karelian rather than Russian, while the propaganda of distribution of land of the propertied among the poor caused a painful sentiment, expressed by such epithets as “unlawful and dishonest, although almost unsuccessful agitation.”

Thus, the understanding of *Osvobozhdenie* as a forum for articulation of different political outlooks justified expectations. Although in a veiled form the Finnish representatives could express their negative attitude not only toward the Russian government, but also to the “alien” Russian migration, and thus departed from purely legal understanding of the Russian liberals of the nature of the “Finnish question” that characterized the Russian liberals.

The “Polish question” was much more explosive. The readers of *Osvobozhdenie* could obtain information on this question from a series of articles entitled “Pis’mo o sovremennoi Pol’she” (“*The Letters about Contemporary Poland*”), the first of which appeared in the issue of 20-21 of 1903, that is, somewhat later than the articles about Finland. These articles were signed by pseudonym

²² Ibid.

²³ Peter Struve, *Patriotica. Politika, kul’tura, religiia, sotsializm* (Moscow: “Respublika,” 1997).

“Informator” concealing the name of Leon Wasilewski, a member of Polish Socialist Party (PPS). He was a Pole by origin, but was born in St.Petersburg, where he got his education.²⁴ Later on in 1906, the collection of his articles supplemented by discussion of the latest situation in Poland was published in a separate brochure.²⁵ The author had aimed to inform the “representatives of the Russian opposition” about “what is Poland at present, what are the political strivings of different levels of the Polish society, what is the balance of power among the political parties in Poland, and what is their attitude to the present political disturbances in Russia.”²⁶ In his first article, Wasilewski described the developments in Poland after the suppression of the Polish uprising of 1863, bringing a special attention to the policy of Russification in Poland, conducted by the authorities. According to the author, the Russification initially affected only “intelligentsia and propertied layers of society,” but gradually the “Russification went lower and lower.” Thus, the “direction and the aim of the Russian policy in Poland is complete Russification (*obrusenie*) of the Polish population.”²⁷ Since Russification began to affect not only intelligentsia, but also workers and peasants, the socialist organizations acting among these people had to accept the struggle against the “Russian (*russkii*) regime” as one of their aims. As the author argued, “by early 1890s the Polish socialist movement acquired a clear political and separatist character.”²⁸ On the other hand, the Polish intelligentsia also suffered from the Russificatory regime, which is why “in the mid 1890s a significant number of the oppositional intelligentsia

²⁴ Andrew Kier Wise, *Aleksander Lednicki: a Pole among Russians, a Russian among Poles. Polish-Russian Reconciliation in the Revolution of 1905* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 44.

²⁵ Leon Vasilevski, *Sovremennaiia Pol'sha i ee politicheskie stremeniia* (St.Petersburg: “Obshchestvennaia pol'za,” 1906).

²⁶ Informator “Pis'ma o sovremennoi Pol'she” *Osvobozhdenie* 20-21 (1903): 370.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 372.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

gathers in the national camp, which put into the foreground the struggle with everything Russian.”²⁹

Wasilewski argued that this trend gradually acquired its supporters among “the mid-size landlords, manufacturers, and clergy.” As a result, “in the first plan there [came] pure nationalism, which [had] to unite all the classes of the Polish society in the struggle with a common enemy – Russia.”³⁰ According to Wasilewski, because of Russification all oppositionist parties in Poland became opposed not only to the Russian government, but also to Russia as such and put an aim of secession and creation of an independent state.

In his second article, published in the 22nd issue of *Osvobozhdenie* for 1903, author provided a more detailed characteristic of Polish parties and their attitude towards Russia. At the beginning of Nicholas II reign there emerged a party of Ugodowcy expressing hopes on some easing up of Russificatory regime and publishing the newspaper *Ślowo* and the weekly journal *Kraj* in St. Petersburg. According to the author, the program of this group, which consisted mainly of representatives of aristocracy, clergy, and upper bourgeoisie, suggested the following:

Polish society rejects forever the separatist tendencies; it links forever the fate of Poland with the fate of Russia both in happiness and misery. In return it asks for complete freedom of national development and immunity of religious beliefs of the Polish people.³¹

Having achieved certain success in the beginning, this conciliatory party, according to the author, gradually lost its supporters as it turned out that the Russian government did not plan any concessions for Poland. Eventually, the majority of those who left Ugodowcy turned their sympathies towards the National Democratic Party.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid. 22 (1903): 400.

According to the author, this party from the very beginning focused on the propaganda among peasants thorough the newspaper *Polak* published in Krakow and smuggled into the Russian Poland in large numbers. This edition “[provided] its readers with the essays on the Polish history, the history of literature and geography written in the spirit of the Polish nationalism; besides it [provoked] hatred to the Russian government and to everything Russian in general.”³²

The author’s characterization of the Polish Socialist party in the article did not provide any information about its attitude towards Russia, while the third article was devoted directly to this topic. According to the author, Ugodowcy, who took a strictly legalist position could not express their attitude to Russian oppositionist parties sincerely, and therefore their intentions were still unknown.³³ Yet, as the author argued, “the party of conciliators expects from the opposition movement in Russia certain leniency in the “borderlands,” which would allow the Polish society in the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania to acquire gradually the position it had lost as the result of Russificatory policy.”³⁴ In any case, according to the author, this party still remained “an absolutely passive spectator, who would not venture on any decisive step due to his extreme loyalism. However, he would be the first to take advantage of the results of any of the reforms, won by the opposition.”³⁵

The author further characterized the view of the National Democrats on the revolutionary sentiments in Russia. Since the Russian oppositionist movements had been mainly socialist, the National Democrats regarded them negatively due to their negative view on socialism in general. According to the author, the National

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid. 24 (1903): 444.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

Democrats showed an interest in Russian opposition and its claims only after the appearance of *Osvobozhdenie*. The author referred to the position of the major organ of the National Democrats, *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, which, according to him, “treated the expressions of oppositional strivings of various layers of the Russian society as ‘squabble of the Poland’s enemies between themselves.’ It weakened Russia and therefore it was beneficial for Poland.”³⁶

The emergence of more moderate constitutional group of the opposition caused, for the author, a certain transformation of the position of the National Democrats. The author supplements a long quotation from *Przegląd Wszechpolski* (1903, no. 2, pp. 87-88):

The contemporary liberal opposition does not treat us in a friendly way, it is rather indifferent to us... however, we are afraid that after it gets a better idea of us, the liberal opposition would not be more sympathetic towards us, but on the contrary... The greater would be the influence of the society over the direction of state affairs, the greater would be the russificatory pressure on Poland... Germanization is so dangerous because it is carried out by the German society...and Russification began to make serious success only when a nationalist trend appeared in the Russian society... The less Russian society is restricted, the more it will be flexible, the more energetic will be the russificatory activity...³⁷

Thus, as the author tried to demonstrate, the position of the National Democrats stemmed from the idea that the development of the constitutional movement in Russia could only bring harm to Poland. But even if this party would sympathize with the efforts of the Russian constitutionalists, who could provide for Polish parties more favorable conditions for legal political activity, the interference of one of the Polish parties on their side could make things worse. Here again the author quotes *Przegląd Wszechpolski* (1903, no. 2, pp. 90):

We cannot hope on favorable results for the movement if we take part in it... The appearance of the Poles would provoke various suspicions even among the most moderate Russian nationalists, who take part in this movement. We would avert a substantial part of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid., 445.

opposition, and at the same time we would provide the argument for adversaries of the reforms, namely that it is above all Russia's enemies, who are interested in transforming of state.³⁸

Finally, the author concluded, that on the practical level the position of the National Democrats did not differ from the position of Ugodowcy, "They both want to stay non-participating observers, yet at the same time they hope they would be able to take the benefit in certain way from the gains of the Russian opposition."³⁹

In his outline of the attitude of Polish Socialist party towards the Russian oppositionist movement, the author spoke of a certain sympathy even towards the liberal wing of the Russian opposition. In his opinion, a minimal constitutionalist reform would facilitate the struggle of Polish workers for their liberation. However, the final aim of Polish socialists was different. According to the author, "PPS [assumed] that a complete satisfaction of the needs of the Polish proletariat would only be possible in the independent republic (*nezavisimaia respublika*), where a socialist party would be the main political force. Therefore, when they promised their assistance to Russian comrades, PPS always asked the latter to recognize of a complete right for an independent life (*samostoiatel'nuiu zhizn'*) after all cultural nationalities in the Russian state."⁴⁰

There are two interesting observations regarding the last fragment: "samostoiatel'nyi" does not signify autonomy here, but rather an urge towards creation of an independent state. At the same time, the "cultural nationalities" are opposed to all other nationalities. The latter, allegedly, do not deserve to obtain the right for self-determination.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

Thus, on the basis of description of Polish oppositionist parties, provided by Informer, a member of the Russian opposition was likely to make an unfavorable conclusion that collaboration with any influential Polish party would be very complicated. The Ugodowcy and the National Democrats were ready to stand above the fight expecting for Poland some benefits from political cleavages in Russia, while the alliance with the Russian socialists was possible only if the latter recognized their claims of Polish independence. One should note, that this discussion of the Polish political attitudes was published before the formation of the Polish Progressive Democratic Union (*Związek Postępowo-Demokratyczny*), which gave hope to Russian liberals for collaboration with oppositionist groups in Poland. About this Wasilewski wrote in his further essays in his book in 1906, but these were not published in *Osvobozhdenie*.

Approaching the Allies

An important transformation took place within the Russian constitutionalist movement alongside with the opening of a certain forum on the pages of *Osvobozhdenie*, from which the Russian reader with liberal outlook could learn about the situation in the borderlands. A more radical group of like-minded activists emerged out of initially diverse and weak amalgamation of isolated groups in the zemstvo movement.⁴¹ At the congress in Switzerland in July 1903, they founded the Union of Liberation. This organization was a natural consequence of the “necessity” formulated by Struve and Miliukov on the pages of *Osvobozhdenie* to create a consistent set of ideological principles that would distinguish liberals from other

⁴¹ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Left*, 324, Dmitrii Shakhovskoi, ““Soiuz osvobozhdeniia” Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Rossii, 538.

groups and allow them to act as a cohesive political force with a clear political agenda.⁴²

The founding congress in Switzerland also considered question of tactical allies of the movement, including the representatives of national groups. The first group was the Jews.⁴³ In exchange for their support it was suggested to promise them complete religious tolerance under the constitutional order, equal civic and political rights as well as abolition of Pale of Settlement and restrictions in admission to universities.⁴⁴ Two other groups were the Finns and the Poles.

With respect to Finland, the representatives of the Union of Liberation, closely linked to *Osvobozhdenie* believed that it was necessary to restore the “constitutional” order, which existed in Finland before the violation of its rights by Bobrikov’s regime in 1899. The leaders of the Union of Liberation did not see any problems there and thought that it would be enough to abolish restricting measures in order to achieve a reconciliation with Finland, a “loyal and cultural nation.” The “Polish question” was much more complicated. In a short outline of his report “Constitutional party in the following year” Peter Dolgorukov wrote that “[Poles] should not be promised political autonomy.”⁴⁵ The report was delivered during the same first meeting. A fuller quote from this document demonstrates the difference in the way the members of Union of Liberation treated Finland and Poland at this very initial stage:

15). Conclusion of an alliance with the *Finns*. (Open or secret?). Commonality of interests. They replace the center of gravity to the Russian constitution; try to unite with the Old-Finns into an oppositional party. A common action with us in Europe. Mutual exchange of

⁴² Peter Struve “K ocherednym voprosam” *Osvobozhdenie* 17 (1903): 289-292.

⁴³ Supposedly, these were the members of Bund. According to Richard Pipes, Struve sought to develop close working relationship with this organization along with the Finnish opposition. Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Left*, 314.

⁴⁴ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 37.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

interesting materials. *We* promise them assistance and propaganda of an idea to preserve Finland's former freedoms and the political autonomy.

To work out in the constitution a form of unity with Finland.

The meeting with the Finns in winter (prepare the theses and materials (Igelstrom). Involve the St. Petersburg group. Federation is not separatism (*federatsiia ne est' separatism*) (Switzerland), on the contrary, it is a stronger unity of Finland with Russia.

16). The *Poles* – consider the situation. Decide whether to develop the relationship for reconstruction (Museum at the Lake Geneva Bapechwil). Spasowicz. Political autonomy should not be promised.⁴⁶

It is notable, that the relationship with the Finns was represented as having practical basis. It presupposed an agreement about the support of autonomy by the Union of Liberation in exchange for the Finns' support of the Russian constitution. One also finds here the major argument for the support of Finland, namely that “federation is not separatism.” By contrast, the decision about further relations with the Poles could be made after a thorough appraisal of the situation in Poland.

One should note, that the group of the zemstvo-constitutionalists had a relatively long history of relationship with the representatives of the Finnish opposition, while there were almost no efforts to approach the Poles at that time. The interaction with the Finnish groups took place mainly by way of *Osvobozhdenie*. At the same time, the leading core of the Union of Liberation created a special commission led by Peter Dolgorukov for establishing closer political contacts with the key figures of the Finnish opposition shortly before the convocation of the founding congress of the Union. In June 1903 Dolgorukov visited Helsingfors (Helsinki) and Stockholm where he had a meeting with representatives of major groups of the Finnish opposition and learned their attitude towards potential constitutional transformations in Russia.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

At that moment, there were two major camps of the Finnish opposition, which emerged after the famous Manifesto of February 1899. The group of peaceful resistance, whose major ideologue was senator Leo Mechelin, represented a moderate part of the Finnish opposition. This group was preoccupied with the legal forms of resistance to what they called illegal attack on the rights of Finland. At the same time, they saw their major purpose in the internationalization of the “Finnish question,” yet without violating the principle of loyalty to the Russian emperor.⁴⁷ In the opposite camp there were the proponents of active resistance under the leadership of Konni Zilliacus. The latter was involved in illegal activity aiming for revolutionary mobilization of masses for the Finnish cause. The members of this group did not exclude the possibility of a complete separation of Finland from the empire. It should also be noted, that during the Russian-Japanese war Zilliacus used the funds of the Japanese government to unite the forces of the Russian opposition for weakening the Russian autocratic regime and also for the organization of the military uprising in St. Petersburg.⁴⁸

However, despite the difference in the methods of political activity the opposition leaders were in a close contact with each other, and discussed the common matters, such as the question of dealing with the Russian liberal opposition. However, this did not preclude the competition between these two groups.⁴⁹

Generally, the meeting of Dolgorukov with representatives of both groups was mainly a get-to-know enterprise and the discussion of particular decisions was

⁴⁷ Outi Korhonen, *International Law Situated: An Analysis of the Lawyer's Stance Towards Culture. History and Community* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 30-31.

⁴⁸ Antti Kujala, “The Policy of the Russian Government Toward Finland, 1905 – 1917: A Case of the Nationalities Question in the Last Years of the Russian Empire” Mary Schaeffer Conroy (ed.) *Emerging Democracy in Late Imperial Russia* (Niwot: University of Colorado, 1998), 261-277.

⁴⁹ William R. Copeland, *The Uneasy Alliance*, 131-141.

postponed for a later period.⁵⁰ Both the Russian liberals and the representatives of the Finnish opposition needed time to formulate their suggestions regarding the status of Finland in case of establishment of constitutional order in the Russian empire. Upon arrival from the trip to Finland Dolgorukov presented his report on the first congress of the Union of Liberation. The report was prepared as an article in *Osvobozhdenie*, but for some reasons remained unpublished.⁵¹ In it Dolgorukov offered a detailed account on the “Finnish question.” A significant part of the article was devoted to description of the situation in Finland, its major political parties and their resistance to Russification. This policy, according to Dolgorukov, had already caused the general indignation, while the attempts of loyal groups to negotiate the possibility of easing the pressure on Finland came to a dead end. Dolgorukov led the reader to the following idea:

And now the Finns more and more realize the necessity to relate their hopes to the Russian oppositional movement. ...Finland wants the Russian government, with which they could discuss their needs ... it looks for the legal order in the Russian government that... would provide serious guarantees of fulfillment of established norms and respect of law. Thus, it seems that everything makes the Finnish opposition to follow one common aim with the Russian constitutional party...

As we, in our turn, envision the future political order in the Russian empire, have to leave there a place for Finland, no less independent than it had been until now in accordance with its own fundamental laws. In addition we have to establish an interaction between the two legislative assemblies, so that Finland could further develop its laws in the course of time, without threatening the unity of the empire.⁵²

Thus, Dolgorukov spoke of an agreement with the Finns, in which the Russian constitutionalists would guarantee the protection of Finnish autonomy within the empire in exchange of their support. Dolgorukov excluded the possibility of complete separation of Finland, just as he excluded the possibility of imposing laws on Finland

⁵⁰ At a certain point, Struve arrived to Helsinki and joined the discussion between Dolgorukov and the Finnish opposition. For details: Arkistolaitos (Finnish National Archive) Leo Mechelin Collection KAY: 931. pt. 360-369.

⁵¹ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 606.

⁵² Peter Dolgorukov, “Finlandiia i Russkaia konstitutsiia” Ibid., 59.

by the Russian representative institutions. The laws related to Finland had to be adopted jointly by the agreement between the Russian parliament and the Finnish Diet. This point was very important as it had anticipated what happened in 1910, when the Russian Duma began to adopt laws, restricting the rights of Finland. Dolgorukov rejected such a possibility:

We think, we are not wrong, when we say that the Russian people is tolerant by nature and does not have any nationalist or chauvinist tendencies. It would not repress a weaker nationality through the representative government, an example of which we may observe in certain parliamentary states, like Prussia against Posnan, and Austria against Galicia. And if a closer association between the Russian and the Finnish people would takes place, it will only be through a free cultural interaction and mutual trust and respect. And only then a more solid unity of Finland and Russia will be accomplished, rather than it will be a result of the present practice of unlawful violence...⁵³

The idea of Dolgorukov about the “tolerance” of the Russian people is partially wishful thinking, and partially a false assumption, as it is not the “people” that would decide, but its representatives in the parliament on the basis of their own political conviction and programs. The constitutionalists could guarantee the realization of their part of the agreement only by becoming a dominant party in the parliament. By contrast, if nationalists became such a dominant force, it would not be possible to prevent the repression of Finland by the Russian parliament, however “tolerant” the Russian people. Such a concern was expressed by Konni Zilliacus on the closed meeting of the Finnish groups speaking about perspectives of collaboration with the Russian liberals. Zilliacus feared lest the establishment of the Russian constitution and parliament exposed Finland to even more detrimental consequences than the repressive measures of the Russian autocratic government.⁵⁴ The Poles, especially the National Democrats, expressed the same idea. Dolgorukov actually tried to convince the Finns that this scenario was impossible, yet his reliance on the natural

⁵³ Ibid., 59-60.

⁵⁴ Copeland, *The Uneasy Alliance*, 167.

tolerance of the Russian people was a weak argument. The historical examples of Prussia and Austria suggested that Russians could be no less chauvinistic in comparison with the German majority of these empires.

At the same time, Dolgorukov assumed that the convergence of the Russian and the Finnish peoples would be desirable, yet he did not indicate in what form such a convergence had to take place. It is not clear whether he spoke about political unity, or rather some cultural interaction as a result of development of economic connections and migration etc. Nor did Dolgorukov take into consideration the position of the Finnish side. The latter, as will be demonstrated, on the contrary, tried to establish rigid borders between Finland and the empire. Moreover, as one can see from the quotation about peddlers in the article in *Osvobozhdenie*, the Finns had their reservations about the possible influx of migrants from Russia and the economic influence of Russian merchants.

The problem of Dolgorukov's rhetoric was that it might have irritated the Finns. When he tried to convince the readers of *Osvobozhdenie* of the necessity of preserving the Finnish autonomy, Dolgorukov addressed mainly the Russian public, and particularly those, who could fear that concessions to Finland and other borderlands would result in the disintegration of Russia. The major group targeted by Dolgorukov's rhetoric were not the Finns, with whom, as he believed, it would be easy to reach an agreement, but rather those who were quick to grasp the rhetoric of the Russian right-wing thinkers. According to Dolgorukov:

One of the widely spread arguments of the adversaries of the constitution was the fear of succession of the borderland nationalities from the empire. But this fear is unfounded. I have already mentioned that Finland itself does not think of secession (*otdelenii*) from the empire. And the example of other peoples shows that a friendly cultural cohabitation is the strongest way

to cement the state. Take, for example Switzerland, where the Germans, the French and Italians live together peacefully...⁵⁵

In some way, Dolgorukov's reasoning seem too presumptuous. In particular, only moderate Finnish politicians seriously considered the possibility of Finland's remaining within Russia, while the more radical groups in Finland did not exclude the possibility of separation from Russia, especially in the conditions of forced Russification. At the same time, the example of Switzerland demonstrated the intention to perceive Russia as a civic nation by analogy with the Alpine country, where the population in different cantons regarded themselves as Swiss and members of one common nation in the first place, although they spoke different languages. However, this was also wishful thinking, rather than the actual state of affairs in the Russian empire, and particularly in Finland. It was not quite obvious whether the Finns considered themselves as subjects of Russia in the first place, and only then citizens of Finland.⁵⁶ Yet, it is not quite important, whether Dolgorukov was right, but rather that he clearly demonstrated that he wanted a convergence with the Finns as well as the desire to prove to the Russian readers that such a convergence would be firmer, if it were voluntary and not a forced one. However, Dolgorukov could not prove the existence of the same intention on the part of the Finns.

The position of the Finnish side in a more developed form was presented at a joint meeting of the participants of the Union of Liberation and the moderate group of Finnish constitutionalists in January 1904. Initially, the liberationists intended to invite the Finns to the congress of the Union, which took place simultaneously, but the plans of the Russian side had suddenly changed after the Finns presented their *Pro Memoria*

⁵⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁶ Max Engman, *Finliandtsy v Peterburge* (St.Petersburg: "Evropeiskii Dom," 2008), 33-37; Henrik Stenius, "The Finnish Citizen. How a Translation Emasculated the Concept" *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History* 8 (2004).

specially prepared for this meeting by Leo Mechelin. *Pro Memoria* consisted of a draft version of the article, which had to be included into the text of the Russian constitution. The second document, composed by Mechelin, was the text of the project of the State Act on the connection between Russia and Finland, which reminded by its form the agreement between Austria and Hungary in 1867.⁵⁷ In these two documents, Mechelin developed his old idea of a connection between Russia and Finland on the terms of a real union – a theory, which caused a heated debate among the Russian theoreticians of law and the nationalistic part of the Russian society. At the same time, Mechelin feared that the Russian constitutional order could threaten the Finnish legislative institutions. In the first article of his project Mechelin wrote:

The Grand Duchy of Finland is connected with the Russian Empire and has its common monarch. The supreme authority in this country belongs to the Russian Monarch as the Grand Duke of Finland. It is executed in association with the Finnish state institutions and authorities in accordance with the Fundamental Laws of Finland, representing the Constitution of the Grand Duchy of Finland. The latter cannot be altered any other way than by the consent of the Finnish national representation.⁵⁸

First, this passage presupposed the existence of a special Finnish constitution, which would guarantee a special legal order in Finland, distinct from the Russian one. Second, any changes of this order would be possible only by agreement of the Finnish legislative institutions. Further on, the project suggested that the laws of succession of the throne were common for Russia and Finland, while “in all other spheres the fundamental laws in the Russian Empire are not valid in the Grand Duchy of Finland.”⁵⁹ Should certain issues require a common legislation of the Empire and the Great Duchy of Finland, such legislation would be created through the adoption of the identical versions of the bill by the Russian and Finnish representative assemblies.

⁵⁷ “Zakon ob obshchikh delakh vsekh zemel’avstriiskoi monarkhii i o poriadke ikh razresheniia” *Sovremennye konstitutsii. Sbornik deistvuiushikh konstitutsionnykh aktov*. Vol. 2. (St.Petersburg: “Pravo,” 1907), 57-65.

⁵⁸ Arkistolaitos (Finnish National Archive) Leo Mechelin Collection, box 93. folder 29. p.1.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Foreign policy was the only sphere, where the Russian dominance was recognized. However the international decisions related to the interests of Finland had to be discussed in parallel in the Russian and Finnish representative organs. In Mechelin's opinion, the only way to secure the Finish legislation from the domination of the Russian parliament was a rigid separation of constitutional spaces of Russia and Finland. Moreover, Mechelin did not presuppose a simple "incorporation" of the Finnish constitution into the Russian one, as Russian liberals did in their constitutional projects.⁶⁰ Instead the Finnish fundamental law had to be guaranteed by an agreement between two political nations, which implied an actual "independence" of the constitution of Finland from the Russian constitution. Characteristically, Mechelin's later project of the Russian constitution established norms only for the Russian state institutions. It did not even mention Finland, and presupposed a reorganization of Russia into a symmetrical state with autonomies.⁶¹

The optimism with which the Finns presented their claims to the Russian liberals Finns was a result of their earlier meeting with the leaders of the Polish National Democratic party in London. As Zilliacus mentioned later, the Finnish demand for the restoration of the pre-Bobrikov regime seemed quite modest as compared to the demands of the Poles for complete independence.⁶²

At the same time, the formulation of the question in such a form caused serious concerns of the part of the Russian liberals, who thought that the discussion of the Finnish claims on the congress of the Union of Liberation would alienate the majority

⁶⁰ "Osnovnoi gosudarstvennyi zakon Rossiiskoi imperii" *Materialy po vyработke russkoi konstitutsii. Izdanie redaktsii "Osvobozhdeniie"* (Paris, "Osvobozhdeniie," 1905-1906), 2; "Programma Konstitutsionno-demokraticeskoi partii, vyrobotannaia uchreditel'mym s'ezdom partii" *S'ezdy konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticeskoi partii*. Vol. 1, 37.

⁶¹ Arkistolaitos. Leo Mechelin Collection, box 93. folder 30. (Konstituion für Russland), p. 1-20.

⁶² Copeland, *The Uneasy Alliance*, 145.

of the participants. Therefore, the Russian and Finnish groups decided to consider the agreement within a closed circle. The members of the Union of Liberation immediately rejected the conditions of Mechelin's project and instead suggested the idea of connecting Russia and Finland on the terms of a federation. The Finns in turn rejected this proposal, as, in their opinion, a federation would link Finland to Russia even closer, than it was linked at that moment. Finally, both sides agreed on the idea of restoring the pre-Bobrikov regime. The same idea figured in the resolution of the January congress of the Union of Liberation on the national question. Along with the recognizing of the right of self-determination for nationalities in the Russian empire, the resolution proclaimed the principle of "restoration of the legal semi-state status that had been in this country (Finland – T.Kh.) before the unlawful violation of this status." ⁶³

The analysis of the Russian-Finnish negotiation demonstrates that the idea of possible unanimity of views of the Russian liberals and the groups of Finnish opposition was quite illusory. This did not preclude the possibility of a tactical union, but the final goals of the two sides were different. The Finns wanted to distance themselves from the empire as much as possible, limiting the issue of the common concern only to the questions of defense and foreign policy. At the same time, the Finns envisioned the connection between Finland and the Russian Empire was as based on the principle of a real union, i.e. through a person of a monarch (and common dynasty), who had to be both the Grand Duke of Finland and the constitutional monarch of Russia. Such a construction presupposed the preservation of a monarchy in Russia, although in a constitutional form. Meanwhile, a part of Russian

⁶³ Shakhovskoi, "“Soiuz osvobozhdeniia ...”, 552.

constitutionalists envisioned Russia as a republic.⁶⁴ In a case of realization of the republican scenario the Finns would have the possibility to argue that in the absence of a monarch there remained no connection between Russia and Finland.⁶⁵

Further revolutionary developments in Russia and as the drift of Russian liberals to the left placed their tactical union with the Finns in danger. Up to a certain point the liberals preferred to ignore this fact. This is what Peter Dolgorukov wrote about the “Finnish question” in an article published in *Osvobozhdenie* a year after the meeting with the Finns.

...Finland would be satisfied with its returning to the position it had before the unlawful acts, committed during the reign of Nicholas II. Protected by its constitution, in a peaceful cohabitation with Russia, Finland would continue to develop materially and spiritually and improve its state organization...⁶⁶

Dolgorukov denied that the Finns would want to separate themselves from Russia and create their own independent state. He argued: “It is too small and too weak to become an independent state. Since it has never been one, it does not have any historical memories that would provoke there even unrealistic dreams of separation.”⁶⁷

Dolgorukov implicitly compared Finland to Poland, to which he devoted the rest of his article. According to Dolgorukov, the Poles were thinking of independence, because they had “historical memories.” At the same time, Dolgorukov argued with those, who feared that Finland might want to return to Sweden: “[In Finland], the Finnish tribe (*finskoe plemia*) prevails considerably. It does not have anything

⁶⁴ Liberal’noe dvizhenie v Rossii, 101-115.

⁶⁵ This is what actually happened in 1917 after the abdication of Nicholas II. Osmo Jussila, *Velikoe Kniazhestvo Finliandskoe* (Helsinki: Ruslania, 2009), 758-763; Eino Ketola, “Russkaia revoliutsiia i nezavisimost’ Finliandii” V.IU. Cherniaev, Ziva Galili (eds.) *Anatomiia Revoliutsii. 1917 god v Rossii: massy, partii, vlast’* (St.Petersburg: “Glagol,” 1994), 293-306.

⁶⁶ Russkii “Natsional’nyi vopros i konstitutsiia” *Osvobozhdenie* 59 (1904): 147.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

common with Sweden. This tribe (*plemia*) develops more and more its own national physiognomy.”⁶⁸

Yet, Dolgorukov did not expect that the “Finnish tribe” (which did not have too many similarities with the Russian culture) would want to acquire independence. Dolgorukov ignored this possibility, partially, because he was thinking in the categories of “great powers.” Such a standpoint implied that the “small and weak” peoples were doomed to be under the influence of the big and strong powers, in this case either Russia or Germany. Therefore, formal independence did not make any difference. Unable to be an independent country Finland, in Dolgorukov’s opinion could play a role of a “buffer.” According to him: “Russia would benefit to have close to its capital this cultural and loyal people as a buffer against the neighboring peoples of the German race (*sosednikh narodov germanskoi rasy*).”⁶⁹

Further on he spoke again about “convergence” on the basis of common interests, which would appear as soon as the “repression” of Finland is discontinued.

Despite the seemingly friendly tone of the article, Dolgorukov’s rhetoric might be regarded as offensive for the Finns. Small size did not necessarily mean the absence of a will for independence, while the proposed role of a “buffer” was not a pleasant one, given the vulnerability of Finland in the case of collision of neighboring great powers. At the same time, Dolgorukov did not consider it possible that the Finns might want to choose to ally with Germany even though the Russian nationalists expressed such suspicions.⁷⁰ In this sense, Dolgorukov did not bring any arguments

⁶⁸ Ibid

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ E.N.Berendts, *K finliandskomu voprosu. Stat'i po povodu rechi chlena Gosudarstvennoi Dumy P.N.Miliukova 13 maia 1908 goda pri rassmotrenii zaprosov po Finliandskomu upravleniiu* (St.Petersburg, 1910).

that could convince the Russian readers that providing greater freedom to Finland would not bring any damage to the Russian state.

Thus, the seeming simplicity of the question of Finland was a consequence of a certain self-deception on the part of the Russian liberal. The latter's understanding of the position of their prospective partner in coalition was more of wishful thinking, than a sober consideration of the actual public sentiments among the Finns. Or else, if the Russian constitutionalists indeed realized that only a tactical agreement with the Finns was possible with the Finns, they were consciously deceiving a moderate nationalistic part of their audience in order to convince the readers, that greater autonomy of Finland would help to strengthen its connection with Russia.

As it has been mentioned, the second part of Dolgorukov's article was devoted to Poland. At the moment of publication of this article (October 1904), the members of the Union of Liberation did not succeed much in developing connections with any of the Polish political parties. Nevertheless, the conference of Russian oppositionist parties, which took place in Paris in September-October 1904 had certain impact on the subsequent relations between the Russian liberals and the Poles. The conference was organized by Konni Zilliacus who sought to create a united front of oppositionist parties to undermine the power of the tsarist regime.⁷¹ This is how Miliukov described the meeting with the Poles:

As for the Poles, who were represented at the meeting by two parties, the national and the socialist - our relations with them regarding the question of autonomy began sometime later, through the mediation of A.R.Lednicki, a popular lawyer in Moscow. I do not think that in 1904 there was any formula of the Polish autonomy. At the meeting, Struve and others of our delegates went further, than me in this question. My stubborn resistance prolonged the discussion for one and a half sessions and was the reason why we have not got the formula that would be acceptable for both sides. I remember, after the discussion, a thickset Pole with a

⁷¹ Dmitrii Pavlov, *Iaponskie den'gi dlia pervoi Russkoi Revoliutsii* (Moscow: "Veche," 2011), 67-96.

clever gaze approached to me and told: "I am very glad to meet the finally a Russian man, who does not promise us everything we want." This was Dmowski.⁷²

After the beginning of the Russian-Japanese war the National Democrats began to express certain interest in the Russian liberal movement. As observing the intensification of the activity of the Russian liberals, the leadership of the Polish party did not exclude the possibility that the latter would come to power as a result of revolutionary upheaval. Nor did the Poles exclude the possibility of an alliance with the liberals. Yet, in the opinion of the National Democrats, it did not presuppose any mutual concessions.⁷³

In this context Dolgorukov wrote about Poland that: "[the] Polish question is more complicated. On the one hand, among the Poles there the memory of a historical past of their motherland is still alive. On the other hand, more than a hundred years of distance gives for many Russians the reason to consider Poland an inalienable Russian 'province.'"⁷⁴

Thus, the problem, according to Dolgorukov, was that opposite positions seemed irreconcilable. Whereas the Poles, relied on their historical memories and wanted independence, the moderate Russian nationalists were likely to consider any changes of the status of Poland as an attempt to bring about the "disintegration" of Russia. Nevertheless, Dolgorukov tried to suggest a compromise that would satisfy the interests of both the Poles and the Russians.

However, a seemingly complex question of whether Poland should be an independent political body, or only an autonomous region of the Russian empire – appears simpler due to the fact that certain parts of Poland belong to Germany and Austria. Therefore restoring the entire Poland is out of the question yet. Meanwhile, there is no sense for ten Vistula provinces of Russia to separate into a distinct state - even the staunchest patriots agree with this. Indeed, this entity would be too weak (*velichinoi*). Such Poland would be tied among its large neighbors, and

⁷² Miliukov, *Vospominania*, 169.

⁷³ Kozicki, *Historia Ligi Narodowej*, 233-235.

⁷⁴ Russkii "Natsional'nyi vopros i konstitutsiia...": 147.

in the future, it might even be under the threat of Germanization. In addition, a separation from Russia by a customs border would threaten Poland with economic bankruptcy.⁷⁵

Dolgorukov tried to prove to a Russian reader that despite their declarations, the Poles did not have reasons for immediate separation from Russia. A threat of a possible Germanization brought the Poles closer to Russia. With this argument Dolgorukov apparently took into consideration the position of Dmowski, who thought that the pressure of Germany was a greater threat to the Poles (as in Posnan), than awkward Russificatory measures of the Romanov empire. Moreover, Dolgorukov spoke of Russia as a trade area for the products of Polish industry. In this way, he hoped that it would be possible to convince Polish parties not to break with Russia entirely, at least in the nearest future, and to agree to certain “autonomy.”

For a remote perspective, Dolgorukov admitted two possibilities. The best scenario would consist in achieving a reconciliation of both nations on the basis of common interests, which would allow the Poles to stay within the Russian state. In the other case, one allowed the Poles to “leave” and create an independent, yet still relatively weak Poland. Similarly to Finland, the latter would perform a role of a buffer between Russia and German states.

The carriers of Russian statehood may treat the dreams of restoration of Poland quite calmly. Let the citizens of the Russian Poland live for a while in liberated Russia, let they develop their spiritual and material forces in the guaranteed freedom of everyone, and then future will show, what would be the best way to accommodate. If the peaceful cohabitation with a lawful and cultural Russia would be convenient and beneficial for Poland, than it might drive closer to us... If, on the contrary, the circumstances would allow appearing the hidden state-building forces of the Poles and the international circumstances of Europe would favor the restoration of Poland in its former borders (*vosstanovleniu Pol'shi v prezhnikh razmerakh*), than, perhaps, it will again become an independent state. But, this perspective should not frighten Russians.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 147-148.

The argument of Dolgorukov for the Russian reader that the Polish independence would not threaten the interests of Russia, was based on the utopian idea of creating a “pan-Slavic federation,” which would oppose the Germans.

Yet, let us suppose, that a federation of all the Slavic peoples with Bosphorus or without would be established and that the Slavic race will have to compete persistently and continuously – hopefully, peacefully, with the German race. Yet even so, an allied state buffer would not be unnecessary to us.⁷⁷

A “small” independent Poland did not seem to be a threat in the conditions, when a big pan-Slavic federation was projected. Here Dolgorukov thought within a framework of a global confrontation of German and Slavic “races” and from this perspective, it would be easier to have Poland as a buffer, rather than as a conquered territory. Moreover, the very fact of the Poles’ belonging to a “Slavic race” made them more friendly to Russians, than to Germans, especially in the conditions of an impending conflict with the Germans.

Thus, Dolgorukov expressed hope that the Poles would be satisfied with “autonomy.” This is how he understood the meaning of this autonomy:

If with establishing a constitutional order in Russia the Poles are provided similar rights and guarantees as other citizens of the Russian empire, a similar representation in the Russian parliament, a wide local self-government and the so called right of “cultural” self-determination – the majority of the Poles will be quite satisfied for the time being. By local self-government we mean everything that refers to administrative and economic autonomy.

Besides, we consider... it would be desirable to introduce a certain body that would unite the ten Vistula provinces through a common self-government in a form of a diet, or Landtag, or regional zemstvo with its representation in the Russian-wide assembly. ... From the standpoint of the Russian statehood, *considering big spaces, large population and variety of nationalities, climate and life conditions* (the italics is mine – T.Kh.) the only reasonable organization would be a wide local self-government. And for most large and civilized borderlands, such as Poland and Transcaucasia, it would be a regional self-government. As for the cultural self-determination, we mean by this term the right to use one’s native language and also the school instruction in this language... as well as the right to preserve certain traditions and laws, peculiar to certain regions...⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Ibid., 148.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 147.

This passage shows that Dolgorukov did not promise the Poles too much: first, he suggested civic equality within the borders of the Russian empire; second, the right to use the language, including in education, the preservation of local traditions, and finally, the establishment of a Diet (or Landtag). Yet, the competence of the latter would be limited by administrative and economic matters. In other words, he spoke not of “state autonomy” as in the case of Finland, but rather a system of advanced local self-government and on a regional scale. Dolgorukov compared Poland not to Finland, but to the Caucasus and the Baltic provinces (*gubernii*). The italicized fragment in the above cited passage shows that the major ground for providing such autonomy was not the claim of a certain region for self-determination, but rather its geographical, climatic and ethnographic peculiarity, which required an adjustment of laws to the local conditions.

The position of Dolgorukov, expressed in his article, led to formulation of the program of the Union of Liberation, which was adopted on the congress on March 25-28 in Moscow.

The widest regional self-government should be in any case provided to the regions of the Empire, with distinct life and historical conditions, for example to Poland, Lithuania, Little-Russia or Transcaucasia. We unconditionally recognize after these nationalities of the Russian Empire their right for cultural self-determination.⁷⁹

Soon after, Struve commented on this article of the program in *Osvobozhdenie*. In particular, he objected to placing Poland on the same plane as the borderlands, like Lithuania, Little-Russia and Transcaucasia. According to him, it was necessary to provide Poland a similar political status as Finland. However, he thought, this would be unacceptable for Transcaucasia, let alone Lithuania and Little-Russia.⁸⁰ Finally, Struve offered a choice: “either the paragraph on regional self-government provides to

⁷⁹ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 160.

⁸⁰ Peter Struve, “K programme Soiuzu Osvobozhdeniia” *Osvobozhdenie* 69-70 (1905): 307.

little for Poland, - too little not from the view point of an abstract justice, but a real politics, or if the paragraph defined more widely, than related to other regions of Russia, except Finland and Poland, it goes too far.”⁸¹

In other words, in accordance with the initial position “not to promise political autonomy [to the Poles]” Poland was supposed to have the same form of self-government as any other region in the empire. Yet, Struve went even further in defining the political status of Poland. His more articulate view on the autonomy of Poland was published in the issue 67 of *Osvobozhdenie* and the relevant passage merits being cited in full:

The liberated Russia has to break decisively with the suppression of borderlands and bureaucratic centralization, peculiar for the autocracy. From this follows, above all, that the constitution of Finland, providing its special state status, has to be entirely restored and officially recognized in the fundamental laws of the Russian empire. All further actions, common to both the Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland, in the future, have to be a matter of an agreement between the legislative bodies of the Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland. The relationship between Russia and the Kingdom of Poland has to be transformed on the basis of a principal recognition of the constitution of 1815, granted by Alexander I.

The state-legal relations between the Empire and Poland have to be regulated by an agreement of a constituent assembly of the Russian Empire and the constituent assembly of the Kingdom of Poland.⁸²

As one can see, Struve suggested restoring the status that Poland enjoyed in 1815-1830, by analogy with the Finnish case, where suggested restoring the pre-Bobrikov situation. However, there was a contradiction in Struve’s position on the Polish case. The restoration of the older Polish constitution presupposed the monarchy as an essential institution connecting Poland and Russia, on the one hand, and the person of the emperor as source of supreme authority, on the other, at least in the Kingdom of Poland (articles 4 and 35 of the Constitutional Charter of the Kingdom of

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Peter Struve, “Demokraticheskaia partiia i eie programma” *Osvobozhdenie* 67 (1905): 279.

Poland).⁸³ Yet, Struve's reference to an agreement between the Constitutional Assembly of the Russian Empire and the Polish Constitutional Diet recalled the French Constitutional Assembly of 1789-90, and hinted on the project of republic in Russia. The source of sovereignty resided, in accordance with this vision, in the people, not in the tsar's sovereignty, as in the Polish constitution of 1815.

The Deal with the Poles

In his memoirs Shakhovskoi mentioned an event that could have changed the position of the majority in the Union of Liberation.

Shortly after the third meeting, two other consultations took place in Moscow on the initiative of the liberationists. On April 9, there was a meeting with the Poles, the representatives of the parties of national democracy and progressive democracy. This meeting made an essential progress in the question of Russian-Polish relations and indicated particular grounds for further agreement.⁸⁴

One can infer from Shakhovskoi's testimony, that something happened during these Russian-Polish meetings, that made the majority of the liberals change their initial plans of providing Poland only with "administrative and economic autonomy" and led them to agree to single out Poland from other regions, which, as liberals assumed, required "regional self-government."

Miliukov's memoirs help to understand the reasons of a change of the attitudes of the constitutionalists towards the Poles. This is how he portrayed the details of the Polish-Russian meeting in Moscow in April:

Lednicki stated: 'The Poles' striving of towards the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland is as unanimous as their understanding of the necessity to preserve the state unity with Russia. Similarly they are unanimous regarding the idea to define the boundaries of the Kingdom of Poland in present limits.' We had to use these conciliatory sentiments and enforce

⁸³ *Konstitutsionnaia Khartiia 1815 goda i nekotorye drugie akty byvshego Tsarstva Pol'skogo 1815-1881). Biblioteka okrain Rossii No. 5. Izdanie N.D.Sergeevskogo. Zasluzhennogo professora S.-Peterburgskogo Universiteta.* (St.Petersburg, 1907), 41-63.

⁸⁴ Shakhovskoi, "'Soiuz Osvobozhdeniia...'", 590-591.

them with a friendly Russian response, however... A.I. Guchkov strongly objected to the autonomy. I gave him a sharp and heated retort... General sympathies were at my side.⁸⁵

Miliukov seems to overestimate his personal role at the meeting. However, his comment denoted the reason of the change of the attitude of the majority of Russian participants. Namely, Russian constitutionalists saw that the Poles, whose major political parties had been striving for independence, were ready to concede and agree to the autonomy. This made easier for constitutionalists to defend the agreement with the Poles against the criticism of right-wing activists. Meanwhile, Miliukov was silent about the fact that the main event that disposed the constitutionalists towards the “Polish question” was the creation of the party of the Progressive Democratic Union in Warsaw in January 1905.⁸⁶ According to Lednicki, the Union expressed unanimous striving of the Polish people towards the unity with the Russian empire.⁸⁷ Lednicki managed to convince his Russian colleagues that the Progressive Union could oppose itself to another two Polish parties, which sought for a complete separation from Russia. Ultimately, the National Democrats also had to give up their former demands of independence and accept the slogan of autonomy. Yet, the latter understood the term much wider, than Lednicki.⁸⁸ The Polish socialists did not take part in the Russian-Polish meetings.

The position of Alexander Lednicki deserves a detailed analysis. From the Polish side, he was the main initiator of the agreement between the Polish parties and the Russian constitutionalists.⁸⁹ The introductory part of the program of the

⁸⁵ Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 187.

⁸⁶ Wise, *Aleksander Lednicki*, 70-75.

⁸⁷ Alexander Lednicki, “Pol’skii vopros” *Russkaia mysl’* 7 (1905): 130.

⁸⁸ See the publications of the National Democrats after the meeting with Russian constitutionalists in April: St.B. “Dążenie do autonomii Królestwa, ego źródła i podstawy ogólne” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 5 (1905); Jan Popławski, “Stosunek prawno-polityczny Krolestwa Polskiego do Rosyi” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 7 (1905).

⁸⁹ Dmitry Shakhovskoi took for himself the arrangement of the meeting from the Russian side.

Progressive Democrats provided their definition of “autonomy.” The author of this program was Waław Sieroszewski, a former participant of the Polish Socialist Party. When the Progressive Democratic Union was founded, he and other members left the socialist party to join the Union. In the Russian press this program was published under his name and it was often mentioned as “Sieroszewski’s formula.”⁹⁰

Any human society, united by a statute, must aspire towards self-determination and defend its independence... Every living being seeks to have the center of its existence inside itself, rather than outside...

Since the politics in general is an art of solution of practical tasks of social life in real conditions, its major task may only be to formulate the propositions, which could bring the maximal benefit for the time being. They should enable the welfare of the people and bring it closer to the ideal conditions of existence, which it has in mind.⁹¹

From this vague formulation it is clear that independence of the Polish people was the major goal of the author of the program. However, in the practical politics required compromises. The nature of the compromises depended on the conditions of a particular moment, yet they were only a transitory stage on the way to a final goal. The following passage expressed the political demands of the Union, which would satisfy them for the time being.

I. Restitution of the political status of the Kingdom of Poland, which the latter enjoyed immediately after it was united with Russia. It... has to become a separate legal and political organization as opposed to the province of the Russian State...

II. The Kingdom of Poland, as a distinct legal and political organization, would obtain self-government, which would rely on its own fundamental laws, approved by the diet, elected by universal, secret, equal, and direct ballot. This self-government cannot be substituted by allowing the Kingdom of Poland to take part in the statewide Russian constitution.

III. The Poles must be granted all national and civic rights without any administrative or legislative limitations in the regions, where they represent a part of the local population [in Lithuania and Rus’].⁹²

The article four of the program declared the list of civic rights and the right to use the Polish language. At the same time, the program refused claims to include

⁹⁰ Nikolai Kareev, “Novaia pol'skaia partiia” *Pravo* 15 (1905): 1176-1177.

⁹¹ GARF (State Archive of the Russian Federation). f. 523. op. 1. item 174. p.15.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 16-17.

“Lithuania and Rus” into the Polish autonomy, which signified the actual repudiation to regain Poland in the historical borders before 1772. The program supposed that the population of Lithuania and Rus’ had their own national strivings.⁹³

The essence of the demands of the Progressive Union was to declare the Polish autonomy a separate state unit with its own legislative assembly. The latter would have to approve a special Polish constitution (rather than local laws). Thus, their notion of autonomy recalled the status of Finland with its distinct legal order, which had to be independent from the Russian one.

The program also explained why the simple participation of the Polish deputies in the central parliament would not be enough to secure the Polish rights in the Russian empire.

Our general equality in the all-Russian constitution would not only fail to provide our national well-being, but, on the contrary, it would seriously worsen the one. In this case, instead of an absolute rule of bureaucrats the Russian society, if it wanted, could suppress us along with the government; the parliamentary majority would oppress us, - instead of lawless death, we would face a legal one, which would be prepared in accordance with all rules of constitutional murder...⁹⁴

As one can see, even the representatives of Lednicki’s group, who were most ready for the compromise with the Russian liberals, did not harbor an illusion regarding the attitudes of the Russian society in general. Therefore they wanted to protect the Polish people from the interference of the Russian parliament in case the nationalist sentiments would prevail there. For the members of the Progressive Union this protection was to consist in the priority of the Polish constitution (the fundamental laws) over any other laws in the country. Such an understanding of the status of Poland differed from the notion of autonomy. In the view of Russian

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

constitutionalists, autonomy implied that the local laws of the region were to comply with the fundamental laws of the whole state.

His view on this issue Lednicki developed in his speech at the Russian-Polish meeting. Yet, before it will be analyzed it is important to expose other opinions, which were expressed at this meeting.

Several Polish spokesmen presented their views in the first day of the meeting. Among them was Zygmund Balicki, a leader of the National Democratic Party. He read out a resolution.⁹⁵

Recognizing the unity of central state authority, namely the form of organization of the state, the commonality of foreign affairs and all international, political and trade agreements, the unity of army and navy, state-wide budget and loan – we demand that the Kingdom of Poland becomes an autonomous legislative and political organization, based on its own constitution, issued in Warsaw by the Polish constituent assembly, elected by universal, equal, and secret ballot.”⁹⁶

Mr. Poniatowski, a landowner from Łuck, spoke about the Poles outside the Kingdom of Poland. According to him,

The demands of the local Poles are limited to the general claims of the zemstvo movement, which were adopted by the majority of the meeting in November 6-9. They included the freedom of religion, political, civil, and economic equality, the right of a cultural minority, namely the Polish language as an elective subject at secondary schools, teaching the Bible in native language, the right to have specialized Polish private schools, theatres, newspapers etc.⁹⁷

The Polish representatives of Vilnius took an exceptional position. According to the minutes, Dr. Kucziowski and Mr. Loźński subscribed to the opinion of certain groups of White Russian, Lithuanian, and Jewish population of the region, who thought that the Russian state order had to be reorganized along federal lines. Moreover, within this structure Lithuania had to acquire a status of a federal unit.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ In his memoirs Miliukov mentioned it as “Sieroszewski’s formula.” Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 187.

⁹⁶ RGASPI (Russian State Archive of Social and Political History). f. 279. op. 1. item.39. p. 4.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

The Russian participants of the meeting were more skeptical regarding the Polish claims. In particular, Fedor Rodichev declared:

We must take into consideration the demands of the Poles. Yet, their turn, the Poles should not ignore the fact of political attitudes in Russia. Our forces are too weak... We cannot integrate the Polish claims into our program. Among us there is no common opinion regarding this issue. A part of our members consider the inclusion of the Polish demands ill-timed and unreasonable. They fear to alienate a part of the forces of opposition and push to the right...⁹⁹

Regarding the distinct constituent assembly in Warsaw, Rodichev noted that “the Poles had to take part in the all-Russian constituent assembly, as there was no other way to acquire the autonomy for Poland.”¹⁰⁰ As one can see, Rodichev did not reject the idea of Polish autonomy. He only exhorted to postpone the discussion of this question, in order to keep the hesitant groups among their adherents within the zemstvo movement.¹⁰¹

Fedor Kokoshkin, who later became the leading expert of the Kadets regarding the national question, offered that the Kingdom of Poland “[had] to acquire not only local self-government, but also an autonomy, i.e. an institution with a special legislative competence. However, it [was] necessary... to define precisely the matters, which would be subjected to the competence of the Polish legislation.”¹⁰² At the same time, similarly as Rodichev, Kokoshkin denied the necessity of a special Polish constituent assembly.

Responding to the Russian speakers, Sieroszewski declared:

We do not want to fight against the Russian people and the parliament, but we will fight for our claims, if only a minority in the parliament will support our claims. ... in the case if our

⁹⁹ Ibid. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ This view Rodichev developed in detail in the article in *Pravo*: Fedor Rodichev, “K pol’skomu voprosu” *Pravo* 11 (1905): 794-798.

¹⁰² RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item.39. p. 9.

demands will not be satisfied, you will have to fight against the Poles with reactionary means and having embarked on the way of reaction you will lose newly acquired liberty.¹⁰³

Mr. Żukowski supported his argument of his colleague and warned the Russian constitutionalists that “without satisfying the general demands of the Poles for autonomy no agreements were possible: having departed from the principle of autonomy, the Polish parties would sign a capital sentence, as the Polish people would give us up.”¹⁰⁴

As one can see, already on the first day of the meeting, the Poles took a strong position, having announced the demand to recognize the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland an essential condition of a possible agreement. At the same time, the opinions of the Russian participants of the meeting were diverse. On the one hand, a certain part of the members agreed to accept this claim, yet, sought to clarify the definition of the term of “autonomy.” On the other hand, the liberals, who feared the break of a more conservative part of zemstvo activists, were reluctant to include the Polish claims into the program of Russian constitutionalists. However involved in the debates with the Poles, the majority of the Russian members became more eager to include the word autonomy into the program, yet to leave for themselves to define publicly the limits of its meaning. In this way they hoped to avoid the criticism of the right-wing politicians, who accused the liberals in the attempts to “disintegrate the Russian empire.” At the same time, they tried to calm down the moderate circles of the zemstvo movement, who were more receptive of the rhetoric of the latter.

The next day of the meeting the Russian liberals opened with declaration of a compromising position regarding the Polish demands. In particular, Dmitry Shakhovskoi noted that “the cultural claims of the Poles in Ukraine and Lithuania

¹⁰³ Ibid., 10.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

[did] not provoke any discord.”¹⁰⁵ He offered to accept the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, but to postpone the discussion of this question. At the same time he recommended rejecting a constituent assembly in Warsaw.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, a few Russian spokesmen were still against the autonomy. They argued that the Russian society was unprepared for accepting the Polish autonomy and warned that the pursuit for the one could threaten the liberationist agenda.

At this moment, Alexander Lednicki presented his speech, which he later published in *Russkaia mysl'*. According to him, “it is impossible to conceal, what the entire people thinks about... Meanwhile our antagonists, are the opponents of the whole liberation movement, in any event, they will assert that the representative government would lead Russia to lose its borderlands.”¹⁰⁷ Regarding the Poles, he assured that they were unanimous in their understanding of the necessity to preserve the state unity with Russia. Similarly, they expressed unanimous consent at the issue of the borders of the Kingdom of Poland. For Lednicki, no one among the Poles believed in the possibility to restore the Polish historical borders. They envisioned the autonomy within the ethnographic borders.¹⁰⁸

Lednicki denied that the Poles aspired for an independent state. According to him, the Poles were “rather individualists, than collectivists or proponents of a strong statehood. They failed to organize a state in the past and now they struggle not for a political power of the state, but want to preserve and develop their national and cultural purposes.”¹⁰⁹ From this followed, that the Poles expected from Russia to

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰⁷ Lednicki, “Pol'skii vopros...”: 130.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

satisfy their “natural cultural strivings.” In the following passage Lednicki explained what these strivings implied.

[But] what is required for national development? Is not the general equality is sufficient... Let me say frankly, this is not enough for the Polish people... The desire to govern [themselves] is a natural one; the more natural, the more civilized and more prepared the people is for an independent life.... [The] cultural productivity of the people is expressed not only in an organization of the local life, but also in creation of legal norms, which are relevant for its consciousness and spirit. This is why, defining the limits of an autonomous organization, it is necessary to have in mind the right of a legislative initiative and power.... [The] courts, administration and local legislation, school... the right for self-taxation, local economy have to be subjected to an autonomous government, represented by the diet, which would function in accordance with general laws of the state. Meanwhile, the law of war and peace, the army, common budget, customs, trade and diplomatic agreements, as well as introduction of personal and political right should belong to the competence of the central state institutions.... And, the last argument for the Polish autonomy from the viewpoint of Russia's state interest. If all the questions of local life become subjected to the institutes of the central government, this will make it cumbersome and slow... Besides, it would be wrong to introduce into a common institution the element of the struggle for the national rights... as we can see it in Austria. It is necessary to single it out and thus, to provide a more regular and peaceful functioning of the central institution.¹¹⁰

Analyzing Lednicki's speech, one can note, that he tried avoid the discussion of the acceptability of the term “autonomy” and focus on the question how to divide the competence between the Polish legislative institution and the central parliament. The argument for decentralization, understood as delegating a part of competences to the local level disregarding the national question, echoed the rhetoric of the Russian constitutionalists. The idea to eliminate the national conflicts from the agenda of the central legislative institution could find support of the Russian participants for other reasons. M.Mandelshtam, who spoke on the Russian side, gave his reaction on this argument. According to the minutes, he declared:

[The] autonomy of Poland will undoubtedly be beneficial for Russia, because if one is absent, the Polish national party will perform in the future Russian parliament a similar role as the Irish do in the British parliament. It will be a master of the situation, providing the support to the party, which will go farthest in the concessions to Poland, and with this support it would at times enable the reactionary elements to dominate in the parliament.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 131-135.

¹¹¹ RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item.39. p. 14-15.

However shrewd the speaker was,¹¹² he did not harbor any illusion regarding the policy the Poles would pursue in the state-wide parliament. For him, it was necessary to provide the Poles with autonomous rights in order to isolate the Polish parties and preclude their “reactionary” influence on the Russian parliament. In accordance with this logic the autonomy was way to “liberate” the central parliament from the “Polish question.”

Further discussion evolved around the issue of the limits of the autonomy and sought to decide, whether it was necessary to convene a special constituent assembly in Warsaw. The discussants ultimately accepted the possibility of such an assembly, yet, in their view, it had to be convened after the state-wide constituent assembly would define the competence of the latter. As a result, the majority of the meeting adopted the following formula:

Recognizing the necessity of an autonomous arrangement of the Kingdom of Poland along with representation in the Russian parliament, yet with a distinct diet... and preserving the state unity... the meeting considers it necessary to postpone a detailed definition of the limits of the meaning of autonomy until an all-round examination of this question.¹¹³

Thus, the resolution fixed the compromise, which had to satisfy both sides. It recognized an autonomy, yet in a very vague formulation, which allowed each side a space for maneuver. The Russian constitutionalists acquired an additional line in the argument with the right-wing politicians. Having assumed the concept in a limited sense, they could prove that such an autonomy would not weaken, but, on the contrary, strengthen the empire. In their turn, the Poles got an opportunity to pose further claims and whereby extend the meaning of autonomy, which could raise the sympathies of their voters in Poland.

¹¹² This was exactly the tactics of the Poles in the Russian parliament, especially in the Second convocation. See chapter 3.

¹¹³ RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item.39. p. 19.

As for the claims of the Poles beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Poland, their ideas of federalization of the entire Russian Empire as well as the claim to single out Lithuania as a distinct unit did not find any support. Regarding them the meeting agreed to secure their political and national rights without any administrative or legal restrictions. Moreover, the members of the meeting offered to provide the legal guaranties for their “free national-cultural development.”¹¹⁴ This formula was later recognized as “cultural autonomy.”

It is possible to note that the compromise between the Russian constitutionalists and the Polish delegates was possible only due to the vagueness of the term “autonomy.” The Russian liberals sought postpone the discussion of this question until the complete victory against the autocracy (i.e. the convening of the Russian-wide constituent assembly). Otherwise, in their view, the “Polish question” could become an obstacle to their political success. As for the Polish delegation, the Russian constitutionalists found out soon that they were not unanimous in their attitudes towards autonomy. The opinion of Lednicki, which the Russian liberals tended to trust, reflected the sentiments of only a small group of Polish intelligentsia. Meanwhile, the major political force involved in these debates, the National Democrats, still approached the autonomy as a dubious alternative to independence. Moreover, the National Democrats were suspicious about any long-term agreement with the Russian liberals. They rather treated these debates as an opportunity to explore the benefits, which the Russian liberals could offer the Poles, in the case if the former would come to power as a result of the revolution. Yet, the National Democrats were reluctant to bind themselves with additional obligations towards the Russian constitutional movement and left for themselves to define their claims.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 20.

Conclusion

The analysis of interaction of the Russian liberals and the representatives of national movements in the borderlands from the beginning of the publication of *Osvobozhdenie* until the summer of 1905 shows that despite the initial enthusiasm on the Russian part for a permanent union, the relationship was gradually moving towards the idea of a tactical alliance. This presupposed that all the parties understood that any agreement was temporal, while the final aims of each of the parties were different. Whereas Russian liberals sought to preserve the unity of the empire in the new form, the representatives of national movements wanted to separate themselves from Russia, although they recognized that an open claim for complete independence unrealistic given the international situation if the time. At the same time, the liberals tried to formulate the result of their agreement in a consciously vague form, in order not to alienate their Russian moderate supporters among the Russians.

At the same time, the position of the Finnish and the Polish activists had their differences. The Finns pursued the goal to separate themselves into a distinct political unit therefore they rejected the idea to take part in the Russian state institutes. In the Polish case, the position of the Poles was complicated because they had to consider the interests of the Poles beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Poland, where they were a minority. Therefore they did not aim for a complete separation and sought to participate in the central legislative institutions in order to protect the interests of the entire Polish population in the empire. As for the Russian liberals, their unanimous friendly attitude towards the Finns contrasted with their polarity of the opinions regarding the “Polish question.” A part of the liberals offered to postpone the issue

and not to include the Polish demands in the program of the constitutional party. They thought that this issue was too painful for the public opinion and could alienate its moderate part. At the same time, many Russian constitutionalists wanted to find a common ground with the Poles, knowing they were eager to make certain concessions and refuse from the claims of independence as well as the pretensions for “Western provinces.” In this respect, the Alexander Lednicki played a decisive role. Having close links with the Russian liberals he managed to convey the Polish demands in the language, which was close and understandable for the leadership of the Liberation Union. Moreover, he created an illusion that his ideas enjoyed a strong support among wider groups of the Polish public opinion. It turned out soon that his group did not have any influence in Poland, and the Russian liberals had to deal with the party of Roman Dmowski, which adhered the idea of “national egoism.” They admitted only a tactical agreement with the Russian liberals. In the same way, they were ready to support the government, if it would suggest any concessions to the Poles.

Nevertheless, the “autonomy” became a starting point to further negotiations between the Russian liberals and the Polish parties and opened the new round of discussions with the representatives of other nationalities in the Russian empire, above all, the Ukrainians and Lithuanians. The latter claimed similar concessions (the autonomy) to their national movements as well. These groups were a minority in the Kingdom of Poland and feared that in the new autonomy the dominant Polish population would suppress them.

Chapter 2.

The "Finnish Question" and the Concept of "Non-Sovereign State"

In this chapter I am going to consider the problem, which was raised by Russian liberal theoreticians of law in the course of discussions on the "Finnish question." This problem was a result of adaptation of a conceptual framework of German federalism to the relations between Russia and Finland. A famous German legal thinker Georg Jellinek proceeded from the idea that the modern state was based on the principle of sovereignty of law. For him, this implied that the state power was restricted not because of the loss of the sovereignty, but rather because the sovereignty of *Rechtsstaat* presupposed an idea of self-restraint, which limited arbitrary rule.¹ In accordance with this theory, the problem of Russian-Finnish relations will be examined in the following pages.

The discussions on the "Finnish question" took place in the period after 1905 that during the transition of Russia from a traditional monarchy to a state with elected legislative assembly and the principle of the rule of law. At first sight, the Russian liberals were the major proponents of such a principle and had to accept its consequences. However, regarding the case of Finland, the transition to a new legal order posed a threat to the traditional constitutional rights of Finland, particularly, because new legislative institutions of Russia could issue laws, which would restrict the competence of the Finnish legislature. Considering this, the Russian liberals agreed with their Finnish partners to protect the traditional rights of Finland.

¹ Georg Jellinek, *Obshchee ucheniie o gosudarstve* (St.Petersburg, 1908), 348-349.

Up to 1905 Finland had been a constitutional monarchy, incorporated into a traditional autocratic (*samoderzhavnaya*) monarchy. This did not create any threat to the constitutional order of Finland as long as the Russian monarchs recognized its status; however within a new organization of the Russian state the reliance only on the good will of the Russian monarch was not a sufficient guarantee. The old constitutional order of Finland had to be somehow integrated into the framework of the new constitutional institutions of Russia. It could not be done easily as this would require a break with the established constitutional order. The further development and the transformation of the established order could be legally arranged only if the new order developed a legal way to modify the old order. But this would inevitably contain an element of arbitrary action.

Regarding the case of Finland this meant the following. Before the introduction of the Fundamental Laws in Russia, the constitutional order could be established there only through a rupture with the previous order. Such a rupture could either preserve or violate the former Finnish constitution. In the latter case the violation could be explained by the necessity to provide a new mechanism of agreement of both Russian and Finnish legislative institutions. This would be a revolutionary way of reorganizing the relationship between Russia and Finland. The alternative can be regarded as a conservative one. It would avoid the destruction of the former constitutional order in Finland and provide a mechanism to incorporate it into a new constitutional order of Russia. However, it would require a good will of both sides, above all, the approval of the Finnish legislative institutions.

The irony of the political situation in Russia was that the role of revolutionaries and violators of the existing order was performed by the right-wing conservative groups inside Russia, whereas the majority of the liberals supported the

“conservative” way of solving the Finnish question. Such a position of the liberals was not a result of any ideological choice, but rather the intention to preserve “historical rights” of Finland. This was a part of agreement between the liberals and the Finnish activists concluded before 1905 in the process of common struggle against the Russian autocracy. At the same time, the liberal politicians relied on the opinion of Georg Jellinek, who suggested exactly this conservative solution of the Finnish question.² In the following I will try to show how the discussion between right wing and the liberal politicians developed and what was the fundamental weakness in the position of the liberal camp.

The "Finnish Question" in the Political Discussions

The juridical status of Finland: theoretical disputes of late 19th - early 20th cc.

The juridical status of Finland in Russia was initially not well defined. In the mid 19th century the Finnish legal thinkers when considering the issues of public law of Finland usually referred to the statements of Alexander I in 1809 at the Diet of Borga (Porvoo). In these statements (pronounced in French) the Emperor promised to preserve the rights and privileges of his new Finnish subjects, granted by the Swedish laws, asking for loyalty in return. Alexander spoke not just about local laws of Finnish provinces in Sweden, but rather about fundamental laws or the constitution (“*Lois fondamentales*”), according to which Finland was a constitutional monarchy. Having approved these laws, Alexander, according to the view of Finnish theoreticians, became a constitutional monarch - a Grand Duke of Finland, while Finland itself was

² Georg Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente* (Heidelberg, 1896).

transformed into a peculiar state within a state, distinct from the Russian empire, but at the same time, united with it through the dynastic ruler.³

Until the late 19th century, this theoretical construction did not cause any anxiety for Russian authorities, as it was not included in any document or official statement of the government. It was only discussed in theoretical works in Swedish. Moreover, on the grounds of domestic and foreign policy neither the Finnish intellectuals, nor Russian authorities tended to clarify the juridical status of Finland. The Finns were afraid that such a clarification would lead to restriction of their rights. The policy of Russian authorities depended on specific situation and varied in different periods. From 1809 to 1863 the Finnish Diet, which existed only formally, was not convened in practice. The administration in Finland was carried out by offices: the State-Secretary office, which forwarded Finnish affairs for the consideration of the Emperor, and governor-general, appointed by tsar, who was the head of the Finnish Senate (the local organ of executive and judicial power). He was primarily responsible for the Russian troops in Finland and the maintenance of internal order. In 1863 the Finnish Diet was reconstituted as a permanent representative institution, exercising legislative authority on the local level. By expanding the factual power of local Finnish institutions (although, nominally, Finland preserved its status unchanged) Alexander II “rewarded” the Finnish elite for its loyalty, in opposition to Poland. The latter was deprived of the remains of autonomy after the second uprising in 1863-1864.⁴

³ Danielson, *Soedinenie Finliandii s Rossiiskoi derzhavoiu...*

⁴ See a more detailed description of motives and logics of Russian authorities, on which practices of ruling in Finland were based, in: Edward Thaden, *Russification in the Baltic Provinces and Finland, 1855-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

Following his father's policy Alexander III did not limit the rights of Finland either. However, in the period of his reign, commissions for the clarification of the juridical status of Finland in Russia were created. In the course of proceedings of first of these commissions in 1882 State-Secretary baron Bruun assigned the Finnish Senate a task to prepare a report on the political and judicial status of Finland.⁵ The result of this work caused concern among the Russian authorities so that the general-governor count Heiden forbade a further dissemination of this report. One of the authors of this report, senator Leo Mechelin, reworked the manuscript and published it in 1886 on his own in French.⁶ Thus, he introduced the Finnish viewpoint to the international juridical community.

Mechelin belonged to a number of those Finnish liberals, who were close to the position of Svecomans (the advocates of preservation of the dominant role of the Swedish language and culture in Finland). In accordance with this position, Russia and Finland were connected on the terms of a real union, which implied that Finland was a distinct state, united with the Russian Empire by common dynasty, and common foreign policy.⁷ The Russian officials also selfobliged respond publicly. Kesar' Ordin published his Russian translation of Mechelin's book, providing it with his own comments. In these comments he argued that Mechelin had distorted the meaning of Alexander's statements on the Diet of Borga. In accordance with Ordin's interpretation, the Emperor spoke only about providing the rights to the Finnish provinces that would allow them to preserve their local legislature and regulate the issues of local administration. Thus, in the opinion of Ordin, Finland was one of the provinces of the Russian empire, having its special laws along with rights and

⁵ Matti Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia* (St.Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Kolo, 2005), 351.

⁶ Leo Mechelin, *Précis du droit public du grand-duché Finlande* (Helsingfors, 1886).

⁷ Ibid., 17-20.

privileges for the local population.⁸ Later on Ordin published a book *Pokorenie Finliandii* (1889) ("The Subjugation of Finland"),⁹ where his position was set out in a more detailed way. In this book he referred to the opinion of Russian legal theorists, who took part in the proceedings of the commission for clarification of the juridical relation of Finland to Russia.

In the early period of the reign of Nicholas II the work of governmental commissions on the "Finnish question" continued to take place in a changed international environment. In 1894 Russia entered into the alliance with France, while the relationship with Germany became tense. The latter had launched an ambitious program of building a navy in the Baltic area. This caused a growing concern in the Russian military circles about the possible attack of the German fleet on poorly defended Baltic coastline, including Finland. These anxieties led to posing a question of increase of the contribution of Finland into Russian military programs including the issue of changing the procedure of recruiting Finnish subjects to the Russian army. In the opinion of Russian authorities, these measures had to be accomplished by the orders of the Russian supreme authority and did not require the approval of the Finnish legislative institutions.¹⁰ The Finns, on the contrary, considered the introduction of such measures an impingement on their constitutional prerogatives. The expansion of the all-imperial law on army recruits to Finland caused a wave of

⁸ Leo Mekhelin, *Konstitutsiia Finliandii v izlozhenii mestnogo senatora L.Mekhelina. Perevedena i dopolnena primechaniiami po russkim dokumentam* (St.Petersburg, 1888).

⁹ Kesar' Ordin, *Pokoreniie Finliandii. Opyt opisaniia po neizdannym istochnikam* (St.Petersburg, 1889).

¹⁰ The influence of foreign policy considerations on the intention of the Russian authorities to limit the rights of Finland is recognized by the majority of experts. See: Paasvirta J. *Finland and Europe: International Crises in the Period of Autonomy 1808 – 1914* (London: C. Hurst and Company, 1981); Jussila O., Hentilä S., Nevakivi J. *From Grand Duchy to a Modern State...*; Tuomo Polvinen, *Derzhava I Okraina. N.I.Bobrikov – general-gubernator Finliandii 1898 – 1904* (St.Peterburg, 1997); Novikova N.I. "Osoboe gosudarstvo ili provintsii: problema gosudarstvenno-pravovogo statusa Finliandii v rossiisko-finliandskikh otnosheniakh" Anan'ich B.V., Barzilov S.I. (eds.) *Prostranstvo vlasti: istoricheskii opyt Rossii i vyzovy sovremennosti. Sbornik statei* (Moscow, 2001).

protests, involving the representatives of Finnish official institutions and the priests. Nevertheless, the Finnish elite could not oppose the measures, promoted by a new governor-general Bobrikov within the frames of the law of 1899, which subjected the Finnish autonomous institutions to the competence of the Russian State Council.¹¹ It could only afford passive resistance. At the same time, organizations of a more radical stance, mostly of Svecoman orientation, were founded throughout Finland. They appealed to more active methods of struggle. Finally, Bobrikov fell victim to terrorist assassination by Eugen Schauman.¹²

"Finnish question" in the political discussions of 1901 - 1906

The peculiarity of the next stage of the discussion of the "Finnish question" was the transformation of the character of this discussion. Earlier this question was disputed in a relatively narrow circle of Russian, Finnish, and European theoreticians of law. This debate was focused on how one should define theoretically the *actual* status of Finland in the Russian empire on the basis of the statements of Alexander I on the Diet of Borga, acknowledged and redefined by the successor monarchs. Now the question was posed differently, namely, it was discussed what the status of Finland *should be* considering different understandings of "Russia's interests" and its immediate and distant political future. There were at least three major groups of participants in these discussions. First of all, there were the Finns. The participants on the Finnish side represented the Fennomans and Svecomans. The former were divided additionally by the political principle on "young" and "old" Finns. Besides, there were liberal constitutionalists and more radical groups of socialist orientation. The common

¹¹ For details see: Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia*, 391-393.

¹² Ibid.

characteristic for all these currents was the recognition that Finland was a separate state united with the Russian Empire. If some, following Leo Mechelin promoted the idea of a real union, then, according to the others (Robert Hermanson and Richard Danielson), Finland could be characterized as a “non-sovereign” state united with the sovereign one. In any case, in the view of Finnish politicians, the laws of the Russian empire could not be applicable on the territory of Finland without the approval of Finnish legislative organs, i.e. Diet. This, according to the Finns, was the essence of the constitutional status of Finland, which as they thought was established on the Diet of Borga.¹³

Russian official jurists and right-wing politicians expressed the opposite opinion. They assumed that Finland was only one of the provinces of the Russian empire, which was provided by the Russian emperors with the rights of local self-government, including the right of issuing local laws in the spheres that did not affect the interests of the empire as a whole. In accordance with this view, no constitution had been granted to Finland, and the Russian tsar had the right to introduce laws in the whole Empire, including the Finnish territory, by his own will. All local laws, which contradicted these all-imperial laws, should not be taken into consideration. At the same time, the emperor could expand or limit the scope of rights of Finland by his will, even without an agreement of Finnish representative institutions.¹⁴

¹³ Germanson R.G. *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozhenie Finliandii* (St.Petersburg, 1892); Idem. “Statia 2 rossiiskikh osnovnykh zakonov i finliandskaia konstitutsiia” *Pravo* No. 16 (1908); Danielson R. *Soedinenie Finliandii s Rossiiskoi derzhavoiu. Po povodu sochineniia K.Ordina “Pokorenie Finliandii”* (St.Petersburg, 1890).

¹⁴ In different variants this idea was advocated by: Korkunov N.M. *Finliandskoe Velikoe Kniazhestvo* (St.Petersburg, 1890); Sergeevskii N.D. *K voprosu o finliandskoi avtonomii i osnovnykh zakonakh* (St.Petersburg, 1902); Borodkin M.M. *Juridicheskoe polozhenie Finliandii. Zametki po povodu otzyva seima 1899* (St.Petersburg, 1901); Idem. *Sovremennoe polozhenie russkogo dela na finliandskoi okraine* (St.Petersburg, 1905); Jelenev F. *Uchenie o Finliandskom gosudarstve* (St.Petersburg, 1893); Berendts E.N. *Kratkii obzor finansov i finansovogo upravleniia Velikogo kniazhestva Finliandskogo* (St.Petersburg, 1900); Idem. *Ob istochnikakh finliandskogo prava. Pervaia lektiia, chitannaia v Imp. SPb. Universitete* (St.Petersburg, 1901).

Finally, after 1903, a new political group joined the discussion – representatives of the Russian liberal movement. There was no cohesion in theoretical views on the status of Finland among the members of this movement. Nonetheless, the Finns were regarded as an important ally in the common "liberation struggle" against autocracy and bureaucracy for a constitutional government of Russia.

The first contacts of the representatives of the group of "Union of Liberation" with Finns were regarded in the first chapter. In the period of Russian-Japanese War the contacts between the Russian liberals and the Finns were interrupted. More radical groups of Finns headed by Zilliacus preferred to deal with Socialist-Revolutionary party and the representatives of the Polish national movement. Moreover, they accepted a direct support of the Japanese secret service.¹⁵ A more moderate group under the leadership of Mechelin, on the contrary, preferred the contacts with Russian government, especially after Sergei Witte, who had a conciliatory position regarding Finland, became a head of the government. The result of successful negotiations between Witte and minister state-secretary Linder, from the Russian side, and the delegation of the Finnish Senate, headed by Mechelin, was the Manifest of the 22nd of October 1905 (issued several days after the Manifest of the 17th of October). The Manifest reversed the force of the laws and orders issued after 1899, which restricted the Finnish autonomy.¹⁶ In Finland, which was overwhelmed by that time with mass disorders and manifestations, the Manifest of the 22nd of October was accepted as a great victory. The following measures expanded the rights of Finnish autonomy. The government introduced reforms in electoral system. A four-chamber diet was replaced by a one-chamber diet, elected on non-estate base, allowing women to participate in

¹⁵ Paasvirta, *Finland and Europe*, 188 – 189.

¹⁶ Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia*, 480 – 485.

its work. If in the former composition of diet the Swedish-speaking elite performed the dominant role, now the majority belonged to socialists. Also the Finnish national parties took a substantial number of places, while Swedish-speaking Finns acquired a relatively minor number of places.¹⁷

Against the background of these events only a few Finnish politicians took notice, that revolutionary outburst in Russia, which was the major reason governmental concessions in the Finnish question, was gradually declining. Already in 1906, the commission for preparation of the Fundamental Laws for the Russian empire included into its project the statement concerning the position of Finland in the empire. In this statement Finland was characterized as a part of the indivisible Russian empire and in its domestic affairs governed "in accordance with the special principles" (*"na osobykh osnovaniikh"*).¹⁸ Such a wording made Mechelin worry. Through Witte, he suggested some corrections, allowing, as he assumed, to avoid such a dangerous impreciseness. Although Mechelin's suggestions were rejected, the formulation of the article was accepted in a milder version.¹⁹ Nonetheless, it did not settle the question of a future status of Finland.

The attack on the rights of Finland in 1907 - 1910

The position of Finland was suddenly complicated after the second Duma had been dissolved and the new electoral law had been issued. Due to this law, the "Union

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sergei Vitte, *Vospominaniia. Tsarstvovanie Nikolaia II.* (Berlin, 1922). v. 2, 245 – 246.

¹⁹ Compare «The Grand Duchy of Finland, being in the state possession of the Russian Empire and constituting an indissoluble part of the Russian state, in its internal affairs is administered in accordance with the special principles" and the finally adopted statement «The Grand Duchy of Finland constituting an indissoluble part of the Russian state, in its internal affairs is administered by special instructions on the basis of special legislation." See: Ibid.

of 17th of October” and the right-wing parties took the majority of the seats in the third Duma. This allowed the Stolypin's government introducing the measures restricting the Finnish autonomy in a way that would seem "democratic."

There were two important circumstances that could be the reasons for the new turn in the politics of the authorities towards Finland. Firstly, an important factor in this situation was considerations of foreign policy. Particularly, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Habsburg monarchy demonstrated that a collision of Russia with the alliance of Central Powers would be more likely in the nearest future. Therefore the defense of the Finnish coastline from the possible attack of the German fleet appeared to be a priority issue.²⁰ The situation was complicated by the loss of the Baltic fleet during the Russian-Japanese war. As a result, a new program of accelerated construction of navy in the Baltic was launched. It was feared, that the actions of the autonomous Finnish authorities would hinder the realization of this program. At the same time, the Russian authorities assumed that Finland was not making a sufficient contribution to the state defense; therefore it was decided to demand on increase of the payment, which would replace the demand of providing recruits. Moreover, the dissolution of the Swedish-Norwegian Union in 1905-1907 caused worries among Russian groups, that the Finns, who regarded the union with Russia as a union of two states, would follow the example of the Norwegians.²¹

Secondly, an important circumstance causing the anxiety of the Russian authorities was that Finland attracted a large part of Russian revolutionary underground. This fact was even more crucial because of Finland's close location to the capital of the empire. According to the opinion of the Russian police authorities,

²⁰ Paasvirta, *Finland and Europe*, 201 – 203.

²¹ Mikhail Taube, “Zarnitsy” *vospominaniia o tragicheskoi sud'be predrevoliutsionnoi Rossii (1900 – 1917)* (Moscow, 2007), 99 – 104. Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia*, 466 - 470.

the local police in Finland did not work hard enough to pursue Russian revolutionaries. Besides, the Russian police was well informed about the contacts between the Finnish opposition, in particular of the group of Zilliacus, and the Russian revolutionary underground.²² Moreover, in the course of the revolutionary events of 1905-1907 that also took place in Finland, the initial notion of a traditional loyalty of the Finns was gradually replaced by the notion of unconditional hostility of the population of the Grand Duchy of Finland to all the measures of the Russian authorities. Such a notion of the hostility as allegedly common to the entire Finnish population (unlike the previous belief in the hostility of only Swedish elite) provoked a fear of a large scale uprising against Russia. For this case the Russian authorities prepared a detailed plan of military occupation of Finland.²³

Already in April 1906 a commission chaired by count Solsky was established to settle the juridical status of Finland in accordance with the new organization of the Russian state supreme institutions, i.e. establishment of the State Duma and the partially elective State Council. It was supposed to introduce a representative of Finland into the State Council so that the State Council could consider the laws for Finland as well. This project, however, was not realized.²⁴

New legislative incentives towards Finland were attempted in 1909. Another Russian-Finnish commission chaired by state controller Peter Kharitonov was established on March 28th. It had to define a range of laws that would belong to all-imperial legislation. The discussions in the commission opened up a significant difference between Russian and Finnish positions. The Russian members of the

²² Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 168.

²³ RGIA f. 1062. op. 1. item. 139; “Po voprosu o merakh na sluchai besporiadkov v Finliandii” *Osobyie zhurnaly Soveta ministrov Rossiiskoi imperii 1901 god* (Moscow, 2000), 464 – 470.

²⁴ Jussila, *Velikoe Kniazhestvo Finliandskoe*, 714-715.

commission, most of whom made their careers in Bobrikov's administration or, as Nikolai Korevo, were the "acknowledged experts on Finland," advocated the view of Finland as a self-governing province and considered, that the limits of the Finnish autonomy should be defined by common imperial legislation.²⁵ The Finnish members suggested that Finland had its special laws, a "constitution," which could not be altered without the approval of Finnish representative institutions, i.e. the Diet.²⁶

Finally, the recommendations worked out by the commission reflected the view of its Russian members, who, together with the chair of the commission, comprised the majority, while the opinion of the Finns was not considered at all. The projects of the commission were presented to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Peter Stolypin, who redirected them to the Council of Ministers for further discussion. After the discussion, the Council approved the suggestions of the Kharitonov's commission in general. The suggestions established rather wide range of questions subjected to all-imperial legislation, which included even the questions of school teaching. At the same time, they considered a possibility for this range to be expanded by the decision of the all-imperial state institutions, without an approval of the Finnish legislation.

Meanwhile, the Finnish members did not deny the possibility of all-imperial legislation. They rather suggested dividing the entire legislation into three parts. The first part would be exclusively subjected to the competence of imperial legislative institutions and would encompass the questions of dynastic succession, as well as the questions related to foreign policy. The other part, according to the Finnish members, would have to deal with the legislation, justice, and administration in Finland. These

²⁵ See his position in details: Nikolai Korevo, *Doklad po Finliandskomu voprosu* (St.Petersburg, 1910).

²⁶ *Po projektu pravil o poriadke izdaniia kasaiushikhsia Finliandii zakonov*, 112 – 113.

issues would have to be reviewed by the Finnish representative institutions in accordance with Finnish laws. Finally, the third part would contain laws related to common interests of Russia and Finland, going beyond the military needs and foreign affairs; for this part they proposed a special legislative procedure. The respective decisions had to be accepted by a joint work of delegations from Russian and Finnish legislative institutions. Should the agreement be achieved between these delegations, the decisions would be approved or rejected by the emperor, without the possibility of alteration of the content of the law.²⁷ The range of laws related to this procedure should be once and forever defined and approved by the diet. Thus, the Finnish members of Kharitonov's commission recognized the possibility of making all-imperial laws, but tried to limit the ability of authorities to apply these laws arbitrarily to the Finnish territory.

In the discussion of this question, which followed in the State Duma the two major positions clashed. Chairman of the Council of Ministers Peter Stolypin represented the state centrist position, while the advocate of Finnish side was the leader of the Constitutional-Democratic Party Pavel Miliukov, supported by representatives of left-wing parties. The outcome of the “Finnish question” in the State Duma was quite predictable before the beginning of parliamentary debates. It was obvious, that Stolypin, relying on the majority composed of the representatives of centrist and right-wing parties, would be able to pass the required resolution, while the Kadets along with the left-wing parties constituted a minority. Therefore the discussion had, in general, significance only in terms of defending a certain political

²⁷ Ibid., 117.

principle and could not alter the situation, as the measures towards Finland were pre-determined.²⁸

A dispute on the limits of the Finnish Autonomy

The positions of Miliukov and Stolypin were not the only ones, which were articulated publicly during the Duma discussion of 1910. The right-wing groups voiced the most radical stance, urging for an almost complete abolition of the Finnish autonomy for the sake of "interests of the Russian people."²⁹ Generally, it was based on the assumption, that the Russian supreme authority, having once given the rights to Finland, could take them back at any time.³⁰ Stolypin's position, nevertheless, was formulated in line with the idea that the "power of law" should have a priority over the "power of force" in Russia. Therefore, Stolypin, although bringing a multitude of arguments, which referred to the idea of state expediency, he did not avoid the discussion of juridical issues. The latter circumstance provides a certain theoretical interest in Stolypin's discussion with Miliukov.

Stolypin's speech at the Duma meeting on the 21st of May 1910 should be regarded in relation to his earlier speech in the State Duma on the meeting on 5th of

²⁸ This is how the discussion of the "Finnish question" was represented in the periodicals. See, for example: "Vnutrennee obozrenie" *Vestnik Evropy* 12 (1909): 768 – 769; "Vnutrennee obozrenie" *Vestnik Evropy* 6 (1910): 359 – 360.

²⁹ The stenographical report of the "Finnish question" in the State Duma see: *Russkie vedomosti* 116 (1910).

³⁰ Such position of the right-wing participants of Duma discussions relied on the heated polemics in right-wing press. In most coherent way this position was presented by journal of Russian borderland society "Okrainy Rossii." This newspaper was edited by M.M.Borodkin, V.D.Deitrich etc.- the Russian members of the commission on preparation of the project of all-imperial legislation. Some of their reflections were formulated in the polemics with foreign theoreticians of law, who had publicly witnessed in defence of the Finnish autonomy. See also: E.N.Berendts, *K finliandskomu voprosu. Stat'i po povodu rechi chlena Gosudarstvennoi Dumy P.N.Miliukova 13 maia 1908 goda pri rassmotrenii zaprosov po Finliandskomu upravleniiu* (St.Petersburg, 1910).

May 1908 concerning the interpellations of Octobrists and the right-wing parties on Finland. Miliukov had also responded to this speech. Stolypin argued, that "the Emperor Alexander I had granted Finland an internal autonomy, he granted and secured for it a right of internal legislation and legal procedure, however he left for himself the definition of the relation of Finland towards the Empire and defined it by the words "property and sovereign possession" ("*sobstvennost' i derzhavnoe obladanie*").³¹

According to Stolypin, "the Russian viewpoint is quite clear, Russia does not desire to violate autonomous rights of Finland regarding its internal legislation and its particular administrative and judicial organization, however, gentlemen, in common legislative questions and some common questions of administration there should be a common decision together with Finland, of course with prevalence of Russia's rights."

³² In Stolypin's view, one should speak of "extending the power of the emperor in all-imperial matters through all-imperial institutions throughout the Empire." ³³ At the same time he denied that "Russia wants to violate the autonomous rights of Finland, granted by the monarchs". "In Russia, gentlemen," - said Stolypin – "force cannot stand above law." ³⁴

Responding to this speech, Miliukov declared: "...one should not fit the juridical position of Finland to any public law theory and affix a public law label... I am ready to concede by convention, that there are no elements of a state in Finland. At least, we face a fact, that the relations between Finland and Russia are not a *tabula*

³¹ *Zaprosy po finliandskomu upravleniiu. Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Zasedanie 1, 5 i 15 fevralia, 5, 12 i 13 maia 1908 goda* (St. Petersburg, 1909), 47.

³² *Ibid.*, 55-56.

³³ *Ibid.*, 60.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

rasa, where one can write anything he wants, and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers is not an authentic interpreter of the existing laws."³⁵ In Miliukov's view, "Empire and Finland constitute two juridical systems; how do they interrelate with each other; how would this interrelationship be established, is an open question, gentlemen, and by a single interpretation of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, by one incidentally spoken phrase containing a whole theory rejecting the century-old position of Finland this question cannot be resolved." Miliukov draws the following formula: "Finland is not a peculiar state, but is a part of the Russian state; however Finland is administered by the special laws, by the special government, and not by all-imperial institutions."³⁶

In the remaining part of his speech Miliukov touched upon the question of expedience of the projected measures to extend to Finland the authority of all-imperial state institutions. At the same time he referred to the opinion of foreign legal thinkers: "After 1899 many foreign scholars were interested in the state of affairs, studied the facts, and the most conservative among them, the most moderate, such as for example Jellinek, came to a conclusion, that the actions attempted by the Russian government in the Manifesto of the 3rd February 1899, were undoubtedly a violation of Finnish rights, and that Finland, whatever one might call it, possesses something, which is adequately or inadequately defined by a term "state autonomy."³⁷

Continuing his speech Miliukov argued, that the suggested by the government way to discuss the common matters with Finland, generally reproduces a juridical construction of 1899, yet, putting instead of State Council new legislative institutions

³⁵ Ibid., 154.

³⁶ Ibid., 157.

³⁷ Ibid., 159-160.

of the empire. The Finnish Diet would be required to make resolutions, which would not be obligatory for implementation. This means that the Diet would lose the right to define the limits of his own competence, which it had in accordance with the fundamental laws of Finland. Thus, Miliukov emphasized the idea that the Finnish autonomy could not be arbitrarily restricted by leveling the wider range of legislation to a category of all-imperial matters.

The essence of the dispute between Miliukov and Stolypin could be ultimately reduced to clarification of the following issue: in whose competence was the establishment of the border between the sphere of internal legislation of Finland and the sphere of all-imperial legislation, belonging to the competence of imperial state institutions. Stolypin assumed that the Russian state sovereignty provided the right for the Russian state institutions to define where this border should be drawn. Miliukov, on the contrary, putting aside the theoretical question about the existence of a special state organization in Finland, considered that the issue of defining such a border belongs to a joint competence of Russian and Finnish legislative institutions. In other words, according to Miliukov, Russian sovereignty did not signify the right of all-imperial institutions to make an arbitrary decision about the sphere of application of the Finnish specific law. In the interpretation of the leader of Kadets, the sovereignty of Russia was not limited by any other state. This fact, however, did not presuppose an unlimited power of central state organs over the constituent parts of Russia. In his speech on the 22nd of May 1910 Miliukov formulated it as "an axiom of public law": "...sovereign power restricts itself, even in those cases, when it appears the only source of responsibilities, accepted by it."³⁸

³⁸ *Russkie vedomosti* 116 (1910).

Thus, the theoretical dispute of both orators came down to different interpretations of one and the same notion - "sovereignty" or, as Stolypin put it, Russia "sovereign rights of possession" regarding Finland. Stolypin comprehended these rights as a juridical possibility to establish laws, applicable on the entire territory of a sovereign state,³⁹ while Miliukov, grounding his view in the theory of composite states, denied this thesis, assuming that a constituent part of the state could have other state-juridical construction in comparison with the state embracing it.⁴⁰ In such a way, according to Miliukov, Finland could be a constitutional monarchy, where none of the projected laws could become an actual law without an approval of Finnish legislative institutions. It could be so despite the fact that the legal practice of the Russian empire still allowed passing laws only by the superior authority of a monarch, bypassing the existing representative institutions.⁴¹

In the following part of this chapter I will trace the origins of such a view of Miliukov, considering German theories of composite states and their different interpretations by Russian and Finnish legal thinkers.

A Concept of "Non-Sovereign State"

Due to traditional academic ties of Russia and Germany, the German theories of public law made a significant impact on Russian legal thinkers. In the late 19th century the theories of a juridical nature of state were influential. They were formulated in the works of German jurists Georg Jellinek and Paul Laband. The core of these theories in their Russian interpretation was that a state (as opposed to a person

³⁹ *Zaprosy po finliandskomu upravleniiu*, 60.

⁴⁰ *Russkie vedomosti* 116 (1910).

⁴¹ *Ibid.* 117 (1910).

or a community of people) could be a subject of law or an independent "juridical person," expressing the interests of the entire society. The latter was understood as an aggregate of individual wills.⁴² In the Russian liberal legal discourse this theory acquired a special meaning, as an instrument allowing substantiating the independence of the state legal order from an individual will of the monarch. The other part of Jellinek's teaching, devoted to the organization of a composite or federative state, was almost neglected by the Russian jurists until 1905 - 1907.⁴³ Only the awareness of significance of the discussions on the status of the borderlands for the future of the Russian state organization provoked an extensive interest of Russian liberals to these particular works of Jellinek. However, they didn't pay much attention to the context framing the emergence of his ideas and treated his notions as a ready-made theoretical framework, out of their context. But in order to understand how the Russian theoreticians adapted the notions of the German scholar to a particular situation in Russia, one has to understand the original historical context of these notions in the period of their initial development.

Until the mid 1860-s the German confederation represented an association of formally sovereign states, including the German lands of the Habsburg monarchy. The unification of Germany in accordance with the model of Bismarck led, firstly, to the exclusion of Austria (i.e. *kleindeutsch* project was realized as opposed to *grossdeutsch*), and secondly, the remaining lands as unified formed a more centralized federation with a clear Prussian domination. Nevertheless, the power of Prussia was

⁴² F.F.Kokoshkin, *K voprosu o juridicheskoi prirode gosudarstva i organov gosudarstvennoi vlasti* (Moscow, 1896).

⁴³ There were, however, special works, describing the federative concepts of Jellinek and Laband, but their authors did not have any striving to incorporate the theories of the German jurists into the general reasoning of the public (state) law. See: M.Gorenberg, *Teoriia soiuznogo gosudarstva v trudakh sovremennykh publitsistov Germanii* (St.Petersburg, 1891); N.N. Palienko, *Suverenitet. Istoricheskoe razvitiie idei suvereniteta i eie pravovoe znachenie* (Jaroslavl', 1903).

not sufficient for the former States to surrender their historical rights entirely. The resulting state was not unitary and represented a federation, where a part of authority was delegated to the centre, while quite a significant part remained in the competence of the former states - the members of the historical German confederation.⁴⁴ Thus, in Bavaria, for example, the king, the parliament and the court were preserved, although, at the same time, Bavaria sent its representatives to Reichstag and had to submit to the organs of the central power within the range of their competence.⁴⁵

The initial reaction of legal theoreticians to these changes was an attempt to return from the theory of indivisibility of sovereignty to the idea that sovereignty could be divided. However, the division of sovereignty was understood differently in comparison with the way it was perceived in feudal states with their complex system of vassalage. It was understood, instead, as a result of the division of authority between the centre and the federative units. Thus, the concept of sovereignty was invested with a positive content, and this notion was connected with a set of prerogatives in a certain sphere. In other words, a federative state was considered as a sovereign one, while the composite states appeared as half-sovereign entities, i.e. their power was restricted to a certain sphere of competence.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ More detailed study on the federative nature of the German empire see: Maiken Umbach (ed.) *German Federalism, Past, Present, Future* (Palgrave, 2002); Abigail Green, *Fatherlands. State-Building and Nationhood in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Idem. "How did German Federalism Shape Unification?" Speirs R., Breuilly J. (eds.) *Germany's Two Unifications: Anticipations, Experiences, Responses* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁴⁵ Carr W. *A History of Germany 1815 – 1985* (London, Baltimore, Melbourne: Edward Arnold, 1988), 106 – 107.

⁴⁶ Such understanding of the notion of "sovereignty" was based on theoretical generalizations of Alexis de Tocqueville in his work, devoted to the analysis of the federal organization in the United States of America. See: Tocqueville de A. *Democracy in America*. vol. 2. chapter 8. In Germany the major advocate of this concept was Georg Waitz, who argued that in the course of unification into a state union separate states delegate a part of their sovereignty to common state organs. M. Gorenberg, *Teoriia soiuznogo gosudarstva*, 38 – 40.

Such an understanding of sovereignty, however, contradicted the major meaning of this term, which implied the independence of the state power from any supreme or subordinate power. According to this understanding the half-sovereignty appeared as logically impossible and a half-sovereign state appeared as simply a non-sovereign one. The logical consequence of this was the denial of the possibility of a federative state, as it appeared, that sovereign state could be either unitary, or ceased to be a state and turned into a confederation of sovereign states.⁴⁷ In the case of Germany the latter opportunity, which one could admit before the unification along Bismarck's model, was rejected in practice.⁴⁸

In these circumstances a theoretical way out of the conflict of definition was the separation of the concepts of sovereignty and state. In other words, a sovereign state was declared as one of historically possible forms of state. This statement was proved by the reference to the historical experience of existence of a hierarchy of states, until Bodin's theory of indivisibility of sovereignty became generally recognized. As Jellinek argued, if the separation of the notions of state and sovereignty was possible in the past, it is possible in present, as well as in future.⁴⁹ Not all the German theoreticians agreed with this viewpoint. In particular, it was contested by Hanael, who supported the theory of indivisibility of the notion of sovereignty from the notion of state. From this standpoint, the former members of the confederation, who became parts of the German empire, appeared in their new condition not as states, but just as self-governing provinces.⁵⁰ Thus, Hanael was ready

⁴⁷ Such a standpoint was advocated by Max Seydel, a Bavarian jurist who borrowed John Calhoun's ideas. The latter tried to substantiate that the United States of America was a confederation. A.S. Jashenko, *Teoriia federalizma. Opyt sinteticheskoi teorii prava i gosudarstva* (Jur'ev. 1912), 683 – 684.

⁴⁸ Merriam C.E. *History of the Theory of Sovereignty since Rousseau* (Kitchner, 2001), 98.

⁴⁹ Georg Jellinek, *Obshchee ucheniie o gosudarstve* (St.Petersburg, 1908), 370.

⁵⁰ Merriam C.E. *History of the Theory of Sovereignty*, 99.

to sacrifice the rights of particular lands in favour of the rights of the unitary German state.

An important characteristic of a sovereign state, for Hanael, was the right of its central institutions, representing the state in general; to define the competence of all other authorities in the state, including those administered its separate parts. This principle was briefly framed as «Kompetenz–Kompetenz», i.e. the competence of the central authority to define the competence of local authorities. This did not exclude the autonomy as such, but the definition of the limits of the autonomy was the exclusive prerogative of central power, which did not need approval of semi-autonomous entities themselves.⁵¹

Jellinek and Laband considered that such a concept obliterated the idea of federative state, based on the mutual agreement of its parts, rather than the coercion of the centre. But in order to substantiate the possibility of such a state it was necessary to denote the status of its constituent parts, which, nevertheless, without a logical contradiction, could not be considered as sovereign states. The decision was found in the notion of "non-sovereign state" (*nichtsouveräner Staat*), i.e. such a state, which did not possess sovereignty, but at the same time preserved the major characteristics of state organization.

In their attempts to define what exactly were the characteristics of state the German theoreticians, the adherents of this theory, could not come to a single opinion. Jellinek himself changed his position through the time. Initially, he considered the existence of a legal order established by the state itself independently of the will of

⁵¹ Ibid.

other states as an essential characteristic of a state.⁵² But this brought the notion of "non-sovereign state" very close to the notion of a local community, which could set its local laws. Later on, Jellinek came to the idea, that a state, in order to be such, had to possess all the branches of power.⁵³ For example, a province possessing an elected legislative assembly, but having a head of its executive power appointed from the centre, can not, according to Jellinek, be a state, as one of the branches of power does not belong to this province, but is subjected to a superior power. Thus, Austrian provinces, according to this terminology, were not states, despite the fact that they possessed their own legislative organs.⁵⁴ Jellinek considered Bulgaria as an example of non-sovereign state. This country, though being under the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire, possessed all branches of power characterizing a state, so it was necessary to break the vassal link with a Turkish sultan in order to make Bulgaria a state in a full meaning of the term.⁵⁵ The critics of Jellinek, including Russians, pointed out, however, that this example did not prove anything; as such a status was granted to Bulgaria only by the interference of European powers - the guarantors of the Berlin treaty of 1878. Thus, Turkish sovereignty over Bulgaria appeared to be restricted, therefore it was not sovereignty in a true meaning of this word. And even in the treaty itself, which defined the relations between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria, there was used another term - suzerainty.⁵⁶ However, if one would disregard the Finnish interpretation of Jellinek's ideas (which will be described below) these debates had only a theoretical significance for the Russian empire, as the only

⁵² Jellinek, *Obshchee ucheniie o gosudarstve*, 350.

⁵³ Georg Jellinek, *Die Lehre von den Staatenverbindungen* (Wien, 1882), 40.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁵⁶ Palienko, *Suverenitet*, 561.

contender for the status of non-sovereign state in Russia - Finland - did not have such status, according to Jellinek.⁵⁷

The Theory of "Non-Sovereign States" for the Finnish Case

A special interpretation of the theory of "non-sovereign states" was developed in Finland in the works of the professors of the Alexander University in Helsingfors Richard Danielson and Robert Hermanson. Both of them were exponents of the position of Fennomans and belonged to the group of old-Finns, who tried to emphasise the loyalty of Finland to the Russian emperor.⁵⁸ Danielson and Hermanson argued that Finland was a special state, distinct from Russia, though Finland was, according to them, in a peculiar union with Russia. This union, as the Helsingfors professors assumed, contrary to a viewpoint of Mehelin, could not be conceived in terms of a real union. At the same time, the Finnish professors tried to prove that the status of Finland could not be reduced to that of a province of the Russian empire having its special rights and its own legislative institutions.

To substantiate this standpoint they needed to find in the theory of state law as an instrument to describe this state union, which took a transitory position between an autonomous province (as, for example, Bohemia in Austro-Hungary) and a real union (as the Kingdom of Hungary in the Habsburg monarchy). For this purpose the Finnish theoreticians resorted to the theories of Jellinek and Laband. The complication was, however, that Jellinek did not recognize Finland as a non-sovereign state. Therefore, they had to suggest an interpretation of Jellinek's theory, which would prove the idea

⁵⁷ Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente* (Heidelberg, 1896), 45.

⁵⁸ Klinge, *Imperskaia Finliandiia*, 360 – 363.

that his understanding of the status of Finland is incorrect from the perspective of his own theoretical framework.

Richard Danielson, a historian, was focused in his works on the substantiation of the thesis that the statements and documents provided by Alexander I on the Diet of Borga in 1809 allowed one to assert that Finland, which by that time was constituted as Swedish provinces, became a special constitutional state in Russia. In Danielson's view, Alexander I recognized the constitutional laws (*lois fondamentales*), which had been functioning on the territory of Finland, when it was a part of Sweden. Thus, according to him, Finland became a state, distinct from Russia, while the latter still remained an autocratic monarchy.⁵⁹

Proceeding from these historical arguments, Hermanson, who was a legal theorist, inferred that Finland, due to the constituent acts of Alexander I, became a special state, although not a sovereign one. In other words, it remained a part of the Russian empire, and, from the point of view of the international law, together with Russia it formed a single subject of international relations. However, from the standpoint of the Russian domestic law, Finland was a "non-sovereign state," so it did not merge with the Russian empire into a unitary whole, but constituted a distinct sphere of legal order.

To understand how Hermanson defined non-sovereign state, and to underline the difference of his definition from Jellinek's understanding of this term, I will consider the composite parts of Hermanson's complex notion.

By "state" Hermanson understands a combination of the following elements. Firstly, the state is connected with a certain territory and comprises a settled (as

⁵⁹ Danielson, *Soedinenie Finliandii s Rossiiskoi derzhavoiu*, 98.

opposed to nomadic) population, i.e. the inhabitants "united by a constant commonality of interests." Secondly a state presupposes the existence of a state authority, which "constitutes a legal order, imposing obligations."⁶⁰ Besides, the state authority "belong to a certain society and exist only for the sake of the interests of this society."⁶¹ In other words, if power is exercised on a certain territory for the sake of a neighbouring state (for example, of an occupied, without any agreement with a local population, province), such a power cannot be considered as constituting a separate state on this territory. It is worthwhile noting, that in the interpretation of historical events, which Danielson and Hermanson relied on, the promises of Alexander I given at the Diet of Borga could be treated as obligations taken by the emperor to administer Finland for the sake of the interests of the Finnish society, as opposed to the interests of a neighbouring state - Russia. Thus, from the point of view of the Finnish theoreticians, Alexander I governed Finland as a constitutional monarch, a Grand Duke of Finland, in accordance with the fundamental laws of Finland. At the same time, as a Russian emperor, he performed a role of suzerain of Finland, but was in this quality only when he represented Finland on the international stage or considered the joint tasks of defence and sustenance of the military might of the empire.

This implies that, in the view of the Finnish theoreticians, the power of the emperor of Russia over domestic (as opposed to foreign or international) affairs of Finland was restricted by Finnish laws, as a power of any constitutional monarch. The Grand Duke of Finland was assumed to be a Finnish official, who did not have an authority to issue or pass laws by his arbitrary will. The legislative authority, according to the view of the Finnish professors, belonged to him only in compliance

⁶⁰ Germanson, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozheniie Finliandii*, 10.

⁶¹ Ibid.

with the Finnish legislative institutions, i.e. the Diet. This did not, as Hermanson assumed, abolish the fact, that the Russian empire was sovereign on the territory of Finland, while the Finnish state itself did not possess sovereignty. In order to understand this construction, it is important to consider the way Hermanson understands the notion of "sovereignty."

Sovereignty, according to Hermanson, signifies "the supreme human power on a certain territory." Besides, sovereignty means that a certain state "is not subjected and *is not obliged to subject itself on any issue* (italics of the author – T.Kh.) to the power of other state."⁶² Further on Hermanson introduces a principal statement that "sovereignty as being characteristic of a state power does not necessarily imply unrestricted authority."⁶³ According to Hermanson, "for recognition of a state as sovereign it is not necessary that the power of the state had to be unrestricted, but it is only required that it was not subjected to another state power."⁶⁴ A reformulation of this principle supposed a possibility of existence of "non-sovereign states." Such states, according to Hermanson, could exist on the part of the territory of sovereign states, but at the same time, sovereignty of the latter did not mean, that their sovereign power on the territory of those constituent non-sovereign states had to be unrestricted.

What is the nature of such restriction? In other words, what hampers this sovereign state to exercise on its territory, i.e. the territory of a constituent non-sovereign state, its unrestricted power? Regarding the case of Finland, one might ask, what precluded the Russian autocrat as a supreme governor of Russia, possessing

⁶² Ibid., 23.

⁶³ Ibid., 28.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

sovereignty over Finland, from exercising of an unrestricted power on its territory? According to Hermanson, the sources of such restriction can be twofold.

On the one hand, these restrictions could be international treaties. According to these treatises, a sovereign state could voluntarily restrict its power over a part of its territory by the agreement with other sovereign states and thus enable a creation of a non-sovereign state. The example of such situation is the status of Bulgaria within the Ottoman Empire. The latter is a sovereign state, with a sovereignty being applied on the territory of Bulgaria. However, Bulgaria, in accordance with the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, is a separate state, although a non-sovereign one, ruled by its own legislative power and government. It is clear, that such a status can be sustained only because this special situation is guaranteed by the international treaties. But such construction is not applicable to Finland, as the Treaty of Fredrikshamn, which the Russian legal scholars usually referred to in order to substantiate the absence of a state organization in Finland, did not recognize Finland as a special state, but only declared the Swedish unconditioned concession of former Finnish provinces to Russia. Thus, no international treaty granted Finland the status of a state.⁶⁵

However, within the frames of this theoretical construction, there remained another possibility for Hermanson to prove the status of Finland as a non-sovereign state. In accordance with this theory, a sovereign state, without refusing its sovereignty on a certain part of its territory, could grant this territory certain rights, maintaining its special state status. In other words, a sovereign state may restrict its own power, at the same time preserving its sovereignty, as no other state is involved in such restriction.⁶⁶ In other words, it is not Finland that restricts Russia with its

⁶⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 33.

special laws. As a non-sovereign state and a part of the Russian Empire it could not do this, because such restriction would affect Russian sovereignty. But Russia, as a sovereign state, could voluntarily restrict its power in Finland, providing the latter with the opportunity for self-administration within the limits of its own judicial sphere, yet the competence of this sphere would exclude the sphere of international affairs and the questions of state defence. Such self-restriction of the Russian state power, according to Hermanson, was not a result of a treaty. He assumed that no mutual exchange of obligations between Alexander I and the Finnish people had taken place on the diet of Borga.⁶⁷ Thus, it is possible to speak only of a unilateral acceptance by Russia of certain obligations towards Finland. But once these obligations were taken, they cannot be broken without a significant violation of a constitutional legal order.⁶⁸

The comparison with the Ottoman Empire allows clarifying this construction. The Ottoman Empire, according to Hermanson, was not a modern state, i.e. *Rechtstaat*. Therefore, its power on the territory of Bulgaria may be restricted only inasmuch this restriction would be guaranteed by other states.⁶⁹ But if Russia claims herself to be a *Rechtstaat*, it does not need restrictions from outside. The legal order implies a self-restriction of power in respect to the rights of individual citizens as well as non-sovereign states, being constituent parts of the whole.⁷⁰ Such self-restrictions can be abolished or changed only by legal means.⁷¹ In other words, the fundamental laws existing on the territory of Finland comprise a legal procedure of their alteration, which excludes one-sided changes of these laws, without the approval of the Finnish

⁶⁷ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 71.

⁷¹ Ibid., 73.

representative assembly. Such a way, Russia, although it may unilaterally reject its obligations towards Finland adopted by Alexander I, would, in such a case, cease to be a modern *Rechtsstaat* and would become similar to the Ottoman Empire, which is unable to restrict its power deliberately.

Finland as "Staatsfragment"

The theoretical elaborations of Hermanson found their response in the work of Jellinek *Ueber Staatsfragmente* (1896).⁷² This work was not devoted to Finland directly, but Finland was for Jellinek an important example of a political formation, which was not a state (even a non-sovereign one), but at the same time preserved some characteristics of a state, thus taking an intermediate position between a non-sovereign state and a self-governing province.⁷³

For Jellinek, Finland was not a non-sovereign state, because not all the branches of power were essentially Finnish.⁷⁴ The arguments of Hermanson, who separated the person of the monarch into two legal components - an autocratic monarch of the Russian Empire and a constitutional Grand Duke of Finland, was not convincing for Jellinek. From his viewpoint, Hermanson's theory was a renovated version of Mechelin's old theory about the union of the Finnish and the Russian states.⁷⁵ According to Jellinek, the solution of the question of the status of Finland in the Russian Empire considered within a different theoretical framework.

⁷² Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente*...

⁷³ Ibid., 11.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 43.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 44.

Jellinek put Finland into a category of state fragments (*Staatsfragmente*) or, as he calls them, "rudiments" of states. These were political formations, which preserved some characteristics of a state and, therefore, did not fit into the category of non-sovereign states. According to Jellinek, this, nevertheless, does not mean, that in respect to these states the supreme power of a sovereign state could take any arbitrary action.⁷⁶ Jellinek recognized that Russia and Finland formed a single juridical space, where the major source of power was concentrated in a person of the supreme representative of the sovereign Russian empire - the Russian monarch. Jellinek advocated, however, the following general principle. According to it the states, having a constitution, may change it only by legal means, which would not restrict their sovereignty. According to Jellinek, if at the moment of incorporation of Finland Russia had a constitutional order, then in this order there would contain a condition that any changes into the constitutional status of Finland could be introduced only by the approval of Finland.⁷⁷ Consequently, into the notion of a state fragment Jellinek invests the following meaning: the sphere of a judicial competence of this fragment may be changed only by its approval.⁷⁸ This is what distinguishes them, first of all, from self-governing provinces, whose sphere of legal competence is defined by the central authority. Jellinek clearly opposes such understanding of constitutional relations between sovereign states and their state fragments to the standpoint of those, who, following Bodin, stand for "an old absolutist teaching, which identifies sovereignty with unrestricted power, so that the possibility of self-restriction of the states is denied and force is mingled with the right."⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 46.

It is important to note major differences of the Finnish elaborations from Jellinek's theory. Both Mechelin and Hermanson, although the latter to a lesser degree, recognized that Finland and Russia, as two different states, were united into a single whole in such a way that they formed two distinct juridical fields, which were connected by a juridical personality (or persons, if one would recognize the emperor and Grand Duke as two different juridical persons) of a monarch.⁸⁰ Regardless how one would name such a union, it comprises the rudiments of the old notion of sovereignty as belonging to a certain person or a political community. Hermanson's strategy of defence of the Finnish rights actually led to an attempt of bringing the notion of sovereignty closer to the idea of suzerainty. In such a way, he considered the Ottoman Empire as a sovereign state as regards to one of its constituents, Bulgaria. At the same time, it would be wrong to say that in relation to Bulgaria Turkey was a source of legal order. Such theoretical construction, however, contradicted Jellinek's major idea, for whom the legal order and the state were inseparable notions.

Jellinek proceeded from the notion, according to which sovereignty did not belong to a person, but rather to a state. At the same time, he understood a modern state as a *Rechtsstaat*, i.e. such state, which possessed an established legal order; the latter could be changed only by legal means. Thus, he excluded the element of an arbitrary action, as even a sovereign state may change its legal order only in a legal way.⁸¹ This is the source of restriction of a central authority. It was not allowed for the latter to make arbitrary changes in the legal competence of constitutional institutions

⁸⁰ Leo Mekhelin, *K voprosu ob avtonomii i osnovnykh zakonakh. Kritika broshury, izdannoï pod etim zaglaviem zasluzhennym professorom N.D. Sergeevichem* (Berlin, 1903), 57-59; Idem. *Nepriemlemyi proekt, sostavlennyyi russlim soveshianiem* (Helsingfors, 1909), 20 – 21; Hermanson, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polizhenie Finliandii*, 83-84.

⁸¹ Jellinek, *Obshchee ucheniie o gosudarstve*, 352.

of state fragments.⁸² In Hermanson's interpretation it appeared that the Finnish rights were given by the Russian monarch, so that inviolability of these rights was granted only by a principle, according to which such promise bound the monarch and his successors.⁸³ Such idea of allegiance to a solemnly proclaimed promise had a moral, rather than legal character. From the legal point of view, the autocratic monarch was not restricted in this respect, and no law bound him to keep allegiance to his promises. Thus, Hermanson could appeal here only to the traditional notion of a good monarch, who restricts himself by certain principles, as opposed to a despot, who makes arbitrary decisions. In the final analysis, his argumentation leads to the idea of self-restriction of a certain person, but not of an abstract legal order. Of course, this idea demonstrated mostly a difference of accents, rather than a difference in principles, as Hermanson did not speak of self-restraint of a monarch, but of Russia; this implied that the latter wanted to become a modern *Rechtstaat*. However, Jellinek made a more clear emphasis on a link between the legal character of changing of a legal order and inviolability of the rights of Finland, while Hermanson's theory admitted an understanding of self-restriction of Russia as a self-restriction of its monarch (as a holder of sovereign power).⁸⁴ From the legal point of view, however, according to the Russian laws, such restriction did not exist for an autocratic monarch, and Russian jurists (the opponents of the Finns) pointed it out.⁸⁵

Most clearly the difference of the approaches of Jellinek and of the Finnish professors came to the foreground at the moment, when Russia, due to the Manifesto of the 17th of October and the following acts of the state power, got under way of a

⁸² Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente*, 9 – 10.

⁸³ Hermanson, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozhenie Finliandii*, 84

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 97.

⁸⁵ N.M.Korkunov, *Finliandskoe Velikoe Kniazhestvo* (St.Petersburg. 1890), 327 – 328; F. Jelenov, *Uchenie o finliandskom gosudarstve* (St.Petersburg, 1893), 31.

gradual transformation, at least legally, from a traditional monarchic state to a modern constitutional state, although with some reservations.

In such a state a monarch appeared not just as a personal instance, unrestricted in his rights, but rather an integral element of the legal order, one among a number of constitutional institutions. In these circumstances the old promises to Finland acquired a relatively lesser juridical power in comparison with the institutions of the new legal order, particularly with the Fundamental laws of 1906. But these laws admitted such interpretation, which made a special juridical status of Finland quite vulnerable. In the new situation the Finnish constitutional order became a part of the all-Russian constitutional order. At the same time, however, there still remained some slight opportunity that this order would contain the elements of legal self-restraint. That is, this order could become legal if the competence of the Finnish legislature would be changed in a legal way, without a violation of the existing Finnish constitution. This constitution provided that Finnish laws could be changed only by approval of the Diet. Consequently, in order to incorporate the Finnish constitutional order into the new Russian constitutional order without violating juridical principles it was necessary to provide a constitutional mechanism of agreement of changes in the imperial legislation (initiated by the supreme authority of the Russian empire) with Finnish local laws. As long this mechanism was not established, there remained the elements of arbitrariness in the Russian state order.

Unlike the theories of Finnish lawyers, containing the elements of an old monarchical understanding of sovereignty, Jellinek's concept provided the possibility of substantiating of a special constitutional status of Finland in the new circumstances. In the following part I will consider whether Russian liberal jurists managed to use

this possibility in advocating constitutional rights of Finland against the attack of right wing politicians during the parliamentary debates in 1909-1910.

Russian Liberals' Interpretation of Georg Jellinek's Position

As for political attitude towards Finland, a part of the Russian liberals, forming the Constitutional Democratic Party, supported the view established at the Congress of oppositional parties in Paris in 1904. According to the memoirs of Paul Miliukov, at the congress there were both Finns of the traditional monarchic orientation, standing for a special Finnish constitution (Leo Mechelin) and new, as Miliukov called them, radicals, who drifted towards the politics of an open resistance to authorities (Zilliacus).⁸⁶ If one would trust the memoirs of Miliukov, written already in emigration, the logic of the future Kadet leaders consisted in reaching an agreement with moderate Finns, and thus isolating the radical groups, which, as he assumed, aimed at territorial disintegration of Russia.⁸⁷

In practice this politics led to the idea of a parallel legislation, which was expressed in the programme of Kadets, adopted on the second congress of the party on the 5th-11th of January 1906. In the 26th paragraph of the program it suggested: "The Finnish constitution, which provides Finland with its state status, must be entirely restored. Any further measures, common for the Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland, from now on must be a matter of an agreement between the legislative organs of the Empire and those of the Grand Duchy."⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 168 – 169.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ *S"ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticeskoi partii* (Moscow, 1997). v. 1, 192.

The intensification of the discussions on the juridical status of Finland, initiated by the right-wing leaders in 1908-1909, stimulated for elaboration of a detailed theoretical clarification of this programmatic statement. The preparation of a more detailed statement was entrusted to Fedor Kokoshkin.⁸⁹ The results of his work were accepted in the form of the resolution of the Moscow group of the Kadet party, which said that: "... the establishing of an all-state legislation in that form or another, which would be carried out through imperial legislative institutions... and applied to Finland, would be possible only by means of two parallel laws of respective content, which would be issued: one - by the imperial legislation, the other - within the procedure of the Finnish Diet's legislation."⁹⁰ The Moscow group also underlined that the unification of the Finnish and the imperial legislation "constitutes one of the tasks of the development of the constitutional order of the Russian state," but such unification of legislation should not be unilaterally enforced, but "based on the joint understanding of common interests."⁹¹ In general, it was proposed that the question of agreement of the Finnish and the imperial legislations be postponed until the time when the political circumstances would become more favourable: in the present conditions it was decided to defend the idea of a parallel legislation.

Along with the preparation of internal documents for a discussion within the party, Kokoshkin explained his position on the "Finnish question" in press. In his article, published in *Russkie vedomosti* ("*Russian Bulletin*") on the 23rd January, 1910

⁸⁹Since the foundation of the party Fiodor Kokoshkin was dealing with elaboration of the general programme of the party on the national question. See his works: F.F.Kokoskin, *Oblastnaia avtonomiia i edinstvo Rossii* (Moscow, 1905); Idem. "Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro s"ezdu zemskikh i gorodskikh deiatelei po voprosu natsional'nostei i detsentralizatsii upravleniia I zakonodatel'stva" *Pravo*. No. 40 (1905) Kokoshkin was acquainted with Georg Jellinek and attended his lectures during his internship in Heidelberg University. Later on he maintained friendly relationship with the professor. See: V.V.Shelokhaev, "Fedor Fedorovich Kokoshkin" B.S.Itenberg, V.V.Shelokhaev (eds.), *Rossiiskie liberaly* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 318.

⁹⁰*S"ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*, v. 2, 257.

⁹¹ Ibid.

he directly referred to Jellinek's theory in order to substantiate his idea of parallel legislation. The key question, according to Kokoshkin, could be formulated as follows: was it legally possible to change the status of Finland without an approval of the Diet? Referring to Jellinek's work *Ueber Staatsfragmente*, Kokoshkin wrote, that Jellinek had "definitely emphasised the inviolability of its (Finland's - *T. Kh.*) autonomous rights."⁹²

In general, Kokoshkin emphasized the idea of similarity in practical terms of Jellinek's position, which did not recognize Finland as a state, and that of Hermanson, who defended the theory of Finland as a non-sovereign state. Probably, he meant that the key similarity was the idea that it is impossible to change the juridical competence of Finland without the approval of its legislative organs. But, at the same time, Kokoshkin's statement, that Jellinek himself recognized a "practical closeness of his theory to that of Hermanson," with a reference to *Staatsfragmente*, is not quite correct. In *Staatfragmente* (in a footnote), where the book of Hermanson is directly mentioned, Jellinek did not recognize the similarity of his theory with the one of Hermanson, but rather insisted on practical resemblance of the Hermanson's and Mechelin's theories. As Jellinek argued, Hermanson's idea of Finland as a non-sovereign state was a modern version of the old theory of the Finnish constitutionalists suggesting that Finland was connected with Russia on the terms of a real union.⁹³ Nonetheless, Kokoshkin, who was Jellinek's disciple in the Heidelberg University, used in the first place that part of the doctrine of his professor, which underlined illegitimacy of changes in the sphere of competence of the Finnish constitutional organs without the approval of its legislative institutions.

⁹² F.F.Kokoshkin, "Nemetskie professora i peterburgskie chinovniki" *Russkie vedomosti* 18. (1910).

⁹³ Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente*, 44.

The position of another Jellinek's disciple, Bogdan Kistiakovsky, was more complex. Although Kistiakovsky undoubtedly belonged to the liberal movement, he did not take part in the activity of the Kadet party.⁹⁴ Originally, Kistiakovsky was closely connected with the representatives of the Ukrainian national movement and was quite unsympathetic about the idea of autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland in the version proposed by the deputies from the Polish Koło in the State Duma. Kistiakovsky rather insisted on a juridical equivalent for the status of all the national provinces of the Russian empire. The local legislation of the autonomous provinces, for him, should include, first of all, questions of cultural development, while the issues belonging to public, social and criminal sphere of legislation should be handed over to competence of the central state legislative institutions.⁹⁵

As regards the "Finnish question," Kistiakovsky took a special position as well. Already in April 1909, before the beginning of the public discussions on Finland in the State Duma, Kistiakovsky published in his journal *Kriticheskoe Obozrenie* ("Critical Review") a review on the work of Richard Erich "The state and juridical status of Finland in the works of foreign jurists" («Государственно-правовое положение Финляндии в освещении иностранных юристов» (1908)). In this review Kistiakovsky rejects Erich's attempts to rely on the authority of foreign jurists to substantiate a special position of Finland in the Russian Empire. It is important to note, that Erich belonged to the traditional school among the Finns and advocated the idea of a real union between Finland and Russia.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Heuman, Kistiakovsky, *The Struggle for National and Constitutional Rights*, 30.

⁹⁵ Bogdan Kistiakovsky, "Oblastnaia avtonomiia i eie predely" *Moskovsky ezhenedel'nik* 4 (1907).

⁹⁶ R. Erich, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozhenie Finliandii v osveshchenii inostrannykh juristov* (St.Petersburg, 1908).

Kistiakovsky noted with regret, that such a position of the Finns emerged as a response to the repressive politics of the Russian authorities and has acquired a greater political significance than the "position of those Russian constitutionalists, who consider it necessary to enforce the political and juridical connection between the both parts of the Empire, without the violation of the Finnish constitution."⁹⁷ From the following text of the review it becomes clear, that Kistiakovsky would consider it desirable that the legislative prerogatives of the monarch, which, in his view, undoubtedly apply to the territory of Finland, would be shared with the new Russian legislative institutions as well. Kistiakovsky criticises the position of those Finns, who perceive the connection of the both parts of the Empire only through the person of the Russian monarch. In his view, "a foothold of the Finnish constitution should lie in the Russian constitution."⁹⁸ In practice, this idea led Kistiakovsky to the statement that the constitutional organs of the Russian state finally have a prerogative to define the competence of the Finnish constitutional organs.

Kistiakovsky defended his interpretation of the idea of a desirable constitutional organization of Russia in his private conversation with Jellinek. The Russian disciple mentioned this conversation in his obituary to his German teacher, published in the journal *Russkaia Mysl'* ("Russian Thought") in 1912. The essence of this conversation, in Kistiakovsky's rendering, was that the latter told the professor his ideas regarding constitutional organization for Russia, particularly, that in the case of a conflict of the legislative organs of Finland and Russia, the last decision should be left to Russian legislative institutions. According to Kistiakovsky, Jellinek did not go into details, while objecting to his ideas, but at the same time, he persistently defended

⁹⁷ Bogdan Kistiakovsky, "R.Erich. Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozhenie Finliandii v osveshchenii inostrannykh juristov. SPb., 1908" *Kriticheskoe obozrenie*, 1909, vol. IV., 73

⁹⁸ Ibid., 76.

his original view that "no change in the state organization of Finland could be done without the approval of the Finnish Diet."⁹⁹ Finally, Kistiakovsky had to acknowledge, that such an agreement would be desirable, if not from a legal, then at least from a political standpoint.

Strictly speaking, the position of Kistiakovsky did not diverge significantly from the line, defended by the Kadet party, and, in particular, from the view of Kokoshkin. The dissimilarity can be perceived as a difference in accents. Kistiakovsky, who was not limited by considerations of current practical politics, reflected upon the future constitutional organization of Russia. He envisioned such an order, which would allow solving possible tensions between the constitutional organs of Finland and Russia by legal means, provided in the constitution.

By contrast, the Kadets, who were primarily concerned with elaboration of their position in a heated confrontation with the government and the right-wing parties in the State Duma, postponed the final solution of the question of a constitutional status of Finland in the Russian Empire for the uncertain future. They believed that at the moment the conditions were not ripe for a fair solution of this question.¹⁰⁰ In practice this implied the defence of the idea of a parallel legislation, which was in accordance both with the position of the exponents of the traditional constitution of Finland (the idea of returning to pre-Bobrikov conditions) and with the position of the advocates of the idea of Finland as non-sovereign state (Hermanson et al.). Nevertheless, such a position left with no solution of the main question: what should the policy be in the case of irreconcilable conflict between the Finnish and Russian legislative institutions.

⁹⁹ Bogdan Kistiakovsky, *Georg Jellinek kak myslitel' i chelovek* (Moscow, 1911), 10.

¹⁰⁰ *S"ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*, v. 2., 257.

Conclusion

Because the State Duma was dominated by the majority of right-wing and centrist deputies, the strongest argument for Kadets would naturally take the form of defending the constitutional rights of Finland through the idea of sovereignty of law. The theory of Jellinek on the self-restriction of authority as a principle characteristic for a modern *Rechtsstaat* suggested the potential for such a line of defence. This position, based on the clear principle, was not fully expressed. This was, in particular, because of various tactical concerns, based on the agreement of the Kadets leadership with the moderate part of the Finnish advocates of the traditional monarchical position, i.e. the connection of the both states through the dynastic ruler. The idea of a parallel legislation, suggested by the Kadets was much more in agreement with the alliance with the Finnish groups.

Leaving aside the details of the dispute, the situation in the Duma during the polemics on the "Finnish question" can be described in the following way. On the one hand, Peter Stolypin and the politicians supporting him based their position on the idea that state interests of Russia required the inclusion of the Finnish juridical field into the new order, established in Russia by the Fundamental Laws of 1906. From this followed that the local laws of Finland should be subordinated to all-imperial legislation. The legislative organs of the Empire, according to Stolypin and his supporters, should establish the borders of their own competence and, consequently, they could limit the competence of the Finnish legislative organs.

On the other hand, Miliukov and the liberal politicians, supporting him, defended the idea of preservation of the Finnish constitutional order. It was supposed

that it was necessary to find a mechanism, allowing including the specific Finnish laws into the Russian constitutional order without any conflict in future. The problem was, however, that Kadets and the left-wing deputies, being a minority in the Duma, could not prevent the violation of the constitutional rights of Finland in practice. In this situation they had only the only option to proclaim a position based on principle, i.e. to suggest such a solution of the "Finnish question", which would be in accordance with the idea of sovereignty of law. However, this was not done. Instead of the principal concerns, the tactical ones took the priority. As a result, the Kadets appeared as advocates of the elements of an "old order," i.e. they promoted a position of Finland, which had guaranteed its special status within the frames of the traditional monarchy. At the same time, the leaders of the Constitutional-Democratic party were not able to suggest any particular project regarding juridical status of Finland, which would correspond to the new constitutional order in Russia. Instead they postponed the decision of this question for an indefinite future.

Such a weakness of the Kadets' position in their dispute with the right-wing groups was a consequence of a broader problem, with which the Russian legal thinkers had confronted, while attempting to adapt the German theories of state law to the Russian conditions. The notion of sovereignty, characteristic of these theories, as referring not to a person or a group of people, but rather to a state as such, inalienable from the established legal order, was not systematically applicable in Russia. For the majority of liberals, the Russian state could hardly fit a model of a *Rechtsstaat*, despite the emerging elements of constitutionalism. The leaders of the Kadets, therefore, had to appeal to the "sovereignty" not of the law that already existed, but rather to the "sovereignty" of a law, which would have to emerge in future. Thus, the notion of "sovereignty" in application to "law" acquired a paradoxical meaning, as it referred to

something, which did not exist in reality. In practice it turned out that the principle of "sovereignty of law" was substituted by the will of the legislative institutions, which had to establish a new law as soon as favourable political conditions would come. At the same time, the theory of the German theoreticians of law on self-restriction of the supreme authority as an inalienable characteristic in a *Rechtsstaat* was actually ignored. The legislative organs, which were projected by the liberals for the future, did not have to restrict themselves by an existing law as, in liberals' view, they would have to perform a role of a constituent assembly. Thus, the arbitrary rule of the supreme authority was opposed not to an existing legal order, but to another arbitrary action - that of the future legislative institutions, which had to express, as liberals assumed, the will of the people. But until these institutions were created, the decision on a constitutional status of Finland had to be postponed.

Chapter 3.

The “Polish Question”:

Contesting the Meaning of Autonomy

In the book “Germany, Russia, and the Polish Question,” published in 1908 the leader of National-Democrats Roman Dmowski described the behavior of his party at the beginning of the revolution of 1905-1907 in the following way:

Political elements, who represented the Polish national strivings... did not rush... with organization of protest actions against the government. They understood, that the question of state organization should be resolved by the struggle between the government and the Russian people. If they had come into the forefront, the Poles would have deprived it of a character of the struggle of the Russian people against its own bureaucracy and would have assisted the transition of Russian nationalist elements on the side of the government. From the experience of 1863 the Poles realized, that by raising the Polish question, they can provoke the Russian nationalism and suppress the liberal strivings. Wishing the victory to the Russian constitutionalist movement, they tried to take a wait-and-see attitude as long as it was possible.¹

Although the wait-and-see tactics, described by Dmowski, did not justify itself in the long run, and the National Democrats had to reject it, the quotation above contains an important observation, which characterizes the vulnerable position of Russian liberals in their attempt to find Polish allies in their struggle against the government. As it was demonstrated in the first chapter, an attempt to place the Polish question on the agenda of Russian constitutionalists caused a split in this movement and the resignation of the group led by Guchkov, which eventually became a core of the Octobrist party. Many elements in the tactics of the Kadet party regarding the Polish question can be explained by their polemics with the more moderate liberals and the more extreme right-wing forces, who accused the Kadets of causing “the disintegrating Russia.”

¹ Roman Dmowski, *Germaniia, Rossiia i pol'skii vopros* (St.Petersburg, 1909), 126-127.

In order to defend their position the Kadets argued that providing Poland with autonomy would not lead to Russia's disintegration, but, on the contrary, it would contribute the strengthening of the Russian statehood.² This argument fitted the general theory of decentralization, in which the borderlands were to enjoy the right to issue their own laws regarding the local needs. At the same time, the unity of the state had to be ensured by the unity of the executive power. Thus, the Kadets believed that between the strict centralization without any autonomy and secession of the borderlands there was an intermediate position, equally beneficial both to Russia and the population of a borderland. The Kadets regarded the Kingdom of Poland as the only borderland, for which they were willing to provide autonomy in such a sense. It was connected to the notion of maturity of Polish culture and legal conscience of Polish population. The idea that autonomy would be mutually beneficial for both the borderlands and the center enabled the Kadets to respond to the criticism of the right-wing politicians, blaming the latter of incompetence and inability to fathom the complexity of juridical questions.

This chapter aims to demonstrate that the position of the representatives of the Polish national movement did not help the Kadets to defend their approach. The Polish claims went far beyond the Kadet's model of provincial autonomy, yet keen national pride and overrated claims of the Polish delegation were only part of the problem. The Polish partners, whom the Kadets had to deal with in the Duma, proceeded from quite a different notion of autonomy and the role that it had to play for Russia as whole. National Democrats, who constituted the majority of the Polish *koło*, proceeded from the assumption of the peoples as living organisms, who were in

² Peter Dolgorukov, "Natsional'nyi vopros i konstitutsiia" *Osvobozhdenie* 59 (1904), 147-148; Fedor Kokoshkin, "Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...", 3322.

a mutual struggle for existence. Such a theory excluded the possibility of a middle position, which would be equally beneficial both for the Russian and the Polish peoples. National Democrats considered that Russia, “weakened by anarchy” would accept their claims if they would rely on solidarity and resolute will of the Polish population. Therefore they did not look for allies among Russian political parties, but rather counted on acquiring autonomy in return for their assistance to the government in its struggle with the “forces of anarchy.”

This behavior of the Polish National-Democrats made the representatives of the Constitutional-Democratic party vulnerable to attacks from the right. The position of the Poles called into question the arguments of the Kadets, who tried to prove that the Polish autonomy did not contradict the idea of strengthening of the Russian statehood by means of decentralization. On the contrary, the Polish claims in the Duma bolstered the position of those who tried to prove that any concessions to the Poles would be the first step towards their separation from Russia. As a result, the Polish representatives in the first two Dumas, faced indifference, and failed even to provoke a discussion despite a significant number of potential sympathizers of autonomy among the Russian deputies. The Kadets accepted a wait-and-see tactics, hoping in vain that the Poles would finally reduce their claims. In the end, a considerably diminished Polish delegation in the third Duma faced a majority, which appeared to be hostile not only to the idea of autonomy, but even to the notion of civic equality of the Poles.

Polish Parties and the Question of Autonomy

In order to understand the situation, in which the Russian liberals found themselves regarding the “Polish question,” it is important to consider the political groups they could cooperate with. Whom could they perceive as a potential ally? In the beginning of the twentieth century, the most influential parties in the Kingdom of Poland were the National-Democrats (*Stronnictwo Narodowo-Demokratyczne, Endecja*) and the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna, PPS*). The group of “ugoda,” which recognized the possibility of collaboration with Russian political forces, was insignificant in the Kingdom. Besides, the political composition of this group differed greatly from the composition of the Russian liberals.

The Polish Socialist Party was the most influential group on the left wing of the political spectrum of the Kingdom of Poland. It was founded in 1892 by the merger of several groups of socialist orientation that survived after the suppression of the uprising in Łódź.³ The ideology of this party combined the slogan of restoration of independent Poland as a democratic republic with the general ideas of European socialists, such as socialization of the means of production.⁴ This ideology did not allow any points of contact with Russian liberals, who advocated the idea of territorial integrity of the Russian empire, even when they sought to transform it into a constitutional state.

The Polish socialists, however, had few connections with Russian socialist parties. Links between PPS and Socialist-Revolutionary Party were weak because PPS was oriented towards the labor movement, while Socialist Revolutionaries gave a

³ Glenn Alfred Janus, *The Polish Kolo, the Russian Duma and the Question of Autonomy* (PhD Dissertation: Ohio State University, 1971), 32.

⁴ Martov L., Maslov P., Potresov A. *Obshchestvennoe dvizhenie v Rossii v nachale XX veka*. Vol. 3. (St.Petersburg: “Obshchestvennaia pol’za,” 1909-1914), 242.

greater priority to agrarian question. The relationship between PPS and Russian Social-Democrats were complicated because of the existence of a separate Social-Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania (*SDKPiL*) of Rosa Luxemburg, Julian Marchlewski. This party was founded in 1900 as a result of a merger between a faction of PPS and the Social-Democrats from Lithuania. SDKPiL criticized PPS for breaking the principles of socialist internationalism and positioned itself as a major ally of Russian Social-Democrats in Poland and Lithuania. This party envisioned the future Congress Poland as an autonomous republic within Russian socialist republic.⁵

The Polish Socialist Party pursued the national independence of Poland, which it planned to achieve by means of military uprising. There is no place here to go deeper into details regarding the evolution of the party. Enough is to mention that in the course of the Revolution of 1905-1907 PPS split into two factions – the so-called *lewica* (the young generation) and the revolutionary faction (the old generation). *Lewica* sought convergence with SDKPiL, recognizing the necessity to collaborate with Russian Social-Democrats and supporting the slogan of the autonomy of Poland within the Russian state.

The National-Democratic Party was the most influential political force on the right wing of the political spectrum in the Kingdom. The party originated from the Polish League founded in Genève in 1886 by Zygmunt Miłkowski. The League attempted to create a network of illegal organizations in all the Polish partitions, united by common national program. In 1897, the organizing center of the Polish League moved to Galicia. By that time the organization had established numerous

⁵ Janus, *The Polish Kolo, the Russian Duma*, 32; Liliana Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire*, 108.

autonomous associations oriented to particular groups of population in all the three empires.⁶ The majority of scholars agree that the initial program of the Polish League did not go beyond the discourse of “*niepokorny*,” which characterized future National Democrats and socialists. Similarly to the socialists, the future National Democrats stood for creation of an independent Polish state. Unlike the socialists, they assumed that the state should be based on unification of all the social layers around the national idea.⁷

By the early 1890s, the National Democratic Party had acquired clearer ideological contours. One of its major ideologues was Zygmunt Balicki, who had been a member of several socialist groups, before he joined the National League – the predecessor of the National Democratic Party. The other two ideologues – Roman Dmowski and Jan Popławski edited the journal *Przegląd Wszechpolski* in Krakow as well as many other editions (intended for particular groups of population), which were illegally delivered into Russian Poland.⁸

General traits of the ideology of National Democrats were formulated by Balicki in his brochure “National Egoism against Ethics” (1893).⁹ In this article, Balicki opposes the ethic of ideals and the ethic of ideas. The former is personal, individualistic, sensitive, and dogmatic, while ethic of ideas is collective, self-conscious and autonomous.¹⁰ According to the author, “the ethic of ideals aims, if not

⁶ William Edward Freeman, *The National Democratic Movement in the Kingdom of Poland, 1886-1903* (PhD Dissertation: University of Colorado, 1974), 170-171.

⁷ Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate: Imagining Modern Politics in the Nineteenth Century Poland* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 213-215; Magdalena Micińska, *Inteligencja na rozdrożach, 1864-1918* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008), 118-120.

⁸ Teresa Kulak, Jan Popławski – biografia polityczna (Wrocław, 1994), 273-308.

⁹ Zygmunt Balicki, “Egoizm narodowy wobec etyki” In: Idem, *Parlamentarizm. Wybór pism* (Warszawa: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2008).

¹⁰ Ibid., 346-347.

at immediate accomplishment of perfection, than at the most possible convergence of individuals until they approach the condition of absolute perfection. At the same time, the notion of perfection devoid of any subjective estimation of the social must be more or less a priori.”¹¹

The ethic of ideals Balicki opposed to the ethic of ideas, or social ethics. “Its major principle is the common good of a particular society, to which a particular individual belongs.”¹² “Instead of the precept, based on sensitive altruism, to do good to everybody whom we met by chance, there comes to fore the precept of raising the individuality of a group we belong to, doing good to it, and accomplishing social happiness.”¹³

Earlier Balicki discussed the ethic of ideas, based on belonging to a certain social group, but he did not specify what particular group he was speaking about. However, the next passage indicated what exactly Balicki had in mind:

Everything mentioned above about autonomous morality becomes only a sound of the accord that corresponds to the highest social individuality, which is nation. It envelops all aspects of one’s life and in normal conditions is self-sufficient. Besides [nation] is the only society, to which a person belongs by birth, and which an individual does not choose, but is born into it... Social ethic seeks to enable everyone to feel that he is a member of his people. One not only had to identify himself with the national interest, but also to relate all his social existence to the existence of his people and to live its life...Ethical demands of national egoism have to override not only the egoism of autonomous groups, but also their altruism, [especially] if the latter is directed against the interests of the nation.¹⁴

The further development of this idea clarifies the political orientation of this philosophy and its polemic with representatives of socialist camp:

Social classes, which would feel solidarity with similar classes of the other people, rather than with other classes of their own people; the party, for which the commonality of international principles has a greater weight, than the commonality of traditions and national interests; a friendly circle, which establishes regular relations and lives with the circles of a

¹¹ Ibid., 347.

¹² Ibid., 352.

¹³ Ibid., 355.

¹⁴ Ibid., 361-362.

hostile society, breaking the internal connections of its own people, - all deserve strict criticism from the point of view of social morality, irrespective of their intentions, because they put the egoism of their altruism above the altruism that obliges them for the sake of national egoism.¹⁵

The idea that a nation is the highest form of social life was of major importance for Balicki. From this follows that any other forms of social association should be subordinated to the interests of the nation. Therefore, class solidarity above national borders is declared to be against the norms of social morality. Instead, one had to abide by the principle of solidarity of different classes inside one nation, which altogether goes against the interests of all the classes of a “hostile” nation.

It is noteworthy, that the principle of national egoism prevented the National Democrats from cooperating with the parties of other nations and particularly the Russian parties, because the Russian nation as whole was perceived as hostile. Such a position was expressed in the program of the party in 1903. The introductory part of the program declared that the aim of the party within the Russian empire was the development of such qualities in the Polish people that would be necessary for acquiring a better future “in the highest forms of an independent (*samoistnego*) political existence.”¹⁶ Despite a certain vagueness of the phrase, it clearly implied national independence.

There followed a paragraph about general principles of accomplishment of this aim which argued that “the Polish people, despite its political division, has a feeling of its unity, has its common interests, which differ from the interests of other peoples; even though it is deprived of independence (*niezależności*), it is a political people in the true sense of the word, and as such it needs a collective existence as an

¹⁵ Ibid., 363.

¹⁶ “Program stronnictwa Demokratyczno-Narodowego w zaborze rosyjskim” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 10 (1903): 724.

independent (*samoistne*) state.”¹⁷ Thus, the demand for independent statehood was inferred from the fact that the Polish people was a political nation. The absence of independence was supposed to be an accidental circumstance, which sooner or later should be overcome.

A special paragraph devoted to the goals of the party declared that “the major political aim... is the accomplishment of independence (*niepodległości*) and the creation of an independent (*samoistnego*) Polish state.”¹⁸ This idea was clarified in the following way:

For a people, which has a living feeling of unity and distinctiveness of its interests, the national state is the only form of political existence that may unconditionally prevent it from denationalization and provide it with an independent cultural and political development. Belonging to a foreign state divides the political forces of the people, lowers the value and diminishes the effectiveness of its cultural work. Even if it relies on the principle of autonomy, it not only binds the freedom of political action..., but also... makes the whole development of the national life impossible. The people not only cannot repudiate its pursuit for political independence, but should make the accomplishment [of such independence] the major aim of its strivings.¹⁹

Thus, the authors of the program did not consider autonomy within any of the empires that divided Poland a serious alternative to independence. In this formula autonomy was regarded as something that hampers the national development, because it urges the nation to take into consideration the conditions of a foreign state. An alternative understanding of autonomy as a mediate stage on the way towards independence is absent in the text.

At the same time, the program suggested, that particular choice of the means to achieve the aim of the party depended on opportunities provided by specific conditions in each of the partitions. In the constitutional states, such as Germany and Austria-Hungary, the political struggle could be pursued with legal methods, while in

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., 727.

¹⁹ Ibid.

the Russian conditions the party had to create an “illegal secret organization.”²⁰ The National Democrats thereby admitted that in the constitutional states the opportunity of self-government could facilitate the accomplishment of the final aims of the Polish nation, the way they saw them. By contrast, in Russia, where the National Democrats could only act illegally, pursuit of autonomy had no sense in the struggle for independence. This would only alienate the more radical followers, and offer no means to achieve the final goal. Only Russia’s transformation into a state with the possibilities of the political struggle within a legal framework could make the National Democrats drop the slogan of complete independence as an immediate political aim and adopt the idea of autonomy as an intermediate stage on the way to complete independence.

Russia’s military defeats in the war with Japan and mounting political tensions inside the country drove the National Democrats to the idea, that the moment was ripe to take advantage of Russia’s weakness and demand certain concessions in the “Polish question.” This tactics required coordination of their actions with the representatives of the Russian revolutionary and liberal camps. The details of the Congress of opposition groups in Paris in September 1904 were described in the first chapter. Here I will focus on the evolution of the position of the National Democrats. The article of one of the party’s leaders Jan Popławski in the December issue of *Przegląd Wszechpolski* for the 1904 offers a good starting point.

²⁰ Ibid., 737.

Jan Popławski: Indefinite Visions of the Status of Poland

The title of Popławski's article was "The Crisis of the State in Russia and Decentralization."²¹ The relationships between Poland and Russia as such were not discussed there and received only indirect references. The article, according to its author, aimed at explaining to the Polish readers the meaning of the developments in Russia. Speaking about the evolution of Russian revolutionary and constitutional movements, Popławski argued that Russian intelligentsia, even when it claimed the originality of its views, operated with the Western European clichés based on simplified rationalistic doctrines.²² "An organic and historically natural view on socio-political relationships is beyond the Russian way of thinking, especially in liberal-progressive circles, where it is considered to be equivalent to reaction."²³

Popławski explains the peculiarity of Russian thinking by the historical conditions of development of the Russian statehood. In his view, the European states were composed of several parts, which varied in racial, cultural, statehood, and religious traditions. United by common dynasty and common interests, these parts later on were drawn together by stronger ties, which required an ability to negotiate and find mutual compromises, as well as respect special rights and traditions, especially those of culture and language.²⁴ The Russian state, according to Popławski, emerged as a result of colonization of vast thinly populated lands. Because of their lower stage of civilization, the inhabitants of those lands could not establish autonomous regions that would have their distinctive cultural and legal traditions. Only in the course of the wars with Sweden and Poland during the eighteenth century

²¹ Jan Popławski, "Kryzys państwowy w Rosyi a decentralizacya" *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 12 (1904).

²² *Ibid.*, 898.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 899.

did Russia gain territories, which possessed their own culture and individuality.²⁵ For Popławski, those civilized borderlands could not be administered by centralist methods, which Russia traditionally used for governing its territories.²⁶

However, further development was complicated, because the post-Petrine Russian bureaucracy began to follow the German model.

For the sake of the interests of the state and the dominant nationality, but more in the interests of the officials, a system of centralization and unification had been gradually and unconditionally applied to conquered territories, which recently enjoyed a certain political and legal, or at least administrative, autonomy, which owed to their higher culture and outstanding distinctiveness of their national and social relations.²⁷

Popławski sought to prove that similar institutions could not function correctly in such regions as Warsaw and Orenburg, Helsingfors and Tiflis. According to the author, the Poles were aware of this, but such views could not penetrate into the political thinking of the Russian intelligentsia. Only recently did Russians begin to realize that the system of complete centralization had proved to be ineffective. For Popławski, the system of decentralization in Russia could follow the model of the United States, where cultural and natural borders between the territories were likewise missing.²⁸

According to Popławski, the slogan of decentralization recently became fashionable in the circles of enlightened bureaucracy. The liberal bureaucrats tended to delegate part of state authority to the institutions of local government, i.e. to society itself. In particular, they revisited the project of Mikhail Dragomanov, former professor of Kiev University. According to this project, Russia had to be divided into 10 or 12 autonomous districts with their legislative institutions. In the view of

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 900.

²⁷ Ibid., 901.

²⁸ Ibid., 903-904.

Popławski, “the weak point of this project... consisted in neglecting the historical and cultural distinctiveness of particular regions. As a result, the Polish Kingdom and Lithuania had to enjoy the same degree of autonomy as the Volga region or the Black Sea provinces.”²⁹ Besides, Dragomanov’s project presupposed a federation, established from above, whereas Popławski considered that federation could emerge only as a result of voluntary and gradual historical development.³⁰

Comparing specific peculiarities of the mentioned Volga and Black Sea provinces Popławski concluded that certain degree of decentralization would be desirable for Russia and would not threaten the unity of the state and the people. The same, he thought, referred to the Little Russian provinces. Popławski warned of the dangers of “constitutional centralism.” The latter could awaken social forces, but would be unable to coordinate and organize them, and thus could result in anarchy.³¹ Finally, Popławski indicated that the article was intended for the Polish readers in order to warn them about the consequences of Russia’s transformation into constitutional state without decentralization and the impact of such transformation on the Russian-Polish relations.³²

Thus, one can see that Popławski left aside the question of the status of Poland in constitutional Russia. He only asserted that Poland (and Lithuania) could not have the same status as other regions in Russia, if the latter were to follow the path of federalization. He rejected Dragomanov’s idea of a symmetric federation, but, at the same time, he did not specify what sort of asymmetric arrangement was suitable for Russia.

²⁹ Ibid., 905.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid., 908.

³² Ibid., 909.

The Deal with the Wrong Partner

The course of the Russian-Polish meeting in April 1905 was considered in details in the first chapter. The reaction of the National Democrats to this meeting was expressed in the anonymous article “The Debut of Progressive Democracy,” published in *Przegląd Wszechpolski* in May 1905.³³ Since Balicki took an active part in the meeting and was one of the editors of the journal, one can attribute the article either to him or to one of his close associates.

The author argued that the activity of the Progressive Democrats was destructive and only impeded the achievement of the real aims of this meeting. According to the author,

...the Progressive Democrats, who had the formula, but lacked real political thinking, believed they were participating in something like preliminary constituent assembly and engaged in heated bargaining about their formula... This turned the entire discussion on absolutely wrong path and, together with actions of the radicals from Conquered Lands (*Kraj Zabraný*) offered to the Russians such an image of Polish society, that other Polish delegates had to blush with shame.³⁴

The formula in question belonged to Wacław Sieroszewski, and was suggested on the first day of the meeting (by Balicki himself). It offered:

Recognizing the unity of central state authority, namely the form of organization of the state, the commonality of foreign affairs and all international, political and trade agreements, the unity of army and navy, state-wide budget and loan – we demand that the Kingdom of Poland becomes an autonomous legislative and political organization, based on its own constitution, issued in Warsaw by the Polish constituent assembly, elected by universal, equal, and secret ballot.³⁵

The discussion at the meeting, according to the proceedings, was reduced to the protestations of Russian participants, who insisted that the legislative assembly in Warsaw operated within the framework established by the empire-wide constituent assembly. Finally, the meeting issued a resolution, which partially reproduced

³³ “Debiut postępowej demokracji” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 5 (1905).

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 293.

³⁵ RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item.39. p. 4.

Sieroszewski's formula. In this resolution the deputies recognized the necessity of an "autonomous arrangement of the Kingdom of Poland," which would have a "distinct diet, elected by universal, equal, direct, and secret ballot, irrespective of nationality and confession." At the same time the resolution affirmed the principle of "state unity" and insisted on the "representation [of the Kingdom of Poland] in the Russian Parliament." In the end, it was decided to "postpone a detailed definition of the limits of the meaning of autonomy until an all-round examination of this question."³⁶

According to the proceedings, this resolution was adopted by a majority against one voice (Mr. Mich). In addition to the resolution, the participants passed a supplement regarding the equality of cultural rights of the Poles in Lithuania and Urkaine-Rus.

Although it follows from the proceedings that Balicki voted for this resolution he was apparently unsatisfied with the course of the discussion. According to the proceedings, during the second session of the meeting he presented the program of the National Democrats regarding the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, which was earlier published in newspaper *Rus*'.³⁷ The program demanded:

an inner arrangement [that would] conform to particular local conditions and historical tradition, [and would include] legislation, administrative system, courts and judicature, and national education [supported by] a separate budget for the Kingdom of Poland. The elaboration of such a reform should be entrusted to people, who are aware of local conditions, have the credit of the Polish society and are empowered by election to implement this task.³⁸

At the end of his speech Balicki declared that the constituent assembly of the Kingdom of Poland had to be convened after the Russian-wide constituent assembly.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid. p. 19.

³⁷ *Pol'skii vopros v gazete "Rus"* (St.Petersburg: Izdanie gazety "Rus", 1905) v. 1. p. VII.

³⁸ RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item 39. p. 13.

³⁹ Ibid.

The program of the National Democrats did not mention the word autonomy, but it clearly presupposed certain form of political distinctiveness of the Kingdom of Poland. The main difference of this program from Sieroszewski's formula was that it recognized the competence of the Russian-wide constituent assembly over the Polish autonomous institutions. For this reason Miliukov found Balicki's program to be more preferable to the formula of Sieroszewski.⁴⁰

This is how *Przegląd Wszechpolski* portrayed the events preceding the adoption of the resolution:

Half of the meeting was spent in unpleasant discussion on what was neither the contemporary state of affairs in Poland, nor the purpose of the meeting. As a result, there remained no time and space for the arguments that would clarify the demands for autonomy. A dominant opinion among the Russians was that no resolution could be passed and the meeting would have to end with nothing. The Progressive Democrats... were the first to digress from the general declaration on autonomy, insisted on purely partisan postulates and declared to all the participants that they would leave the meeting if it does not accept their program.⁴¹

In response, the representatives of the National Democrats asked the Progressive Democrats to postpone the discussion of the divisive subjects, and suggested to work out an official position on them. At the same time, they asked to "turn the rest of the discussion from secondary questions to the subject of autonomy, making no claims and resolutions."⁴² In the same vein, according to *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, the representative of the National Democrats read the declaration and the program of the party, published in the newspaper *Rus'*. The latter, according to the author, did not contradict Sieroszewski's formula.

"From this moment on, the meeting recognized the possibility of passing a resolution and began the discussion on this subject. And at this point, the Progressive Democrats intervened with their indecent demand to adopt their own, somewhat

⁴⁰ Ibid. p. 16.

⁴¹ "Debiut postępowej demokracji...", 294.

⁴² Ibid.

modified version of the resolution.”⁴³ “Amidst chaotic disputes Miliukov opposed the opinion of the National Democrats, published in *Rus’*, to the position of the Progressive Democrats, as standing on the ground of political autonomy. However, the latter... tried to insist, contrary to all evidence, that the position [of the National Democrats] did not imply political autonomy.”⁴⁴

The author argued that the Progressive Democrats strove not just to pass the formula that would suit everyone in general, but the formula that would be consonant to the interests of their own party. “Having taken a firm position on this question, the representatives of the National Democrats refused to vote for the resultant resolution (which was not reflected in the proceedings – T.Kh.). The Progressive Democrats voted instead... solely for the sake of their own position.”⁴⁵ According to the author, if it were not for the “futile discussions about the supremacy of the Polish constituent assembly... it would have been possible to contribute more effectively and successfully to working out common position with the outstanding representatives of the Russian constitutionalist movement. However, our Progressists did everything to strengthen among the Russians the reaction against what they did not want and could not accept, which created quite an unflattering impression about the political maturity of the Poles.”⁴⁶

This reaction to the resolution of the meeting – practically a disavowal – meant that the National Democrats did not consider themselves bound by any agreements with the representatives of the Russian liberal movement. The fact that the Russians were ready to accept the idea of Polish autonomy was not, in the opinion of the

⁴³ Ibid., 295.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 296.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

National Democrats, the reason to abandon their own attempts to accomplish the autonomy or reduce its extent. They imagined themselves to be ambassadors of the Polish people and viewed the Progressive Democrats, who had reached certain agreement with the Russians, as representing no one, except their own party. The National Democrats only sought to inform the Russians of their vision of the “Polish question” and to learn the Russian opinion on this matter.⁴⁷ According to the author, they did not plan to strike any agreement with the Russians, at least officially. The resolution passed at the meeting was, in their view, the result of the intrigues of the Progressive Democrats, who also broke the agreement to keep the proceedings of the meeting unpublished. This demonstrated that the National Democrats were an uneasy partner for Russian liberals, a partner, who could easily break the agreement.

Autonomy in the Program of the National Democrats

Despite the generally negative tone of description of the meeting in *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, the representatives of the Polish delegation, including the National Democrats, agreed with their Russian partners that the idea of autonomy might become a common ground for further discussions. However, in order to understand the position of the Polish side, it is important to consider another article in *Przegląd Wszechpolski*, which appeared in May soon after the meeting.⁴⁸

The author of the article, signed by the initials St.B. was focused on the opposition between the Russian and the Polish political traditions and came to the conclusion that “[there] is nothing to improve or develop in Russia, to reform the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 292.

⁴⁸ St.B. “Dążenie do autonomii Królestwa, ego źródła i podstawy ogólne” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 5 (1905).

social order; it is necessary to destroy it entirely.”⁴⁹ The author decried: “... the domination of a people which had been formed in the traditions of absolutism and bureaucracy, and for which the respect to the rights of individual is unthinkable,... over a society, which had been formed in far-reaching traditions of rights and freedoms of individual”⁵⁰

The author further argued that, “continued subjection of Poland to the Russian rule is not only disastrous for our people, but threatens our position among civilized nations in Europe.” And further: “...with the beginning of the crisis of statehood in Russia... the striving towards the autonomy of the Kingdom emerges among various trends of Polish political thought. It is possible to say, that the program of autonomy has become a nation-wide program.”⁵¹

It is clear from the author’s reasoning that he understood autonomy in a negative way, as a tendency to the greatest possible degree of separation from the Russian statehood, since the essence of this statehood was incompatible with the character of the Polish nation. From the reasoning of the author it followed that the Polish nation represented a living organism put into the cage of a foreign statehood. The bigger the size of the cage the wider possibilities it provided for a normal life of the organism. Naturally, the cage of a bigger size would be more preferable, than a narrow one, but it would be much better to do without cage altogether. If the prisoner – the Polish nation – agrees with the cage of a bigger size, it is not to satisfy its natural needs, but because of the historical circumstances.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 278.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 286.

In the next part of the article the author described desired extent of autonomy. For him, it had to be autonomy, based on placing legislation and administration in the hands of the Poles.”⁵² The author referred to the status of Poland in accordance with the constitution of 1815 as a historical model, which was a precedent of a desired autonomy. According to him,

...history knows that during the Russian domination over Poland the civilizational progress of our people was proportionate to the degree the people influenced the government; autonomous separation of the region was always preferable, not only from national, but also civilizational point of view. Consequently, now we must pursue such an organization that would secure us the greatest political separation [from the Russian government].⁵³

The author believed that the restoration of the constitution of 1815 was for the time being impossible.⁵⁴ At the same time, he rejected the model of the Austrian Galicia, because it did not have its own legislation, except for certain “laws of economic character.”⁵⁵ In his view, legislation had to be “the expression of the will of the entire society, and author of this legislation should be the diet in Warsaw.”⁵⁶ Besides, the Kingdom of Poland needed its separate budget, which would rely on a distinct system of taxation.⁵⁷ At the same time, the Kingdom would contribute to the Russian treasury a certain payment to cover statewide expenditure, in the amount defined by a mutual decision of the Polish diet and the Russian officials. Furthermore, the author advocated the total separation of judicial and administrative powers.

All government should be formed from the representatives of the region, and Polish should be the language of administrative institutions. The officials of various administrative departments should be responsible to the diet and be completely independent from the Russian ministries.⁵⁸

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid., 288-289.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 289.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 290.

According to the author, the competence of the diet had to include all questions, except those “indisputably recognized as demanding mutual decision.” Such questions had to be solved by sending a delegation of the Polish diet to the session of the Russian parliament. At the same time, the Polish delegation would not take part in the discussion of purely Russian questions.⁵⁹

The article concluded with the following statement: “It is not an attempt to formulate the postulates expressing the Polish national ideal, but rather the conditions, that would enable normal life of the nation and its participation in general progress of civilization.”⁶⁰ This statement makes clear that, unlike the idea of complete independence, autonomy was not the final goal of the Polish representatives. It was rather regarded as a pre-condition for further development of the Polish nation.

This project of autonomy looks similar to the formula that the Finns pursued in their relationship with the Russian empire. The sphere of statewide questions was reduced to the questions of foreign affairs, defense, and customs. All other issues had to be within the competence of local legislative institutions. Even the authority of governor-general had to depend on the will of the Polish people. Proposed autonomy was thereby comparable to the Finnish understanding of the Russian emperor as a constitutional monarch of Finland.

From the point of view of Kokoshkin’s classification, the Poles were advancing a claim for an interstate union rather than autonomy. The author considered the relationship between the Crown of St. Stefan and Croatia as the closest analogy to the model of autonomy desired by the Poles. The author’s formula recalls, what Jellinek wrote about the relationship between Finland and Russia. In a dispute with

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 291.

Leo Mechelin, who regarded the connection between Russia and Finland as a personal union, Jellinek argued that Finland was a *Staatsfragment*, just as Croatia was a fragment within Hungary.

Juridical Grounding of the Autonomy of the Polish Kingdom

One can find a more detailed argumentation of the adopted vision of the relationship between the Kingdom of Poland and Russia in the article of Jan Popławski, published in *Przegląd Wszechpolski* in July 1905.⁶¹ The article began with a long historical introduction, which gave a positive estimation of Aleksander Wielopolski's attempts to put the relationship between Russia and Poland on a firm juridical ground. In a review of emergence and early development of the National-Democrats party, the author argued that national independence was the party's initial ideal.⁶² He further wrote about the movement of "*ugodowcy*," who wanted to find a *modus vivendi* with Russian authorities. According to the author, their program "relied not on law, but on mercy."⁶³ Now "the time has come to formulate a real political strategy of the National Democratic Party in the Russian partition."⁶⁴ Not unlike the "*ugodowcy*," the author opposed the political program of the National Democrats to the ideas of revolutionary parties, who sought independence by means of armed uprising (obviously, he meant PPS). According to the author, it was evident that liberation by means of armed uprising had been and still remained impossible, considering both the political and the military conditions, particularly the state of

⁶¹ Jan Popławski, "Stosunek prawno-polityczny Królestwa Polskiego do Rosyi" *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 7 (1905).

⁶² *Ibid.*, 378.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 379.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 380.

armament. Therefore, the National Democrats decided to find the third way between depending on the mercy of government and the armed struggle for independence. The following reasoning of Popławski explored the third way and the means to achieve it.

According to Popławski, the aim of the movement would have to be “legal and political particularity of the Kingdom of Poland and the national rights of the Polish element in the Conquered Lands that would correspond to its numerical, cultural and social significance, as well as its historical role.”⁶⁵ Regarding the means, Popławski position relied on his view of the current state of affairs in the Russian empire. Popławski argued that

...the Russian public opinion, and not only circles of opposition, recognized the necessity of certain autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland; the disputes concern the extent of its implementation rather than the principle. At the same time, given the growth of anarchy in the Russian state, the opposition of the Russian government [to autonomy] would not be too strong, [particularly] if our society is capable of decisive and solidary politics regarding this question.⁶⁶

Popławski left aside the position of the Russian liberal movement and possibilities of collaborating with it. He only mentioned the sympathy to the idea of Polish autonomy on the part of the Russian opposition circles and beyond. For Popławski, in order to accomplish the aim, the Polish people would have to unite around the program of the National Democrats. That would force the government, “weakened by anarchy,” to make concessions to the Polish people. The author does not even consider the idea of gaining support of the Russian public opinion by moderating Polish demands.

The author also addressed the difference between the question of the Kingdom of Poland and the question of the Conquered Lands. In his view, the claim of uniting the Conquered Lands with the Kingdom of Poland would provoke a harsh reaction of

⁶⁵ Ibid., 381.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

the Russian people. According to Popławski, although the Polish people were a minority in these provinces, their culture provided to it a natural advantage over other national elements. Therefore, the Conquered Lands should have legal and political particularity within the Russian state. If the Polish element in the Lands becomes stronger, it would be possible to accomplish a closer connection of these provinces with the Kingdom.⁶⁷

Finally, the author relied on a solidary public opinion as a major motion force in the issue of autonomy. At the same time, he sought to define a claim that would be appropriate for the Poles in the current political situation. According to Popławski,

...the only criterion for us (the Poles – T.Kh) in the question of our relationship to the Russian state is our national interest. However, Russia does not respect this interest, since it has its own interest, which is opposite of ours. Therefore we can only put this question on a legal ground. We know for sure that law is only a sanction of force. Yet we should also recall Rousseau who said long ago that ‘even a superior force is not strong enough if it does not transform its force into law.’”⁶⁸

Thus, in Popławski’s view, Poland as a weaker side can enforce its arguments only if they rely on certain legal arrangements. Therefore, he suggested restoring the legal and political relationship between Poland and Russia that had been established by the Treaty of Vienna and acquired the sanction of international law.

The rest of the article provided an interpretation of the rather vague clauses of this treaty on the status of Poland in the Russian partition. In the author’s view, the acts of the congress defined the relationship between Russia and Poland as a real union, or the union of two states.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Ibid., 382.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 384. The article I of the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna has the following phrasing: “The duchy of Warsaw...is united to the Russian empire, to which it shall be irrevocably attached by its constitution, and be possessed by his majesty the Emperor of all the Russia, his heirs and successors in perpetuity. His Imperial Majesty reserves to himself to give to this State, enjoying a distinct Administration, the interior improvement which he shall judge proper. He shall assume with his other

According to Popławski this was neither “the relationship of a unilateral grant [of autonomy], which may be taken back, nor a bilateral agreement, where one of the sides has the right to break the contract... The relationship had the sanction of the international law, rather than of the Russian state law.”⁷⁰ Considered so, the actions of the Poles after the conclusion of treaty (such as, the two uprisings) did not have any juridical significance, because the Poles were not the subject of the agreement. However, depriving Poland of independence, for Popławski, was an unlawful act, from the perspective of international law, since Russia had accepted certain obligations, which it had to follow. As to the argument that the acts of 1815 had only a historical significance, Popławski wrote that they had a certain ideal value. This value could not be lost with time as was clear from the example of the Finish “constitution of 1809 that had also been suspended for a long time, and revised afterwards.”⁷¹

The reference to historical legal acts was another way of saying that the Polish right for independent life did not require any sanction: “Our will is both the ground and sanction for it. If... we restrict our will by the sphere of possible, we have to use everything that may facilitate the achievement of our goal.”⁷² At the end of the article Popławski dismissed as “insincere,” “ineffective and humiliating” any attempts to “substantiate [Polish] demands by the interest of the state and the Russian people as well as commonality of their interests with [the interests of the Poles].” There

titles that of Czar, King of Poland, agreeably to the form established for the titles attached to his other possessions.” “The General Treaty of the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna” In: *British and Foreign State Papers. 1814—1815* (London: James Ridgway and Sons, Piccadilly, 1839) v. 2., 11.

⁷⁰ Jan Popławski, “Stosunek prawno-polityczny...”: 384.

⁷¹ Ibid., 385.

⁷² Ibid., 386.

remained the possibility “to substantiate [Polish] strivings by law, such as it is, and from which [the Poles] may benefit.”⁷³

It is noticeable, that the author proceeds from the assumption of fundamental hostility of the interests of Russia and those of the Polish nation and ignores the sympathy of the Russian public opinion to the idea of Polish autonomy. Consequently, it is useless to look for such a relationship of Russia and Poland that would be mutually beneficial for both sides. If one of the sides wins, the other loses. Therefore, given the relative weakness of the Poles in this zero sum confrontation, the only strategy to adopt consisted, for Popławski, is the reliance on the historical legal precedent. Thus, the slogan of widest possible autonomy, for the National Democrats, actually implied the idea of two states, united by a real union. Taken in this sense, autonomy presupposed the recognition of a separate statehood for Poland and went well beyond the notion of provincial autonomy. The latter concept recognized the statehood only for the Russian empire, which could grant authority to autonomous institutions and take it back in any time.

After the Manifesto of October 17th

Russian state system underwent certain changes in the time that elapsed after the Russian-Polish meeting in April that adopted preliminary agreements regarding the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland. Frightened by the scale of protests, the Russian government had to make partial concessions to the demands of national movements. These changes concerned the interests of the Polish population as well. The decree of April 17, 1905 announced the beginnings of religious tolerance. This

⁷³ Ibid.

was followed by mass conversions from Orthodoxy to Catholicism among mixed Polish-Ukrainian population in Siedlce and Lublin provinces.⁷⁴ The decree of May 1905 abolished restrictions for persons of “Polish decent” to acquire property in the nine Western provinces, which had been introduced soon after suppressing of January uprising.⁷⁵ The statute of June 6, 1905, and the decree of October 1, of the same year allowed opening private schools with the national (non-Russian) languages of instruction, except for the subjects of the Russian language, history and geography. Finally, the Manifest of October 17th declared civic freedoms in Russia (the freedom of press, conscience, meetings, social and political unions) and proclaimed that the forthcoming State Duma would possess legislative authority.⁷⁶

The National Democrats responded to these events in the article “Russian State-wide Duma and the Tasks of the Polish Politics,” published in the August-October issue of *Przegląd Wszechpolski*.⁷⁷ The author predicted that Russian constitutional movement would be weak and that the parliament would not seriously change the political situation. In these conditions, the Polish delegation in the Duma had to behave as a Polish embassy in a foreign state, avoid fragmentation into factions and act as a single solidary whole. The author argued that for the Poles “the Duma would only be a playground for foreign activity, a field for a struggle with other

⁷⁴ Edward Chmielewski, *The Polish Question in the Russian State Duma* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1970), 23; Theodore R. Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia. Nationalism and Russification on the Western Frontier, 1864 – 1914* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996), 174-175.

⁷⁵ Chmielewski, *The Polish Question in the Russian State Duma*, 23. A more detailed analysis on the Russian policy in Western provinces see: Weeks, *Nation and State in Late Imperial Russia*, 96-108; Alexei Miller, Mikhail Dolbilov (eds.) *Zapadnye okrainy Rossiiskoi imperii* (Moscow: NLO, 2006), 209-255.

⁷⁶ Manifest ob usovershenstvovanii gosudarstvennogo poriadka 17 oktiabria 1905 g. In: *Rossiiskoe zakonodatel'stvo X-XX vv.* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literature, 1994), 41

⁷⁷“Rosyjska izba ogólnopanstwowa a zadania polityki polskiej” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 8-10 (1905).

opinions about our rights.”⁷⁸ This statement reflected the political practice of the Polish *koło* in the Austrian and the German parliaments.⁷⁹ For the Russian case it is important that the National Democrats refused to form a coalition with other parties. They were going to behave as a foreign delegation during the diplomatic negotiations. They would advance their demands, relying on the opinion of their own country, and perceive the Russian representatives as a single hostile agent.

Proceeding from this idea, the Polish delegation of 22 people, led by Dmowski, left for a meeting with Witte hoping to negotiate an autonomy for Poland. The trip to St. Petersburg began at the moment when Warsaw was gripped by a general strike. As a result, the government suspected the Poles of the intention to separate from Russia and introduced the martial law in the Kingdom of Poland on November 11.⁸⁰ The delegation learned about this decision on it's the way to St. Petersburg. The delegates refused to meet with the prime-minister expressing their protests against the measures of the government. Dmowski alone decided to seek an audience with Witte. He offered his party's support and assistance to the government in its struggle against the revolution in Poland. In return the government had to provide autonomy to the Kingdom of Poland and “grant the Polish language its rights.” According to Baudouin de Courtenay, Witte was ready to accept Dmowski's proposal and was about to pass his suggestions to the emperor.⁸¹ However, several

⁷⁸ Ibid., 576.

⁷⁹ For more details about the Polish *koło* in Austrian and German parliaments see: William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles and Jews. The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980); Lech Trzeciakowski, *Posłowie Polscy w Berlinie, 1848 – 1928* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2003); Stanisław Pijaj, *Między polskim patriotyzmem a habsburskim lojalizmem. Polacy wobec przemian ustrojowych monarchii habsburskiej (1866-1871)* (Kraków: Instytut Historii UJ, 2003).

⁸⁰ “Zjazd ziemców w Moskwie wobec spraw Polskich” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 11 (1905), 845.

⁸¹ Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, “Autonomia Polski” In: Idem. *Miejcie odwagę myślenia... Wybór pism publicystycznych z lat 1898-1927* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2007), 175.

days later he was “unpleasantly surprised” to find out that Dmowski and other Polish activists, who took part in the meeting of constitutionalists, condemned the politics of the government in Poland.⁸² The Russian constitutionalists were likewise watchful of the Polish delegation, and demanded a guarantee that the Poles would ask the Duma, rather than the government to recognize their autonomy.⁸³

The November Program of the National Democrats

After the Polish delegation returned from St. Petersburg, the National Democrats published a new version of their program. This program gave a specific interpretation of the agreement with the representatives of the Russian zemstvo-constitutionalist movement, which was supposedly reached during the meeting of November 1905.⁸⁴ Although the materials of the meeting suggest that Russian constitutionalists confirmed the claims of Polish autonomy, without specifying its contents,⁸⁵ the program of the National Democrats proclaimed the following understanding of this agreement:

The Political autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland relies on the constitutional act, which provides for a legislative diet in Warsaw, independent Polish administration and separate treasury. The unity of the Kingdom with the state is accomplished through the person of the monarch and fulfilled within the sphere of common state-wide issues, excepted from the competence of the diet of the Kingdom (further follows the list of these issues – T.Kh.)... The unity is also accomplished through participation of the treasury of the Kingdom of Poland in expenses for common needs and through participation of the representatives of the Kingdom in statewide assembly.⁸⁶

⁸² Sergei Witte, *Vospominania* (Berlin: “Slovo,” 1922) v. 2., 143.

⁸³ “Zjazd ziemcow w Moskwie ...”: 848.

⁸⁴ A detailed analysis of the proceedings of the meeting in in the first chapter.

⁸⁵ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii 1902-1905*, 482-495.

⁸⁶ “Stanowisko stronnictwa Demokratyczno-Narodowego w chwili obecnej” *Przegląd Wszechpolski* 11 (1905): 767.

One can see once again that the National Democrats understood autonomy as a real union. At the same time, the program presupposed the participation of the Polish deputies in the statewide legislative assembly in order to defend the rights of the Poles living outside of the Kingdom of Poland. The authors of the program emphasized, that the party did not “refuse from their striving towards autonomy, whatever the way the Russian political evolution takes.”⁸⁷ In other words, the ideologues of the National Democrats did not consider necessary an agreement with the Kadets, despite the sympathy of the latter towards the idea of autonomy. Consequently, whatever the possibilities of alignment with the Russian liberals would appear in the Duma, the Polish deputies were determined to pursue realization of their demands, relying on Polish, rather than Russian opinion.

Within this framework, there was no sense for the Poles to restrict their demands in order to obtain an agreement with the Russian parties. On the contrary, the National Democrats took a certain principle position. Whether the Kadets were ready to accept and support it or not was of secondary importance.

At the same time, the authors of the program assumed that Russia would continue to suffer from anarchy, and believed that autonomy would help prevent the expansion of Russian anarchy and rule out the influence of Russian political organizations in Poland.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 771.

The Progressive Democratic Union

If the National Democratic Party initially stayed aloof from the Russian constitutional movement, the Progressive Democratic Union chose to follow the mutual agreements with the Kadets. At the Zemstvo-Constitutionalist meeting in September Fedor Kokoshkin delivered his report, where he outlined the general ideological contours of the Kadets' program regarding the national question. Kokoshkin justified the necessity of providing autonomy to the Kingdom of Poland immediately after the establishment of the constitutional order. In the end, the participants of the meeting passed a resolution about the Polish autonomy and thereby confirmed their promise to the Poles made in April. The resolution was formulated as follows:

The meeting... recognizes that following the establishing an all-imperial democratic popular representation with constitutional rights, it is necessary to single out immediately the Kingdom of Poland into a distinct autonomous unit with diet, elected on the basis of universal, equal, and secret ballot, on condition of preservation of the state unity of the empire with the possibility of correction of the borders between the Kingdom of Poland and neighboring provinces by mutual agreement... in accordance with the national composition and the desire of the local population. At the same time, the empire-wide guarantees of civic freedom and the right of nationalities for cultural self-determination should be extended to the Kingdom of Poland. The rights of minorities should be protected.⁸⁹

One can see that the liberals rejected the formula of Sieroszewski and followed their own vision of autonomy in the strictly juridical meaning of self-government. Central state institutions had to define the borders of the competence of the latter. Compared to the formula passed in April, the new version set additional restrictions for the Kingdom of Poland, namely, the possibility of correction of boundaries, which was a special concession to the demands of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian national

⁸⁹ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii 1902-1905*, 396

movements. The latter expressed concerns that autonomy would provide the Poles with additional possibilities for the national oppression of their peoples.⁹⁰

This important development in the position of the Russian liberals regarding Polish demands remained seemingly unnoticed by the representatives of the Progressive-Democratic Union inside Poland. On the day of issuing of the Manifest of October 17 the major edition of the Union, the newspaper *Prawda*, published an article elucidating the program of the party and a detailed “Project of Autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, *which would be adopted by the legislative assembly in Warsaw, elected by direct, secret, and equal ballot.*”⁹¹

Specific feature of this project consisted in direct enumeration of the functions of central authority, which contradicted to the idea of regional autonomy. Besides, all the administrative functions had to be fulfilled by commissions, established by the diet and lead by elected office-holders. The diet had to appoint the heads of voievodeships (*województwo*) and smaller territorial units, but the power of these appointees was restricted by local diets, which had to function on an autonomous basis and take charge of all the local matters. The project mentioned the position of governor-general without specifying the functions of the latter. At the same time, a separate section of this document was devoted to various liberties and the code of labor laws based on the minimal labor program.⁹²

The treasury had to be separate from the Russian one and the diet had to approve the budget. The laws, adopted by the diet, had to be submitted for the monarch’s approval. In case of veto, the bill could be approved by the second round of

⁹⁰ Ibid. GARF. f. 579. op. 1. item 1842. p. 1.

⁹¹ *Prawda* 42-43 (1905): 502.

⁹² Ibid., 503.

balloting in the diet.⁹³ Although the project proclaimed the unity of the army in the Russian empire, the descendants of the Kingdom of Poland had to do military service on the territory of the Kingdom. The delegates to the all-imperial parliament had to be elected by the diet. The Russian-wide electoral law would establish the number of the Polish deputies in the central parliament.⁹⁴

Generally, the program, published in *Prawda* went far beyond the borders of regional autonomy. In a certain way, it was a concretization of the Sieroszewski's formula, proclaimed during the meeting in April. Although they declared their agreement with the Kadets, the Progressive Democrats, similarly to the National Democrats, promoted their own program. In it, the meaning of autonomy was close to the idea of independent parliamentary republic, which only coordinated some of its functions with central state institutions.

Why did the Kadets pursue the collaboration with the Progressive Democratic Union, even despite the latter's obvious violations of the initial agreement? First of all, the position of the Kadets inside Poland was weak. The Warsaw group of the Constitutional Democratic Party counted less than 20 members, so it could not pursue an independent the electoral campaign.⁹⁵ The situation was complicated because the Polish population in general stuck to Polish parties. At the same time, constitutionally-oriented Russian population in Poland viewed with suspicion the Kadets' slogan of Polish autonomy, fearing that it would only enforce the Polish domination in the region.⁹⁶ More successful in these conditions was the activity of the local branches of

⁹³ Ibid., 503.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 503-504.

⁹⁵ GARF. f. 523. op. 1. item. 174. p. 41 ob.

⁹⁶ Ibid. See also: N.Ja. Drel', *Raznitsa mezhdru russkin osvoboditel'nyim dvizheniem i sovremennym pol'skim i avtonomiia Pol'shi po dannym pressy* (Warsaw: Tipografiia Okruzhnigi Shtaba, 1906), 24-28.

the “Union of October 17,” which advocated cultural rights of the Russian population and proclaimed the slogan of the “United and Indivisible” Russian state.⁹⁷ The Kadets had to make a “federative union” with the Progressive Democrats and use their Warsaw group as a mediator between the two parties.⁹⁸ The Constitutional Democrats recognized their “ideological similarity” with the Progressive Democrats. In case the latter won the elections to the State Duma, the Kadets could obtain a more loyal partner, than the National Democrats. These calculations motivated the core of the Kadets to defend the idea of Polish autonomy from the criticism of Guchkov at the Zemstvo meeting in November 1905.⁹⁹

However, the calculations of the Kadets proved to be unjustified. The Progressive Democrats refused to participate in the elections to the First State Duma in protest against the martial law.¹⁰⁰ The only representative of their party who became a deputy in the first Duma was Aleksander Lednicki elected from the Minsk district as a member of the Kadet party. The majority of the Polish seats in Duma (34 of 36) were taken by the representatives of the National Democratic Party, who established an independent faction – “the Polish koło.”¹⁰¹ The statute of the koło prohibited its members to participate in the activity of other parties and factions. Koło openly defined its tactics as the principle of “free hand,” borrowed from the practice of the Irish party in the British parliament.¹⁰² This line of action did not presuppose the possibility of a strategic collaboration with any Russian parties and allowed only

⁹⁷ “Programma “Soiuza 17 Oktiabria”” in: *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii*, 342-343.

⁹⁸ “GARF. f. 523...p. 42.

⁹⁹ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii 1902-1905*, 482-495.

¹⁰⁰ Janus, *The Polish Koło, the Russian Duma*, 61.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 63. More details about the tactics of the Polish koło in Duma see: Franciszek Nowodworski, *Koło polskie w Pierwszej Izbie Państwowej Rosyjskiej* (Warszawa: K.Kowalewski, 1907).

for temporary agreements with them on particular questions in exchange for their support of the idea of Polish autonomy.

As a result, the Kadets had to face an unmanageable partner in the Duma. Lednicki's assurances that his party was a significant political force in the Kingdom of Poland proved to be a form of self-deception. Under such circumstances, the Kadets were not interested in the immediate solution of the question of autonomy, although in general they did not renounce their initial intentions.¹⁰³ At the same time, the Fundamental Laws of the Russian empire, issued on April 23, 1906 (i.e. four days before the convocation of the Duma), finally removed from the agenda of the Polish parties the question, which constituent assembly should proclaim the autonomy of Poland. The State Duma could not perform the role of such an assembly since the Fundamental Laws attributed to the monarch the exclusive prerogative of revising the legislation.¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, the Kadets refused to boycott the recently elected legislature, in which they won a majority.¹⁰⁵

Contrary to initial intentions of the parties, who acquired a majority of the places in the Duma, but in accordance with the aims of the government, the Fundamental Laws of 1906 defined the limits of possible discussions and excluded the possibility of Duma's transformation into a constituent assembly. Moreover, the Fundamental Laws fulfilled a *de-jure* incorporation of Poland (and Finland) into an impersonal Russian state. Originally defined as different parts of sovereign

¹⁰³ *S''ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*, v. 1., 243.

¹⁰⁴ "Rossiia. Osnovnye Gosudarstvennye Zakony 23 apreliia 1906...", 567.

¹⁰⁵ *S''ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*, v. 1., 240-243.

possessions of the Russian monarch, these provinces were now parts of “united and indivisible” Russia.¹⁰⁶

Polish Declaration in the First Duma

The State Duma was opened on April 27, 1906. The monarch delivered a speech from the throne, and further sessions of the Duma were devoted to composing the response. The deputy Rodichev suggested creating a special commission, which would work out the draft version of the Duma’s address. The purpose of the address was not just an appeal to the monarch, but a of a declaration of intentions of the new Duma, where the deputies expressed their general demands. The most important of these was the amnesty of political convicts. Other demands included the idea of the ministry responsible to the Duma, the labor code, and the solution of the land question. On the session of April 30, the leader of the Polish koło Jan Harusewicz delivered a declaration on behalf of the Polish delegation. Officially, it was one of the materials that had to be directed into the commission that composed the address. The only member of the commission who represented the Kingdom of Poland was Jan Stecki, a member of the Polish koło.¹⁰⁷

The Polish declaration caused no reaction among the deputies of the Duma, which only forwarded the declaration to the commission. Why did it happen this way? To understand this, it is necessary to consider the text of the declaration and Paul Miliukov’s response to it.

¹⁰⁶ RGIA. f. 727. op. 2. item. 56. p. 13; “Rossiia. Osnovnye Gosudarstvennye Zakony 23 apreliia 1906...,” 567.

¹⁰⁷ *Gosudarstvennaia Duma. Stenograficheskie otchety. Sozyv 1. Sessiia 1. (GDSO)* (St.Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1906-1907), 43.

The Polish declaration emphasized the “historical rights” of Poland, secured by the guarantee of the international law. With the reference on the acts of the Congress of Vienna and the Constitutional Charter of Alexander I the declaration argued, that the Kingdom of Poland was granted an autonomous order. That was reflected by the fact that the monarch accepted the crown of the Kingdom of Poland and had to pass it legally to his successors. The declaration also argued that Nicolas I did not abolish “a distinctive administration of the region and its particular organization,” when he adopted the Organic Statute of 1832.¹⁰⁸ According to the authors of the declaration, the autonomy of the region was abolished by particular decrees that could not “alter the relationship of the Kingdom of Poland to the Russian empire.”¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the declaration expressed the protest against the fact that the new Fundamental Laws of April 23, 1906, eliminated the article, which mentioned the Kingdom of Poland as a distinct possession of the Russian monarch.¹¹⁰

One can see that the Polish deputies tried to legitimate the demand for the autonomy of the former Kingdom of Poland by the reference to the idea of the sovereignty of law. According to this logic, neither the sovereignty of people nor the sovereignty of a monarch, but a historical law, supported by the force of international treaties, was the source of the Polish distinct position.

The declaration further proclaimed that “the whole population of the Kingdom of Poland fervently and unanimously stands up for autonomous rights of their region” and that “such claims found friendly response in the Russian liberation movement.”

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 51.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Article 4 of the former Fundamental Laws: “the imperial all-Russian throne is connected with the thrones of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Finland.” *Svod zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii, izdaniia 1857* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia Ego Imperatorskogo Velichestva Kantseliarii, 1857) v.1., 2.

The authors appreciated the opportunity to advocate their “inalienable rights before the Russian people.”¹¹¹ In the view of the Polish delegation, elimination of the “the Kingdom of Poland” from the Fundamental Laws was an attempt of the government to exclude on formal basis the “question of appropriate rights of our region” from the discussion in the State Duma.¹¹²

The declaration was concluded by the phrase: “Our rights are inalienable and sacrosanct; from them follows the necessity of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland as a cherished demand of the whole population of our region. With this claim we come to the State Duma to fight for our rights and for common freedom.”¹¹³

One can see that the representatives of the Kingdom of Poland did not behave as petitioners, who asked the State Duma to grant some autonomy to the Kingdom. Instead they demanded to recognize their inalienable rights, relying on the opinion of the Polish people, which they represented in the Duma.

Several days later, the newspaper *Rech'* published the article “The Polish Declaration.”¹¹⁴ Presumably, Miliukov was the author of this article. He argued that the deputies of the *koło* did a bad service to their own people when they connected the claim of the Polish autonomy to the restoration of the historical rights of Poland. In Miliukov’s view, the essential point was “a desire to ground Polish political institutions on a legal basis that would be independent from the Russian representative body.”¹¹⁵ According to Miliukov, this was the purpose of the reference to the acts of the Congress of Vienna and the Organic Statute of 1832. Miliukov noted that such a

¹¹¹ *GDSO. Sozvy 1. Sessia 1*, 51.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Rech'* 63 (May, 1906).

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

statement of the “Polish question” was in a direct connection with the program of the National Democrats.

In Miliukov’s view, such a statement of the question carried it “far beyond the scope of negotiations about ‘autonomy’ that had taken place between the representatives of the Polish and the Russian public opinion.”¹¹⁶ The Polish deputies thereby “[deprived] their friends of an opportunity to support their claims in the full range.”¹¹⁷ In other words, Miliukov reproached the Poles for making demands that transgressed the limits of the notion of “provincial autonomy” that the Kadets stood for, when they spoke of Poland. For the Kadets the limits of this autonomy had to be defined by the central institutions. Understood in this sense, autonomy would not cause Russia’s disintegration, as the right-wing parties feared, but, on the contrary, would strengthen the Russian statehood. By contrast, the Polish demands for an autonomy, in which the competence of central institutions would be restricted, by the Polish Sejm could only strengthen fears of those representatives of the Russian public opinion, who viewed autonomy as the first step towards a complete separation of Poland from the Russian state. Moreover, the question of “historical rights” brought back the memories of earlier attempts of Poland to acquire independence by appealing to international public opinion. According to Miliukov, appeals for international mediation could only aggravate the position of Poland in conditions of Russia’s confrontation with Germany.¹¹⁸

As a result, the Kadet-dominated commission for the preparation of Duma’s response on the throne speech disregarded the claims of the Polish delegation. In the

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

final version of the Duma's address to the tsar did not explicitly mention Polish autonomy and contained only general remarks about satisfying "the burning needs of certain nationalities". Such an outcome raised a new wave of polemics in the Russian and Polish newspapers.¹¹⁹ The Poles criticized the Kadets for breaching their initial agreements on the pursuit of the Polish autonomy.

In this situation, the most vulnerable was the position of Alexander Lednicki – the major initiator of the agreement between the Polish parties and the Kadets. He tried to justify the position of the Kadets and placed part of the blame on the Poles. In particular, he argued that the deputies of the Polish *koło* chose the wrong moment to advance their demands, when "the Duma was on the day off, exhausted, driven out of its wits by long formalities." In these circumstances, "any speech would have been accepted negatively regardless of the contents and the manner of reading." To make matters worse, the person who read the declaration chose to hit his fist on the tribune at one moment, which was "somewhat offensive and quite at odds with the general mood of both society and the speaker."¹²⁰

According to Lednicki, the text of the declaration contained several important oversights. In particular, the authors appealed to the international law, which was not a convincing argument. Instead of "the will and the earlier history of the Polish people, [the declaration] referred to an agreement between foreign states, which could be neither a moral, nor a real force... Our today's demands do not rely on thoughts and opinions of the European bureaucracy of the nineteenth century, but rather on the will

¹¹⁹ *GDSO*, 76

¹²⁰ *Prawda* 21 (1906): 253.

of our own people, on the general principles of democracy that urge us to respect this will and take it into account.”¹²¹

Thus, Lednicki found superfluous the references to the supremacy of law, by which the representatives of the Polish *koło* sought to justify their demand for autonomy. For him, the will of the Polish people was a sufficient argument for obtaining the autonomy. His argument proceeded from the same theoretical assumption as the position of the Polish *koło*, namely, that the rights of the people stem from its own will, rather than the will of a foreign government that adopts certain laws. The only difference was that, in the view of the representatives of the *koło*, international acts provided greater legitimacy for their aspirations.

Several days after the adoption of the Duma's response to the throne speech, Lednicki published an open letter to Miliukov. In it, Lednicki expressed his surprise at the fact that the commission for preparation of the address refused to include into it the demand for the Polish autonomy even though every third member of this commission belonged to the Kadet party. In Lednicki's view, general formulations about national demands in the text of the address represented a clear divergence from the party's program. Thus, according to Lednicki, the passivity of the Kadets at the moment, when the Russian government excluded from the Fundamental Laws the expression “the Kingdom of Poland” and the title of “the King of Poland,” could be interpreted no other way but as renunciation of the party from a promise to support the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland.¹²²

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

In an open response to Lednicki's reproaches, Miliukov explained that the address could not be regarded as coming from one party.¹²³ In this case, the Kadets wanted to consider the opinion of all the political parties represented in the State Duma. Therefore, the absence of the question of the autonomy in the address did not signify its exclusion from the Kadet program. On the contrary, as Miliukov said, the Kadets took the slogan of the Polish autonomy into their program, even despite the fact that it complicated the position of the party in electoral struggle with other parties. The latter used to turn this slogan into weapons against the Kadets. Miliukov assured that the autonomy of Poland was still "one of the principles, which the party would strive to accomplish."¹²⁴ In the end, Miliukov wrote:

Our views on the 'fundamental laws' completely coincide with the views of Mr. Lednicki. If there exists any difference in the justification and, consequently, in the understanding the autonomy, which we equally strive for, let me say with confidence that this difference will not impede the promotion of these principles, which are equally precious for us.¹²⁵

Miliukov's response can be interpreted in many ways. On the one hand, he did not want to break the relationship with Lednicki and, consequently, deprive the party of a mediator in its negotiations with the Poles. On the other hand, Miliukov wanted to demonstrate, that Kadets had certain understanding of autonomy, which they did not want to renounce. Thus, for Miliukov, the Poles were wrong to expect that they would get everything they wanted. In this light, the unwillingness of the Kadets to include specific demands of the Polish autonomy into the Duma's address and the general declaration about the rights of nationalities could be interpreted as a signal for the Polish delegation that their present demands were unrealistic. In the view of the Kadets, autonomy within narrower bounds was an accessible goal, yet only if the

¹²³ *Rech'* 66 (1906).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Polish delegation regarded the Kadets as their allies and limited its demands in accordance with their recommendations.

Such was the position of the Kadets, but as it was said earlier, the Polish deputies did not regard the support of the Kadets indispensable for accomplishing their goals. Instead, it was important for them to defend their principal position and remain unbound by any tactical interparty agreements. Only to a certain degree did they count on sympathy of the Russian public opinion. One can find an illustration of the position of the Polish deputies in the article of Władysław Studnicki, published in a separate brochure in May 1906.¹²⁶

The article argued that the question of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland was at the top of the agenda: “The deputies in the State Duma should demand a restitution of particularity of the Kingdom rather than an act providing autonomy. This has great political significance.”¹²⁷ In a certain way, Studnicki suggested calling things by their names. Although the slogan of autonomy had become an important programmatic point of the main political parties in Poland, the very notion of autonomy appeared to be vague.

Among our people, unaware of political sciences, among Warsaw publicists and jurists, who often demonstrate their ignorance of public law, there dominate very inconsequent views on autonomy, on the claims about the future relationship of Kingdom towards the Empire.¹²⁸

The greater part of the article was devoted to Studnicki’s attempt to prove that, in accordance with the acts of the Congress of Vienna and the Polish constitution of 1815, the relationship between the Kingdom of Poland and Russia was a real union, rather than an autonomy.

¹²⁶ Władysław Studnicki, *Konstytucja Rosyjska i prawno-państwowe stanowisko Królestwa Polskiego* (Warszawa: Nakładem Księgarni E. Wende i SP, 1906).

¹²⁷ Ibid., 47.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

Studnicki disagreed with Jellinek, who argued that the connection between Russia and the Kingdom of Poland could not be qualified as a real union, because of the absence of bilateral treaty between the two states. Whereas Jellinek viewed the Congress Poland as a state fragment (*Staatsfragment*), Studnicki argued that non-participation of the incorporated state did not exclude that the conqueror could impose on it a real union.¹²⁹ According to Studnicki,

...even when a non-sovereign [the] state is connected to another state by a real union, it is different from provincial autonomy because, in the first case, it is itself the source of power. Its competence includes all matters that were not accepted as the common issues, or as the questions that refer to the institutions of the state, bounded with it. By contrast, in an autonomous province, the power relies on the acts of the legislative assembly and the authority of the state, to which the province belongs. All the questions that do not refer to the autonomous authority may be regarded only as state-wide issues.¹³⁰

In the view of Studnicki, even the Organic Statute cannot be perceived as an act of incorporation. In his translation of the first article of the Statute Studnicki rendered the phrase “The joining of the Kingdom of Poland to the Russian State (*Prisoedinenie Korolevstva k Rossiiskoi Dierzhave*)” as joining to the “Russian possession” (*posiadłości Rosyjskiej*), rather than as joining to the state (*państwu*).¹³¹ Such an interpretation was grounded on archaic formulations of the Manifesto that preceded the causes of the Organic Statute. The Manifesto used the phrase “our state” (*Dierzhava nasha*) in the meaning of the possessions of the Romanovs, rather than the Russian state.¹³² This allowed treating Poland and Russia as two different possessions of one dynasty, of which the former remained unincorporated in the latter. Thus, an archaic interpretation of the monarchy as a possession of the monarch served the Polish theoretician (as it did his Finnish colleagues) an instrument to substantiate the

¹²⁹ Ibid. 44.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 43-44.

¹³¹ Ibid., 44.

¹³² “Manifest 14 fevralia 1832 goda. O novom poriadke upravlenia i obrazovaniia Tsarstva Pol’skogo” in: *Polnoie sobranie zakonov Rossiiskoi Imperii. Sobranie vtoroe* (St.Petersburg, 1833) v. 7., 83.

idea of legal separation of the Kingdom of Poland from the Russian Empire. Accordingly, Studnicki suggested that the Polish deputies demand restoration of the legal status of the Kingdom of Poland, rather than an autonomy, which would depend on the will of the Russian statewide legislature.

Although Poland had not been the side of the treaty that established the real union, its legal order was not the product of the will of another state that had granted autonomy and could restrict, and even abolish it, but rather originated from from the Polish state. Thus, Studnicki's implicit assumption was that Poland had certain inalienable rights, as if it were a separate, although a non-sovereign, state. From this perspective, the Kadets' idea of making the Russian legislative assembly provide autonomous rights to Poland was not only insufficient, but also contradicted the fundamental principles that stood at the basis of Polish demands. In other words, Studnicki insisted on recognizing Poland as a state and openly declared that this demand was not a claim for autonomy, but as the demand for the restoration of historical rights. Studnicki clearly distinguished between his claims and the Kadets' idea of provincial autonomy. In a certain sense, Studnicki developed the viewpoint of Popławski, who clearly understood the difference. However, it was uncertain how the Polish delegation could implement this agenda, as it went far beyond the bounds of what the Kadets were ready to support. And the Kadets were the only party in the Duma, whose consent was indispensable for the actual implementation of the legislation on autonomy.

The Second Duma: A Step towards a More Realistic Position?

After the dissolution of the Duma, the elections to the new Duma were proclaimed. Despite an unsuccessful declaration of the Polish deputies in the first Duma, the National Democrats decided to continue their struggle for autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland. This time they considered the criticisms of the Russian parties and renounced the ambition of being sole representatives of the Polish interests in the Duma. Instead, they suggested forming a coalition with the other two Polish parties (the Party of Real Politics, former *ugodowcy*, and the Progressive Democratic Union). However, the majority of the Progressive Democrats rejected the proposal, as they were afraid to lose some of their adherents among the Jewish population. Meanwhile, a minority group within the Union, led by Henryk Konic, was more in favor of an alliance with the National Democrats. They left the Union and created the Polish Progressive Party (PPP).¹³³

Having refused to collaborate with the National Democrats, the Progressive Democrats formed a coalition with the Jewish Committee, but it only weakened their position, because of persistent anti-Semite rhetoric that the National Democrats used in the course of electoral campaign. As the result, the participants of the coalition of the National Democrats and the Progressive Party took the majority of the Polish seats in the Duma. Out of 34 places for the Kingdom of Poland, 29 belonged to the National Democrats. The members of the Progressive Party acquired three places; the members of the Party of Real Politics took another two.¹³⁴ Twelve deputies, elected from Western provinces, represented the interests of large landowners. They adhered to the position of the National Democratic Party regarding the agrarian question and joined

¹³³ Janus, *The Polish Kolo, the Russian Duma*, 113.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 116.

the Polish koło.¹³⁵ Roman Dmowski became the leader of the koło. As for the Progressive Democrats, none of the members came to the Duma, and even Lednicki, the closest associate of the Kadets, could not take part in the elections, as he was condemned for participating in “Vyborg Manifesto.”¹³⁶

The balance of political forces in the second Duma was different as compared to the first one. The Kadets won only 98 places compared with the 179 seats that they had in the first Duma.¹³⁷ At the same time, there was an increase in the number of the left-wing deputies and members of moderate parties (Octobrists, Nationalists), who supported the policy of the government. As the result, the role of the Duma’s center performed by the Kadets significantly diminished and they could no longer define the outcome of the voting. In these circumstances, the Polish koło chose the tactics of a “third agent” (or “holders of the golden share”). When the two polar opinions in Duma balanced each other on certain questions, the Poles could play a decisive role, by supporting the side, which was most willing to make concessions on the “Polish question.”¹³⁸

Jan Stecki: Autonomy in hand is better than an unachievable state

After the dissolution of the first Duma, the Polish deputies did not break off their work on the project of Polish autonomy, which they intended to propose for discussion in the new Duma. Along with the supporters of the legal historical justification of the Polish claims there were those who suggested another approach to

¹³⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 118.

¹³⁷ Anatolii Smirnov, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma Rossiiskoi imperii 1906-1917. Istoriko-pravovoi ocherk* (Cheliabinsk: Sotsium, 2010), 214.

¹³⁸ Janus, *The Polish Kolo, the Russian Duma*, 199.

solution of the problem. One of them was Jan Stecki, a participant of the Polish *koło* and an “old” member of the National Democratic Party who also participated in the commission on preparation of the Duma’s response.¹³⁹ Stecki suggested reducing extent of the Polish claims and accepting the idea of provincial autonomy. This step, in his view, could open a possibility of a rapprochement with the Kadets. However, Stecki’s proposal did not signify a change in the strategic aims of the Polish *koło*. There was only a change in the tactics, which was adjusted in accordance with the current situation.

Stecki proceeded from several important principles. For him, the politics of the National Democrats had to consider not only the interests of those Poles, who lived in the Kingdom of Poland, but also the interests of those, who lived in the so-called Conquered Lands. Moreover, the dissolution of the first Duma left no hope that it would be easy to achieve even the modest aim of provincial autonomy.

The fact is that... recent progress in the sphere of freedom should be attributed more to compliance of the government than to the real might of the opposition... When it became clear that formal concessions bring the necessity of actual transformations in domestic policy and administrative organization, the government, after a short period of hesitation and bewilderment (the first half of the Duma’s session)... decided to secure the exclusive right to control the political development of the state... And then, right in the moment of unfolding struggle, the revolutionary movements proved to be powerless.¹⁴⁰

As it turned out, the revolutionaries were able to conduct riots, assassinations, and uprisings, but they did not have enough spirit for a systematic campaign and complete overthrow of the system.¹⁴¹ The author argued that a total revision of the principles of the Polish politics in the Duma was necessary in order to adapt it to the new situation.

¹³⁹ The biography of Stecki see: Czesław Brzoza, Kamil Stepan, *Posłowie Polscy w parlamencie Rosyjskim, 1906-1917. Słownik biograficzny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo sejmowe, 2001), 196-200.

¹⁴⁰ Jan Stecki, *W sprawie autonomii Królestwa Polskiego* (Kraków: G.Gebethner i Spółka, 1907), 17.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 18.

Stecki argued as follows. Taken as a whole, the Polish claims were obviously inspired by the slogan of independence.¹⁴² However, in order to acquire the outer independence it would require such a development of the forces of the Polish people, which would enable its self-sufficiency (inner independence). Then the formal recognition of this independence would be inevitable. The maximum program of Polish parties had to encompass the interests of the Poles from the Conquered Lands along with the interests of the Kingdom of Poland.¹⁴³ For Stecki, the demand of autonomy with elements of statehood (i.e. the demand of such an “autonomy,” which would presuppose the existence of a separate Polish state) would eventually entail the demand for expansion of this state into the territories beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Poland. However, if the claims of autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland still evoked certain sympathies in the Russian constitutionalist circles, attempts to claim the Conquered Lands would be inevitably rejected.¹⁴⁴ According to Stecki, such a demand was more appropriate for a people that reached the condition of complete development of its forces. This was not the case at the moment, since the cultural development of the Poles in the Conquered Lands still required time and favorable conditions.¹⁴⁵ As a result, the claim of autonomy with elements of statehood only irritated the Russians. They began to think that in the conditions of tensions along the Western border, there would emerge a separate state with obscure aims.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 23-24.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 34-35.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 37.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 38.

In these circumstances, it was necessary to choose another way. Stecki suggested purifying the notion of autonomy from the idea of statehood.¹⁴⁷ Certainly, provincial autonomy would not be enough, but it could facilitate the development of cultural and economic forces of the Polish people, taken as a whole. At the same time, provincial autonomy would allow explaining to the Russians that the Poles stand on the ground of all-Russian statehood, which would calm Russian fears and suspicions. In the future, when economic forces of the Polish people develop fully, the Poles would be able to pose a claim for recognition of their statehood. However, at the moment, the Poles had to adjust their claims in accordance with the demands of *realpolitik*.¹⁴⁸

Stecki also analyzed particular arguments of his opponents among the Poles. He argued that the demand for a separate budget would complicate commercial relationship between the Kingdom of Poland and the Conquered Lands.¹⁴⁹ According to Stecki, the usual example of Finland as a model did not apply to the Polish case. For him, Finland existed as a separate whole and the range of common issues with Russia was not that large to create a particular institute that would stay above the Empire and Finland. Furthermore, the relationship between Russia and Poland was much closer, particularly because of the presence of Polish interests in the Conquered Lands.¹⁵⁰ Stecki suggested a hypothesis that the Poles wanted to create a union with Russia on the terms of a union of two states. Consequently, for him, there would be a common institution, for example, a separate chamber of the parliament, which would consider common issues. In this case, the Polish delegation from *kresy* would be

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 39.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 46.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 47.

present in the Russian parliament, rather than in the common chamber and would represent an insufficient minority there.¹⁵¹ The Polish interest consisted in having the representatives of the Kingdom of Poland in the Russian-wide parliament, which would be united with delegates from *kresy*. In this case, they would have a far greater weight in the solution of statewide matters and would be able to prevent the attempts to suppress or restrain the rights of the Poles in the Conquered Lands. Thus, a personal union would be able to protect the Polish interests in the Kingdom of Poland, but it would not be able to protect the interests of the Poles in general.¹⁵²

Stecki believed that the Polish delegation did not need to strive for restoration of the status of the Kingdom of Poland in 1815 or use the legal-historical arguments in order to bolster its demands for autonomy. “[The] major source of the Polish claims are mature needs and the will of the people. The historical-legal apparatus should be adapted to this will and to be used in accordance with these needs.”¹⁵³ Thus, from Stecki’s standpoint, the principle of sovereignty of the law had to be left aside. At the first place there had to be the interests of the Polish people in general, and not only of the population of the Kingdom of Poland. The law was only an instrument to achieve the ultimate goal.¹⁵⁴

At the end of the brochure, Stecki suggested a list of general principles on which Polish autonomy would be based. This list included the recognition of the principle *Kompetenz-Kompetenz*, i.e. the definition of range of autonomous rights of the Polish diet in a law that would introduce autonomy in the region. By definition, such a law had to be adopted by a statewide legislative institution. The diet had to

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 49.

¹⁵² Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 44.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

obtain freedom within the limits of its competence, while other questions had to be discussed in statewide institutions.¹⁵⁵

One can see that Stecki's argument moved in two opposite directions. On the one hand, he formulated a "realistic" position, which would be possible to defend without alienating potential allies among the Russian political activists. On the other hand, he had to convince his Polish colleagues to moderate their claims at the present moment. In order to achieve this, he demonstrated a wide understanding of Polish national tasks, which went far beyond the idea of accomplishing the Polish statehood within the bounds of the Kingdom of Poland. This was tantamount to restoring the pre-partition territorial integrity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, this was a strategic goal, which required the development of the forces of the people that could only be accomplished by means of a provincial autonomy.

The Draft Bill of Autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland

The second Duma lasted less than four months. On June 3, 1907 it was dissolved. During this short period the Polish delegation managed to bring its project of autonomy to the floor of the Duma. At the end of the meeting of April 10, 1907 the speaker read the declaration of the Polish koło that was signed by its 46 members.

An explanatory note to the declaration contained a proposal to form a commission of 33 members, which was to discuss the project and propose to the Duma a draft bill on autonomous organization of the Kingdom of Poland.¹⁵⁶ Since members of the Duma were to receive a printout of the explanatory note, there was no

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 54.

¹⁵⁶ *GDSO. Sozvyv 2. Sessia 2.*, 1914.

discussion on April 10, if one does not to consider the remarks of Vladimir Purishkevich that the question was not in the competence of the Duma. The speaker replied that this question would be resolved after the Duma members read the explanatory note.¹⁵⁷ However, in its last days the Duma focused on other issues and failed discuss and the Polish project (Miliukov's reaction to it, will be analyzed later on). Nevertheless, an analysis of the project is necessary in order to understand what direction the thinking of the Polish delegation took as compared to its previous attempts to place the question of the Polish autonomy on the agenda.

The first thing that draws attention in the Polish project is a word-by-word repetition of the second article of the Fundamental Laws of the Russian empire on the status of the Great Duchy of Finland. The Polish delegates thereby recognized that the Kingdom of Poland constituted an "inalienable part of the Russian state," whose internal affairs were "governed by special conditions."¹⁵⁸ Thus, the authors of the project discarded Studnicki's suggestion to avoid legal incorporation of Poland into the Russian state. This meant that the connection between Poland and Russia was not the one of a real union. At the same time, a closer reading of the general articles of the project revealed the absence of the basic principle of provincial autonomy, namely the recognition of the supremacy of Russian statewide institutions over the Polish ones.

First, the project defined the sphere of issues to be included in the competence of statewide institutions (Article 4).¹⁵⁹ The article five did the same for issues placed within the competence of the diet. However in the paragraph a) it was declared that

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 1917-1918.

¹⁵⁸ "Osnovnye polozheniia zakonoproekta ob avtonomnom ustroistve Tsarstva Pol'skogo" in: *Zakonotvorchestvo dumskikh fraktsii 1906-1917. Dokumenty i materialy* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2006), 709. Compare with: "1906 g. Aprielia 23 Vysochaishe utvierzhennye Osnovnye gosudarstvennye zakony" in: *Rossiiskoie zakonodatel'stvo X-XX vv.* (Moscow: Iuridicheskaiia literatura, 1994) v. 9., 44.

¹⁵⁹ "Osnovnye polozheniia zakonoproekta ...," 709.

the competence of the diet embraces all the affairs, except those mentioned in the article 4.¹⁶⁰ The project thereby put the question of division of competence between the statewide institutions and the institutions of the Kingdom of Poland in favor of the diet. That is, not according to the model provincial autonomy, but rather in accordance with the model of federative connection of two states.

Second, the executive authority in the person of viceroy (*namiestnik*), according to the project, was to be appointed by the supreme authority. However the diet was to define the sphere of his competence including “arrangement of judicial institutions of the region, the structures of government and self-government, the sphere of their competence, as well as the order of their subordination and relation to the diet”.¹⁶¹ The supreme authority, which convened and approved the diet’s decisions, constituted the only restrictions on the latter’s “sovereignty.” However, it is possible to assume, that this statement was a formal one, because the project did not mention, what would happen in the case if the emperor opposed the decision of the diet or refused to convene it. By contrast, Sieroszewski’s project, adopted by the Progressive Democrats, presupposed the possibility of overriding the veto of the monarch by a second favourable vote in the diet.¹⁶²

The absence of such a clause in the draft bill of 1907 could mean that its authors had taken a step towards the concept of autonomy as defined by Kokoshkin (which presupposed the independence of legislative authority, and the subordination of the executive authority to the center).

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 710.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 710-711.

¹⁶² Prawda: 42-43 (1905).

The *koło*'s notion of autonomy was hardly distinguishable from the concept of the union of states. One could imagine a situation, in which the monarch refused to approve the sphere of competence of the viceroy (*namiestnik*) suggested by the diet, which would urge the diet to seek a compromise with the Russian executive authority and above all with the monarch. However, article 22 clarified the intentions of the Polish authors. It stipulated that the conflicts between the statewide institutions and the institutions of the Kingdom of Poland were to be reconciled by means of a commission of 24 members, of whom one half would be elected from the members of the Polish diet and the other half from the Russian legislative bodies. The chair of this commission had to be appointed by the supreme authority.¹⁶³ Thus, the principle of *Kompetenz-Kompetenz* was replaced by the idea of a parallel legislation first articulated by the Finnish delegates as a way to resolve the disputes between the Finnish and the statewide institutions.

Finally, the concluding formula of the general conditions forbade alteration of the clauses of the bill of autonomy without the consent of the diet.¹⁶⁴ That was the key principle that distinguished the provincial autonomy from the union of the states. The statewide institutions were thereby deprived of a possibility to alter the limits of competence of autonomous institutions without the consent of the autonomy itself. In other words, the State Duma had to adopt the law about the autonomy, which it could not alter unilaterally afterwards.

In addition, the sphere of statewide institutions defined in the article four was restricted later on in the text by means of subordination to the Kingdom of Poland of the bodies that controlled certain statewide functions (monetary issues, customs,

¹⁶³ “Osnovnye polozheniia zakonoproekta ...,” 714.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

excise legislation, post, telegraph, railway tariffs etc.). Thus they became responsible to the legislative institutions of the Kingdom, even though they were supposed to function in accordance with statewide laws (Article 12th).¹⁶⁵

At the same time, such a project was not the project of a real union, because the deputies of the Kingdom of Poland were supposed to take part in all-Russian parliament on the basis of statewide legislation (Article 21). In this respect, the authors of the Polish project differed from the Finns, who refused send its deputies in the State Duma.¹⁶⁶

The project was accompanied by an explanatory note. In phrases that remind one of Popławski's article discussed above, the note outlined the historical grounds for the Polish autonomy. It referred to the Congress of Vienna and stressed that the Organic Statute acknowledged the separate administration and autonomous arrangement of the Kingdom of Poland. The note asserted the necessity of decentralization and autonomy in the sense of delegating the authority to decide on local issues to the institutions elected by the population of the Kingdom of Poland. It also explained why Russia needed the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland. According to the authors, Polish autonomy "provides the Russian people a full right to count on the trust of our people."¹⁶⁷ In other words, the Poles promised their loyalty towards Russia in return for a restored Kingdom of Poland. The authors of the project also suggested that the Russian society was following the example of the Poles in the struggle with a repressive bureaucratic machine:

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 711.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 713.

¹⁶⁷ *Gosudarstvennaia дума. Sozyv 2. Zakonodatel'nye zaiavleniia, vnesennye na osnovanii st. 55 Uchrezhdeniia Gosudarstvennoi dumy* (St.Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1907), 137.

At the moment, when the Russian people is about to take a great effort of transformation of the state order..., it will not be useless to acquire a lively, benevolent, free, and multisided assistance of the people, who for two centuries dedicated its forces and strains all its spiritual capacities for creative social work to regulate its social life and struggle with destructive and depersonalizing forces.¹⁶⁸

The project attempted to preserve the general principles, which were in the foreground of the first declaration of the Poles in the Duma. However, the authors sought to present them in a form that would be more suitable for the Russian public opinion. They rejected Studnicki's idea that the Poles had to strive for a real union and articulate it openly, calling things by their names. At the same time, the project did not follow the position of Stecki, who tried to persuade his colleagues that it was necessary to clarify the concept of autonomy from the elements of separate statehood. These elements were preserved in a veiled form, so that it seemed the Poles wanted autonomy and the Kingdom of Poland had to be a part of the Russian state. The key points of the Polish project were hidden in specific articles. Read inattentively they could indeed make an impression that it was really the issue of a certain kind of autonomy.

However, the peculiarities of the project did not escape from Miliukov's attention. In the article published in the newspaper *Rech'* on April 12, 1907 Miliukov praised the Poles for certain move in the direction of political realism, and yet he noted all those features that distinguished the Polish project from "real" provincial autonomy.¹⁶⁹ To this project Miliukov opposed the project in the brochure of Stecki. Disregarding Stecki's ideas to strengthen the Polish influence in Western provinces, Miliukov emphasized his appeal to recognize the idea of provincial autonomy in the true sense of the word.¹⁷⁰ In Miliukov's view, the Polish delegation had to define

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 138.

¹⁶⁹ *Rech'* 86 (1907).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

precisely what they wanted to achieve proceeding from a realistic assessment of the present state of affairs in Russia. If the Polish delegation thought that the situation in Russia had become more favorable for accomplishing their aims, it could count exclusively on the power of the public opinion inside Poland. Otherwise, the behavior of the Poles could be interpreted as impractical seeking only to make a statement of principle in hopeless situation. Miliukov, however, considered, that there were no improvements for the Polish cause then, at the same time, there was still open the way for more realistic projects of autonomy.¹⁷¹ In other words, Miliukov suggested accepting the Kadets' understanding of autonomy and implied that there was still a chance to secure certain rights for the Kingdom of Poland.

However, Miliukov's optimistic hopes were doomed to fail. In the next Duma, elected on the basis of the new legislation, both the Kadets and the Polish *koło* lost their influence considerably. Thus, the expected convergence of the positions of the two parties, if it was ever possible, did not happen.

The Third Duma: the Dead End

The government reacted to the attempt of the *koło* to bargain in the second Duma by dramatically reducing the number of the deputies from the Kingdom of Poland in the third Duma (down to only 12). During the discussion of the governmental reform of the military draft the Kadets decided to support the government, and the Duma was divided on two equal camps. Thus, the outcome of the vote depended on which side the Polish *koło* would choose. Although the Polish deputies joined the side of the government, they demanded the reform of secondary

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

education in the Kingdom of Poland.¹⁷² They put forward a project of making Polish the language of instruction in secondary education. The same happened during the discussion of the state budget. However, all the attempts of the Poles to find a common ground with the government were in vain as the second Duma was quickly dissolved. In the Manifesto of June 3, 1907, the Prime Minister Peter Stolypin declared that the new Duma had to be “Russian by spirit.” Other nationalities, inhabiting the state, could only speak of their needs, but the number of their representatives was not supposed to allow them to decide on the “purely Russian matters.”¹⁷³

The new situation, in which the Polish delegates found themselves in the third Duma, became reflected in the dialogue between the leader of the Polish *koło* Dmowski and the Prime Minister Stolypin, which took place at the seventh session of the Duma on November 16, 1907. At this session Stolypin made a speech that expounded general trends of governmental policy in the nearest future. During the discussion that followed, Dmowski declared that he could not find in Prime Minister’s speech anything “that would provide a hope for actual renovation of the state order.”¹⁷⁴ Dmowski argued that any reasonable policy has to rely on local social forces. Dmowski said:

Stolypin even mentioned the borderlands, but it is not clear from his words... whether all these institutes that the government is going to call to life would only be auxiliary means for purely bureaucratic rule, or the state system would really be renovated by means of wide self-government and invitation of the social forces...¹⁷⁵

In Dmowski’s view, it was necessary to “move the center of gravity of many questions that are resolved here in the center, in St. Petersburg, to the regions, because

¹⁷² Chmielewski, *The Polish Question in the Russian State Duma*, 40-42.

¹⁷³ PSZRI, v. 27. no. 29240.

¹⁷⁴ *GDSO. Sozvyv 3. Sessia I.*, 341.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 341-342.

only there they can be resolved properly in people's favor.”¹⁷⁶ Further on, Dmowski referred to the threefold decrease of the representation of the Kingdom of Poland in the Duma and concluded that in accordance with such a policy “the inhabitants of the Kingdom of Poland will be considered second-rate citizens of this state.”¹⁷⁷ According to the records of the session, at this moment a voice from the right shouted: “Certainly!” Outraged, Dmowski proclaimed that “the Polish people will never accept its position of second-rate citizens in this state and will never be able to reconcile themselves with the state, in which they are assigned a secondary place.”¹⁷⁸

In response to this criticism Stolypin said in the concluding speech that he was not against the reliance on local forces. However, the Prime Minister declared that “the force of self-government, on which the central government will rely has to be always a national force.”¹⁷⁹ Stolypin also declared that those, “who had just called themselves the citizens of the second rate” had to blame themselves. For example, they did not have a normal educational institution because “they did not want to use the Russian language in high school.”¹⁸⁰ He further called to: “Take our point of view, accept that the highest good is to become Russian citizen, carry this status as high as once the Roman citizens did, advised Stolypin, and then you will call yourself the citizens of the first rate and will acquire all the rights.”¹⁸¹

This dialog showed that, in the new conditions, the government opposed even the modest claims of the Poles for the development of the local self-government and

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 342.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 352.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

decentralization. The call to “become Russians” did not imply the acceptance of the ethnic characteristics. At the same time, Stolypin made it clear that dreams of decentralization or equality on the national basis were useless until the Poles accepted the idea of belonging to the Russian state.

The aims of the Polish delegation in the changed situation were formulated by Władysław Grabski, one of the leaders of the Polish *koło* in the third Duma.¹⁸² According to Grabski, the Poles needed to realize that it was impossible to achieve the autonomy by parliamentary tactics. He reached this conclusion by an analysis of their activity in the two previous Dumas. “Earlier, Grabski wrote, we assumed that we would take the autonomy from weakened Russia due to our solidarity and the peculiarity of our Polish delegation in St. Petersburg.”¹⁸³ In other words, the Polish delegation in the Duma thought that they could dictate their will and obtain at least partial autonomy. However, this goal proved to be beyond their reach and caused only a strong anti-Polish movement, both in the government and among a considerable part of the Russian society.¹⁸⁴

It turned out that the power of solidarity may have a moral significance... but it cannot substitute material force and cannot impose on the Russian state the will of the Polish people, either in general, or in minor issues, until the Russian people become convinced that this autonomy suits their own political interests.¹⁸⁵

From this notion Grabski inferred that the Poles could not win the autonomy. They could only receive it from the Russians, and only if this autonomy accorded with the interests of the Russian statehood.¹⁸⁶ Grabski’s statement finally concurred with

¹⁸² Władysław Grabski, “Memoriał o konieczności programu dla delegacji polskiej w Petersburgu w III Izbie Państwowej,” in: *Myśli o Rzeczypospolitej” Autonomia, Reforma, Edukacja obywatelska. Wybór myśli politycznych i społecznych* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1988).

¹⁸³ Ibid., 34.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 35.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

what Miliukov expected from the Poles, when he called them to adopt a realistic perspective on their political interests. However, this convergence came too late. Besides, the Poles continued to blame the liberals for the failure of agreement in the first two Dumas. Grabski himself remarked that the Poles could not count on the Russian opposition.¹⁸⁷ In his view, the Kadets had sufficient weight in the first Duma, yet they did not want to take into consideration the Polish national principles. Now, the Kadets were more disposed to understand these principles, but they did not have the power to implement them.

When the building of the Russian statehood is unsteady again, as it was two years ago; when the government follows the path of concessions under the pressure from below; when it conducts the reforms under coercion, – we may be sure that these reforms will be in favor of the Russian people, but not in accordance with our national principles... And if at a critical moment the government makes certain concessions to us as a people, it will only do so with the intention to take them back after the crisis is over.¹⁸⁸

According to Grabski, the accomplishment of the Polish autonomy depended on several conditions.

First, Russia had to “chose the path of Slavic policy and liberate itself from the German influence.”¹⁸⁹ Here Grabski reproduced Dmowski’s idea, which the latter expounded in his book “Germany, Russia, and the Polish Question” (1908).¹⁹⁰ The core of Dmowski’s argument was that Russia would be able to draw the Slavic peoples on her side only after it stopped repressions against the Poles. Having acquired the trust of the later (and for this it would necessary to give Poland an autonomy), Russia would be able to create an all-Slavic front against the German states – the natural foes of the Slavs. Thus, Dmowski assumed that the mutual interest

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 36.

¹⁹⁰ Roman Dmowski, *Niemcy, Rosya i kwestya polska* (Lwów: Towarzystwo Wydawnicze H. Altenberg, 1908). Russian translation: Roman Dmovskii, *Germaniia, Rossiia i pol'skii vopros* (St.Petersburg, 1909).

of the Russians and the Poles consisted in their common struggle against the German threat. However, the German influence on the Russian government and particular social groups constituted for Dmowski the major impediment for Russia's reconciliation with the Poles.¹⁹¹

Second, Russia had to begin its inner transformation along the path of decentralization. Until these conditions were fulfilled, asserted Grabski, the slogan of autonomy could not define the parliamentary tactics of the Polish koło in the State Duma even though it could still serve as the general goal.¹⁹²

Grabski advised the Polish delegation to look for partial concessions from the government and the moderate majority in the Duma. As Russia took the path of economic reforms and improved the position of peasants, the task of Polish delegation was at least to prevent Poland from lagging behind and help it to preserve its cultural advantage over Russia.¹⁹³ All the projects of the Polish delegation had to be formulated in a way that would not contradict Russia's interests, and would only further its interests in strengthening the Western borderland.¹⁹⁴

The willingness of the Polish delegation to collaborate with the government in the third Duma, if only to acquire the minimal concessions for Poland, contrasted sharply with the obstinacy that the Poles revealed in their relations with the Kadets in the first two Dumas.

It is possible to conclude that throughout the whole period of their interaction the National Democrats did not seriously consider the Russian liberals as their allies.

¹⁹¹ Dmowski, *Germaniia, Rossiia i pol'skii vopros*, 146-179.

¹⁹² Grabski, "Memoriał o konieczności programu...", 36.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 38.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 39.

They expected to gain concessions without relying on the friendly part of the Russian public opinion. Instead they preferred to stake on “moral force” of their own claims. When this tactics failed, the Polish delegation attributed the failure to the Kadets’ misunderstanding of the “Polish principles.” One can explain this perception of the events by the fact that the Polish nationalists did not comprehend the principle differences between the Russian parties (except the socialists, whom they perceived as the forces of anarchy) and acted on the premise that the Russians, just as the Poles, pursued their own interests. Therefore, no basic agreement was possible, but only short-term tactical alliances. In a certain sense, it was easier for the Poles to deal with the Russian moderate right-wing parties due to a keener perception of their aims. Yet, the National Democrats could not understand what moved the Russian liberals to support the idea of the Polish autonomy. All their attempts to approach the liberal allies were confined to the rhetoric of decentralization, which masked the idea of a real union. Reacting to this behavior of the Polish delegation, the Russian liberals became less trustful towards the Poles and consequently sidelined the “Polish question.” At the same time, all the attempts of the National Democrats to propose the question for the discussion in the first and the second Dumas met with indifference and even irritation of their potential allies. Thus, the time was lost and the National Democrats eventually found themselves in the situation, when the slogan of autonomy could no longer serve as the program of their activity in the Duma. Following the convocation of the Third Duma the Poles realized that their demands could only acquire the support if accorded with the interests of the Russian state. However, this realization came too late since the right wing majority, which dominated the third Duma, was unwilling to make any concessions to the Poles.

Conclusion

The position of the Polish deputies on the question of autonomy eventually moved towards greater “realism” (as Miliukov called it). Initially, “autonomy” was understood negatively, as the “particularity” of Poland, or the greatest possible liberation of the Kingdom of Poland from the dominance of Russian bureaucracy. In this scheme, the Kingdom of Poland stopped short of complete independence only by delegating foreign policy to the central state institutions. The Poles essentially offered Russians a bargain: they were ready to abandon the claim for complete independence and accepted “autonomy,” yet in exchange they expected Russia to provide them with complete liberty in their “inner affairs,” by analogy with the Great Duchy of Finland.

Nevertheless, there were impediments on the way to such a solution of the problem. Not only did the government and the rightist part of the Russian public opinion reject the bargain, but even the Poles themselves were divided on this issue. However, the greatest possible separation of the Kingdom of Poland from Russia left open the question of the status of the Polish minority in Russia’s Western borderlands, which the Poles called the Conquered Lands. Unlike the Finns, the Polish leaders agreed to send their deputies to the Duma because they wanted to influence the fate of their co-nationals beyond the borders of the Kingdom.

Besides, it was unclear how the Polish delegation expected to implement their claims. Initially, the Poles acted upon the premise that Russia, weakened by “anarchy,” would agree with them, if the Polish representation behaved as a unitary whole with the solidary support of the Polish voters. They also counted on a certain general support of the public opinion in Russia, without specifying which party they

spoke about. At the same time, the Poles proceeded from a mistaken assumption about the motives and behavior of Russian political forces. Above all, they underestimated the controversy between the government and the liberal opposition, and dismissed the revolutionary parties as agents of “anarchy.”

The government and the right wing parties assumed that no concessions could be made to the Poles, even if the Poles declared their support of the government against revolutionary parties. They were informed by the experience of previous attempts to “grant” autonomy to Poland. In the view of the authorities, the Poles were “ungrateful” each time. They took concessions as weakness, posed greater demands and, eventually, took up the arms and fought for complete independence. From the point of view of the Russian authorities, even minor concessions threatened to lead to secession of Poland in the long run.

Russian liberals proceeded from a different assumption. In their opinion, the Poles’ desire to separate themselves from Russia did not reflect their actual interests. It was rather caused by the government’s continuous repression of all manifestations of their national development. Conversely, if the Poles were provided equality throughout Russia’s entire territory as well as certain self-rule in the Kingdom of Poland, they would eventually realize the benefits of staying within Russia, especially economic ties and commercial advantages.

Thus, the Russian liberals hoped to “reeducate the Poles” by providing them limited autonomy. Battered by criticism from the right, the Kadets restricted their idea of Polish autonomy and subordinated the legislative authority of the Kingdom to the executive power of the Russian statewide institutions.

The major conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of behavior of the Poles in the Duma is that they did not fit the Kadets' image of the "reeducated." For their part, the Kadets did not correspond the image of enlightened Russians that existed in the imagination of the Poles. Thus, the history of interaction of alleged allies can be portrayed as an example of mis-communication.

Each of the two sides, misinterpreted the behavior of the other, whereby each consecutive episode of their communication happened to be as unfortunate as the previous one. Thus, except for a short note of Miliukov in *Rech'*, the Russian representatives in the first Duma failed to react to the Polish declaration. The Poles concluded that their suggestions were not understood and formulated a more detailed project, in which the competence over the competence belonged to the Kingdom of Poland. Once again, they got no reaction, except a more detailed explanation of Miliukov of why the Kadets were dissatisfied with this project. Finally, the Poles realized that in order to achieve their aims, it was necessary to justify their claims by reference to Russia's state interests, rather than just pose their national demands and promising their gratitude and loyalty in return. However, by now they faced the right-wing majority in the third Duma. Similarly to their predecessors in the first two Dumas, the Polish deputies in the third Duma pursued the logic of "national egoism." Instead of self-reflection, the Poles attributed the failure of their strategy to the unwillingness of the Russian liberals to understand the essence of the Polish national principles.

In their turn, the Kadets obviously overestimated the power of their rhetoric over the Poles. Contrary to the self-image of the Kadets, the Poles did not regard them as a significant force and chose to deal with the government, rather than the weak Duma. Focused on the needs of their nation, the Poles were apt to change their

rhetoric, trying to envelop their demands in a form that would be more acceptable for the Russian public. However, they did not change the essence of their demands – the greatest possible separation from Russia. In fact, their behavior confirmed the viewpoint of rightist parties. The latter did not believe it possible to find a status for the Kingdom of Poland, which would be equally beneficial both for Russia and the Poles. The outcome of the Polish-Russian meeting engendered a false impression that the Kadets got on terms with the Poles, but the agreement only referred the word “autonomy.” Moreover, each of the sides invested autonomy with their own meaning. Besides, the Kadets were deceived by Lednicki, who had connections with the Union of the Progressive Democrats. Their mistake was that they took Lednicki’s personal position for the position of all the Poles. The failure of the Progressive Democrats in the elections left the Kadets face to face with the partner, with whom they could not find a common language. Besides, this partner was not disposed to bind himself with any agreements and simultaneously tried to get on terms with the government.

The main problem that led to the failure of the whole project of the Polish autonomy was that the Poles understood autonomy as a means towards a greater goal. Rather than a juridical notion with a precise meaning, they treated it as a slogan, the meaning of which could vary in accordance with the “interests of the nation” and the current political situation. Similarly, the “historical rights” served as an argument, when it was convenient. At the same time, the problem of Polish minority in the Western provinces did not allow the Polish representatives to insist on a real union, by analogy with the advocates of the special status of Finland. Along with autonomy, the Polish delegates wanted to participate in the Russian Duma and influence the position of the Polish minority in the Conquered Lands. Such claims caused suspicion among the representatives of the Russian public opinion, who feared not only the separation

of the Kingdom of Poland, but also attempts of expansion in the “Russian” lands. The situation was complicated by persistent memory of former conflicts. In these conditions, it was much more difficult for the Kadets to advocate the idea of Polish autonomy, than they had earlier advocated the autonomy of Finland.

Chapter 4.

The “Ukrainian Question”: Real Politics and Federative Utopia

In contrast to the Finnish and the Polish cases, the national movement in the Ukrainian case was represented by a small group of intelligentsia, rather than being a significant political force. Established in 1860-ies the Old Hromada united the Ukrainophile activists, who pursued mainly cultural aims. Many of the sympathizers of the Ukrainian circle were engaged in state service and tended to avoid any direct conflicts with the government.¹ In the late 1870-ies the center of the Ukrainian movement moved to Galicia, which offered more favorable conditions for political activity.

By the beginning of the 20th century a new generation of Ukrainian activists emerged in Russia. Influenced above all by socialist ideas, they demonstrated a strong interest in politics. In 1899 Dmitry Antonovich found the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party, which proclaimed the slogan of independent Ukraine.² At the same time, the General Ukrainian Organization in Kiev united the local hromady into a common political network. In 1904-1905 it split into the Ukrainian Radical and the Ukrainian Democratic parties, having announced the political program, in which the autonomy of Ukraine became a central point.

The emergence of the Ukrainians at the political stage took place in the context of the Russian-wide political processes. Many representatives of the Ukrainian

¹ A detailed analysis of the history of the Ukrainian movement in the 19th century see in: Miller, *The Ukrainian Question*...

² Dmitro Doroshenko, *Naris istorii Ukrainy* (Lviv: “Svit,” 1991), 546.

movement joined the state-wide parties; therefore the political possibilities of strictly Ukrainian parties were very limited. The closest Ukrainian allies on the left were the Social Democrats and the Social Revolutionary Party. By contrast, the Octobrists and the Russian right-wing parties opposed the Ukrainian movement and denied the very idea of the Ukrainian nation. The Kadets were another important ally of the Ukrainians. Their local branches in Kiev, Chernigov, and Odessa involved many prominent figures of the Ukrainian movement.

Along with autonomy, the ideology of the Ukrainian movement proposed federalization of the entire Russian state, which distinguished them from other national movements considered in this dissertation. However, the problem of their project was that federative ideas were weakly supported in Russia. The program of the Ukrainian parties preserved many archaic elements, which continued the tradition of Mikhail Bakunin. He promoted the idea of delegating sovereignty from local communities to associations at a higher level and finally to the center. The amorphous organization of the Ukrainians reflected many characteristics of Bakunin's model. Besides, the movement internalized many political divisions which took place at the Russian-wide level. This led to cleavages and personal rivalries complicating mutual cooperation and leading to competition among different groups.

Mikhail Hrushevsky occupied a special place in the Ukrainian movement. A prominent Ukrainian theoretician, he joined St. Petersburg hromada and influenced the activity of the Ukrainian parliamentary faction after the elections in the first Duma. Although the Ukrainians recognized the authority of Hrushevsky, his views diverged from the mainstream of the Ukrainian intellectual tradition. He sought to overcome the archaic ideas of a federation of communes and was more interested in advocating the construction of the Ukrainian national statehood within the Russian

empire. At the same time, he was aware of “immaturity” of the Ukrainian project and thought that introduction of autonomy would facilitate its development.

Such an incomplete character of the Ukrainian national project made it vulnerable to critics, who opposed the emergence of a distinct Ukrainian nation. The Ukrainians had to compete with project of the all-Russian nation that claimed to be common for all three East-Slavic nationalities and was bolstered by the notion of Russia’s status as a great empire. Political tension increased in 1907-1914 in the conditions of an impending conflict of the great powers. In these circumstances the pursuit of the Ukrainian demands was doomed to failure. Prime-minister Stolypin not only supported the project of the all-Russian nation, but also relied on a political alliance with the Nationalist faction in Duma connected with Ukrainians’ most serious adversary, the Club of Russian Nationalists in Kiev.³

In the period of reaction, the Ukrainian movement resumed a form of a non-party association. However, it restored its relationship with the Kadets on the eve of the elections in the fourth Duma. The latter sought to cooperate with Ukrainians hoping to enforce their positions in Ukraine in competition with their political opponents from the Kiev Club. Besides, the leadership of the Kadets strove to avoid a split within their own party, many of whose representatives sympathized with the Ukrainian claims. Both political groups cooperated along the Ukrainian cultural issues. Meanwhile, the Kadets refused to discuss the federative projects and the demands of autonomy as utopian and offered to focus on, what they called, the “real issues.”

³ Anton Kotenko, Olga Martyniuk, Alexei Miller, “Maloross...,” 432.

Dragomanov's Tradition and Nationalism as a New Phenomenon

To understand the intellectual roots of the position of the Ukrainian activists regarding autonomy and federation, it is important to consider the works of Mikhail Dragomanov. In 1880-ies, in his works "Historical Poland and Great-Russian Democracy" and "The Free Union" Dragomanov formulated the principles, which would lay in the ground of reorganizing the Russian centralized state into a federation.⁴ At the same time, it should be noticed, that the Dragomanov's federalist ideas were premised on the notion of federation developed by Bakunin.

In late 1840-ies Bakunin formulated the idea of federation of Slavic peoples.⁵ It did not have any clear juridical meaning, but was rather a metaphor that framed the union of the peoples as a union of free individuals. Such a notion of federation reflected his idea of a union of revolutionaries of different nations to be established in the course of the events of 1848.⁶ His representation of nations as personalities was a characteristic of a romantic movement. However, it was impractical and difficult for realization, as it was based on metaphors that displayed the relationship between peoples in terms of human feelings. At the same time, Bakunin rejected intergovernmental and juridical aspects of a relationship of federal units.

Later on, in 1867 Bakunin formulated a more precise idea of how the humanity in general or a particular country could be reorganized along federal lines. In the project of the United States of Europe Bakunin put forward an idea that "an old organization, based from top down on violence and authoritarian principle should be

⁴ Mikhail Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha i velikoruskaia demokratiia* (Genève: Tipografiia "Rabotnika" i "Gromady," 1881); Idem. *"Vol'nyi soiuz" – "Vil'na spilka."* *Opyt ukrainskoi politiko-sotsial'noi programmy. Svod i ob"iasneniia programmy* (Genève: Tipografiia "Gromady," 1884).

⁵ Mikhail Bakunin, "Osnovy novoi slavianskoi politiki" Mikhail Dragomanov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin. Kritiko-biograficheskii ocherk* (Kazan, Tipografiia A.M.Gran', 1905), 88-91.

⁶ Dragomanov, *Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin*, 41-42.

replaced with a new organization that would reflect the interests, needs, and natural strivings of the population. There would be no other principle apart from voluntary federation of individuals into communes, communes into provinces, provinces into nations, and finally, the latter into the United States Europe first, and then of the entire world.”⁷

In general, Bakunin’s idea was to reconcile individual wills and the needs of the people beginning on the level of local association. For Bakunin, the general will of such an association would not impose its will on individual members of this association, but would conform to their basic interests and reflect the voluntary character of the association. Thus, a federative principle would be at the core of the basic level of the association, and would provide the autonomy of its individual members. Similarly it would be applied to higher levels of the association and secure the autonomy of communes from provinces, autonomy of provinces from nations etc. Within such a framework, an individual, when delegating certain competencies to an association, does not give up entirely his own will. He secures for himself a certain sphere of freedom, that would be inviolable for the association. The contradiction between the will of individual and the will of the association would lose its significance, because in the view of Bakunin it was engendered by statehood and inequality. As soon as the latter two are abolished the contradiction would cease to exist. At the same time, an individual will does not signify arbitrary action; otherwise the contradiction would be unavoidable. Therefore, the anarchist doctrine presupposed a certain anthropological vision of a person. In accordance with the latter, the natural strivings of people did not prevent their solidarity with each other. Moreover, the

⁷ Mikhail Bakunin, “Federalism, sotsializm i antiteologizm” Idem, *Filosofia, sotsiologiya, politika* (Moscow: Izdatel’stvo “Pravda,” 1989), 19.

people were supposed to be capable of self-organization and cooperation without a repressive interference of the state into this process.

Considered from a juridical standpoint, such an approach denied the idea of state sovereignty. “Sovereignty,” if at all applicable in this case, belonged to an individual, who delegated his rights (that he could not realize himself) to a commune or to its institutions. Moreover, these have to be elective and collegial institutions and change their membership as frequent as possible in order to avoid them to be usurped or prevent their intervention into the sphere of personal freedom. Similar principles should be applied to institutions at all the levels of the association. Thus, the Bakunin’s model gave preference to representative institutions (of a social association, rather than a state) and restricted the competence of the people in charge of executive authority. Therefore, the projects, that continued Bakunin’s tradition, tended to emphasize the principles of interchangeability, accountability and responsibility to the people of all in charge with administrative function.

These principles were similarly integrated in the works of Dragomanov. The latter himself recognized the continuity of his ideas regarding the theory of Bakunin. In his work “Historical Poland and the Great-Russian Democracy” Dragomanov spoke of significance of Bakunin’s ideas and shared his suggestion to create a Slavic section of the International. However, he did not want to confine the association only to Slavic peoples. Instead, he recommended to “forming a wider East-European federation. And this federation would be useful now, if not among the nations, than at least among the socialists of the peoples of Eastern Europe and Caucasus.”⁸ Dragomanov called federalism “the most reasonable” part of Bakunin’s theory and wrote: “Now, when the whole east of Europe is captured by double ferment, when

⁸ Dragomanov, *Istoricheskaia Pol'sha*, 250.

each of its natural regions has... the beginnings of socialist organizations, it is a time when the idea of federation of social and political activists of Eastern Europe, - certainly without a separation from the West, - acquires a real significance.”⁹

Dragomanov underlined, that the Bakunin was an original author of this idea.

Dragomanov was reformulating Bakunin’s idea. He assumed that the association of socialist organizations should precede the union of the nations. Thus, the idea of federation acquired a specific meaning. It was to be a permanent socialist organization, a voluntary association of likeminded activists composed of delegations representing their peoples. At the same time, contrary to Bakunin’s plan of an association of Slavs based on the idea of common origin and language, Dragomanov forged an idea of a union founded on the principle of territorial neighborhood. Along with the Russians, Ukrainians such a federation might include the Lithuanians, Latvians, and the peoples of the Caucasus.¹⁰ An interesting element of the theory of Dragomanov was an idea of “natural regions” that formed the Eastern Europe. These regions seem to be opposed to existing states (as “unnatural”). They are divided with each other by “natural” boundaries. In the following abstract Dragomanov makes his idea more explicit.

A union of the whole humanity is only a general union of particular unions. The latter can easily form by nature united by language, psychological similarity, and neighborhood of individuals, communes and tribes of particular nationalities. Moreover, in the times of unconscious colonization the location of these nationalities almost in every case overlapped with the borders of natural basins, geographical, and economic.”¹¹

Thus, according to Dragomanov, the ethnic principle as the basis for defining the borders between the federal units would not contradict to economic and geographic criteria. This particular feature distinguished the approach of Dragomanov

⁹ Ibid., 251.

¹⁰ Ibid., 250.

¹¹ Ibid., 264.

from the views of later activists of national movements, for whom the ethnicity of the population was the main criterion to define the borders between various parts of federation.

The project of the “Free Union”

The history of this project is reviewed in the book of Dmitry Mohrenschild.¹² It is not that much important, that the project of Dragomanov was a result of an intrigue of the organizations linked to the government. In this chapter, I will rather consider the project of Dragomanov as expressing his views on how to organize a federative connection of the units in the new Russian state. However, it should be noticed that Dragomanov addressed his ideas to a particular audience. These were not revolutionaries, but rather more moderate zemstvo activists. The latter circumstance makes explainable certain features of the project, which made it more liberal, rather than revolutionary.¹³

However, despite its liberal “cover,” the project of Dragomanov was radical, particularly because it regarded the delegation of authority not from the top down, as usually the liberal projects of decentralization did, but rather from bottom up, securing a substantial autonomy of the units of lower level. For example, Dragomanov’s list of

¹² Mohrenschildt, *Toward a United States of Russia*, 131-166; See also: Boris V. Anan’ich, Rafail. Sh. Ganelin, “M.P. Dragomanov i P.N. Miliukov o samoupravlenii i federalizme” *Russkaia emigratsiia do 1917 goda – laboratoriia liberal’noi i revoliutsionnoi mysli* (St. Petersburg: Evropeiskii Dom, 1997), 70-73.

¹³ For example, it is exactly due to his appeal to a moderate audience, it is possible to see such an unusual expression for an adherent of Bakunin’s ideas: “In general the present judicial system, according to the statutes of Nov. 20, 1864, can be considered satisfactory.” Mikhailo Drahomanov, “Draft Constitution for the Ukrainian Society in the Free Union” translated by I.L. Rudnitsky in: Ralph Lindheim and George S.N. Luckyj (eds.) *Towards and Intellectual History of Ukraine. An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: The University of Toronto Press, 1996), 173.

inalienable human rights included the right to resist illegal actions of officials.¹⁴ At the same time, a footnote to a section of human rights said: “The preservation of the above rights is the responsibility of local justices of peace, who should be authorized, under their own responsibility, to request the cooperation of nearby troops, whose duty is to give such help.”¹⁵ In other words, according to the logic of Dragomanov, if any executive would violate, say paragraph (e) “inviolability of nationality (recognition of the native language in personal and public life),”¹⁶ a local justice of peace could appeal for military intervention in the office of an official that went too far, should a victim complain.

Along with the rights of an individual, Dragomanov considered in detail the system of local self-government. Self-government had to be carried out through elective institutions starting from the local village and stretching to the level of volost’, then uezd, and, finally, region. The regional level could encompass more than one province (*guberniia*). According to Dragomanov, the village councils and elected institutions had to be authorized to dismiss the officials, who commit illegal action. The elective institutions appoint executive committees, which would have to be responsible to elected councils. The project paid much attention to the competence of local councils. They had to “legislate for and administer the regional public economy,” “supervise all economic activity in the region,” “supervise public education in the region, and administer secondary schools maintained at the expense of the region, as well as higher educational and learned institutions (academies etc.)”¹⁷ The note to these paragraphs emphasized, that the division of the authority between

¹⁴ Dragomanov, “Draft Constitution for the Ukrainian Society in the Free Union...,” 173.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 172.

¹⁷ Ibid., 174.

elective bodies of various level had to be regulated by special statutes. At the same time, it was essential that: “these statutes should provide, in so far as possible, that institutions with wider competence should not become superior to those with more limited competence, but that each should have a maximum of independence in its own field, particularly in matters financed by it.”¹⁸

The higher level of state authority was represented by two chambers. Dragomanov mentioned them as the State Council (*Gosudarstvennaia Duma*) and the Union Council (*Soiuznaia Duma*). The State Council had to be chosen by electoral colleges in electoral districts. Moreover, it was important that “those elected would represent not only the inhabitants of all the localities, but also as far as possible, all types of occupations, and minorities as well as majorities.”¹⁹ The Union Council would consist of the deputies, representing regional councils. These representatives would acquire a mandate from their regional councils and might be replaced by other representatives at any time.

Along with the political project Dragomanov suggested a preliminary sketch of the regions, into which the Russian Empire would have to be divided. At the same time, he admitted the possibility to find “objective” criteria which would allow overcoming irreconcilable tensions and pacify the process of drawing the borders. For Dragomanov, these would be geographic, economic, and ethnographic conditions. Thus, Dragomanov’s regions consisted of several provinces (from 2 to 5). In some cases, a province could be reduced due to assigning ethnic territories to other provinces. For example, according to Dragomanov, Latish territories of Vitebsk province had to be added to the Baltic region. He also suggested forming large regions

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 173.

of Transcaucasia, Western and Eastern Siberia. The Cossack lands had to be united into a distinct region, due to a peculiar social arrangement of the Cossacks. After they would be transformed in accordance with all-estate principle, they could be divided along territorial lines.

Considering the Ukrainian sympathies of Dragomanov and the fact that his project aimed above all the liberation of the Ukrainian people, it is important to see, how Dragomanov approached the division of the provinces with the Ukrainian population. These territories had to be divided into three parts: West (Kiev), East (Kharkiv), and South (Odessa), moreover the borders are defined right along *uezds*, and sometimes, even halves of *uezds*. It is hard to see any natural geographic borders on this territory. For example, for Dragomanov, the Kiev region was to be situated along two sides of the Dnieper. It is possible to assume, that Dragomanov regarded above all the economic criteria. The influence of ethnographic principle might be traced in a tendency to add some Ukrainian *uezds* of Kursk and Voronezh provinces to the Kharkiv region.²⁰

Thus, the features that related Dragomanov's project with the federative ideas of Bakunin were subsidiarity, autonomy of lower levels of self-government regarding the higher ones, a priority of representative bodies over the executive authority (up to involvement of military force in the case, if a representative of executive authority would exceed his competence). At the same time, unlike Bakunin, Dragomanov tried to invest his project with a juridical content that proved its claim to describe a certain state authority. Moreover, the content had certain similar features with *zemstvo* self-government, introduced by the Great Reforms. This was because the federative project

²⁰ Idem.

developed the features of Dragomanov's earlier project written precisely for the "Free Zemstvo Society."²¹

The Ukrainian Political Groups

The organization of the Ukrainian political groups differed from the Polish case. If in Poland the fragmentation of the political forces took place rather early (in 1890-ies), the major task for the Ukrainian activists at the moment was to integrate a large number of dispersed organizations into a common political network. Another challenge for the Ukrainian activists was that they could not publish their editions in the Ukrainian language. This circumstance was an impediment in their attempts to disseminate the ideas of the Ukrainian movement and to politically mobilize the population under national slogans. The growing empire-wide political movements were serious rivals for the Ukrainian groups, as they had developed regional infrastructure and tended to co-opt the representatives of the Ukrainian national movement.²² The representatives of the Ukrainian *hromady* along with assuming cultural tasks strove to preserve their organizational independence vis-à-vis the Russian-wide political movements.

The Ukrainian political movement had been forming in the beginning of the 20th century on the base of an "*Old Hromada*." Its longtime members Vladimir Antonovich and Vladimir Naumenko (Dragomanov's earlier associates) were among

²¹ Mikhail Dragomanov, *Politicheskaia programma obshchestva "Zemskii soiuz"* (Genève: "Vol'noie slovo," 1882).

²² The political interaction of the empire-wide political movements and the Ukrainian national organizations: Faith Hillis, *Between Empire and Nation: Urban Politics, Community, and Violence in Kiev, 1863-1907* (PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 2009). chapter 4; Liliana Riga, *The Bolsheviks and the Russian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 123-155.

the key initiators to unite the local “hromady” into the General Ukrainian Organization in 1899. From time to time, the members of this organization gathered together in private apartments of its leading members.²³ The agenda of these meetings did not go beyond the discussion of purely cultural issues.²⁴ This at least in its early stages enabled a relatively peaceful coexistence of different political groups within a joint Ukrainian movement.

A more radical trend among the Ukrainian organizations was represented by the Revolutionary Ukrainian Party (RUP), founded in 1899. The organizers advocated the idea of combining the cultural and educational work with political claims against exploitation of the Ukrainian population. As the party’s program they approved the ideas in a brochure by Mykola Mikhnovsky “An Independent Ukraine” (1900).²⁵ Mikhnovsky argued that each nation by nature strives to acquire its independence. He assumed that only an independent and ethnically homogenous state would be able to provide its citizens with full and comprehensive development of spiritual forces and material well-being.²⁶ As for Ukraine, according to Mikhnovsky, at that moment it was living through a long interlude in its history. Since 1654, when “the Ukrainian Republic joined the Muscovite monarchy in a political union,” the Ukrainian nation

²³ Evhen Chikalenko, *Tvory* (Kiev: Rada, 2003) v.1., 242.

²⁴ The culturally oriented trend of the activity of the “Old Hromada” and the newly emerged General Ukrainian Organization was in the line with the views that Antonovich and Naumenko expressed in their earlier debate with Dragomanov. The former two represented the trend which saw Ukrainophilism as purely an intellectual endeavor aimed at developing of the Ukrainian language, literature, ethnography etc. Dragomanov, conversely, sought to combine the literary interests with the political and social concerns. Since Dragomanov left Russia, the culture-oriented agenda prevailed in the *Hromada*. John-Paul Himka, *Socialism in Galicia: The Emergence of Polish Social Democracy and Ukrainian Radicalism (1860-1890)* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1983), 46-47.

²⁵ Mykola Mikhnovsky, *Samostyina Ukraina* (Lviv: Drukarnia Udilova, 1900) English translation: Idem, “An Independent Ukraine” translated by Zenon Wsylv in: Ralph Lindheim and George S.N. Luckyj (eds.) *Towards and Intellectual History of Ukraine...*

²⁶ Idem, “An Independent Ukraine...,” 202.

had been gradually dying along with its republican freedom.²⁷ The main reason for the misery of Ukraine, according to Mikhnovsky, was that Muscovite State violated the articles of a so called Pereiaslav Constitution. Meanwhile, the latter secured for the Ukraine the status of a separate state, totally independent in its internal organization. Besides, Ukraine had the right to carry out their foreign policy.²⁸

Yet, according to Mikhnovsky: “When the right to statehood was taken away from the Ukrainian government, the individual members of the former republic lost all their elementary political human rights. The former Ukrainian republican has fewer rights, than today’s lowest Muscovite servant.”²⁹ The former protector of the Ukrainian republic turned into a legal tyrant, who enjoyed an unrestricted right over the life and death of each of the Ukrainians. Finally, the law of 1876 put a ban on the language of the “inheritors of the Pereiaslav Constitution.” “Not only does a foreign tsar rule over the Ukraine, but God himself has become a stranger and does not know the Ukrainian language.”³⁰ The author stated that, the Ukrainian population had been turned into virtual helots, the only difference being that, helots did not have to approve and be loyal to their oppressors.

Mikhnovsky considered two possible variants of actions in response to violation of the treaty with Ukraine by Muscovite tsars. The first variant was to oblige the tsars to fulfil the articles of the Constitution. The second variant suggested renouncing the treaty. Yet, the latter decision lay in the sphere of power relations, rather than in the sphere of legality. The author did not choose between the variants. Instead, Mikhnovsky declared that it was useless to discuss the Pereiaslav treaty,

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 203-204.

²⁹ Ibid., 208.

³⁰ Ibid., 209.

because the Ukrainians themselves had accepted the legality of those violations on the part of Muscovite state. Moreover, the time had passed for restoring former laws. At the same time, Mikhnovsky assumed the statute of limitation of a treaty could only be relevant for perishing nations. This was not appropriate regarding Ukraine, at least until there existed a movement against its oppression with the slogan: “One, single, indivisible, free, and independent Ukraine from the Carpathian mountains to the Caucasus.”³¹

What would be the aim of the true exponents of the interests of the Ukrainian people? In the view of Mikhnovsky, this aim would be “the restoration of our rights under the Pereiaslav Constitution of 1654 and all the wide-ranging implications it has for the entire territory of the Ukrainian people in Russia. We declare that what rightfully belongs to us but was taken away by force we accordingly take by force. Our nation has long been misled, but today it rises for the struggle. The first step towards achieving total freedom will be the Pereiaslav Constitution.”³² Finally, Mikhnovsky wrote: “Ukraine for Ukrainians! As long as even one enemy foreigner remains in our territory, we have no right to lay down our weapons.”³³ By “enemy foreigners” he meant the Poles, Jews, and Great Russians - the politically dominant groups in the region.

Thus, Mikhnovsky, on the one hand, declared an ideal of restoring the independence of the Ukrainian statehood and renounced the Periaslav treaty as outdated. On the other hand, the idea of a complete independence was a dream of a remote future, rather than a political slogan for an immediate action. As the result, of

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 214.

³³ Ibid.

the two variants of decision of the “Ukrainian question” Mikhnovsky, although implicitly, suggested a legal way, that is restoration of the “historical rights” of the Ukrainian people in the form of the Pereiaslav Constitution of 1654. Meanwhile, he disregarded an idea of a forced breaking off the treaty in response to its gross violation by the Russian side. At the same time, Mikhnovsky called to liberation of Ukraine from “exploiters.” At this moment, his rhetoric acquired a revolutionary meaning with certain ethnic implications.

In the reasoning of Mikhnovsky one could see the influence of the Finnish and Polish ideas of restoration of the constitution and “historical rights.” Yet, such a line of an argument in defense of a special status of Ukraine did not acquire a further support even among the members of the party he belonged to. A substantial part of the Revolutionary Ukrainian party sought to develop closer ties with the Russian-wide social-democratic movement. Consequently they disapproved of the idea to include the national claims into their program as bourgeois and distracting the exploited classes from the struggle against their immediate oppressors.³⁴ In 1903 the party adopted a new program that suggested reorganizing Russia along federal lines with special regard of “historical and national” difference of lands.³⁵ This, however, did not abolish the tensions inside the party. In 1904 a certain group of its members broke off with the rest of the party to join RSDLP. The remaining adherents of pro-independence position (above all Mykolai Porsh and A. Huk) found themselves in a weak position and had to form a “federal union” with RSDLP in 1905 as a Ukrainian Social Democratic Labor Party. Their program proclaimed the right of each nation for

³⁴ V.G. Sarbei (ed.) *“Ukrains’ke pytannia” v Rosiis’kii imperii (kinets’ XIX – pochatok XX st.)* (Kiev: 1999) v. 2., 264-265.

³⁵ Ibid., 287.

cultural and political self-determination and forged the claim of the Ukrainian autonomy with a special diet.³⁶

Mikhnovsky's idea to advocate the "historical rights" of the Ukraine did not find its response among a more moderate part of the Ukrainian activists. Conversely, the latter sought to avoid politicization of the "Ukrainian question" as any attempts to formulate the political claims provoked tensions between the members of these groups. Moreover, they threatened to alienate from the General Ukrainian Organization those supporters, whose adherence to the Ukrainian idea remained within the limits of ethnographic interest. For example, the attempt to create in 1904 a unitary Ukrainian Democratic Party³⁷ caused a split among its members. As the result a more radical wing of the party formed a separate Ukrainian Radical Party. Their leaders, devoted revolutionaries Boris Grinchenko and Serhy Efremov, sought to develop the contacts with the Russian-wide socialist organizations.³⁸

In general, the political fragmentation in the Ukrainian national movement was only at the surface. The main problem for the Ukrainian movement was a limited number of its active supporters. Therefore in order to maintain the organizational identity among empire-wide political movements the Ukrainian groups had to cooperate among themselves. Moreover, due to the fact that the Ukrainian-minded intelligentsia in general was a relatively narrow circle, various trends of the Ukrainian movement were financed by the same sponsors.³⁹ These circumstances urged their

³⁶ "Programa Ukrains'koi sotsial-demokratychnoi robitnychoi partii" *Bagatopartiina Ukrains'ka derzhava. Programny dokumeny pershikh ukrains'kikh politychnykh partii* (Kiev: "Poshuk," 1992), 12.

³⁷ By analogy with the Ukrainian National-Democratic Party in Galicia

³⁸ V.V. Strilets, *Ukrains'ka Radikal'no-Demokratychna partiia: vitoky, ideologiia, organizatsiia, diial'nost' (kinets XIX stolittia – 1939 rik* (Kiev: Kyivs'kyi universitet, 2002), 16.

³⁹ Chikalenko, *Tvory*, 245-250; V.G. Sarbei (ed.) *"Ukrains'ke pytannia..."*, 284.

participants to ideological and tactical compromises, or at least to coordinate their common actions and concepts, while setting up the Ukrainian agenda.

National versus Territorial Autonomy: the Position of Mikhailo Hrushevsky

The involvement of Mikhail Hrushevsky into the discussion of the Ukrainian activists brought in a number of new ideas. Above all, Hrushevsky was a more consistent and systematic thinker, than the Ukrainian journalists. Moreover, he had the experience as a politician in Galicia, to which he often referred.⁴⁰ Since 1894 he had been teaching at the University of Lviv and was the editor of the leading Ukrainian scholar journals *Zapyski Naukovego Tovaristva Shevchenko* and *Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk*. At the same time he was the author of a multivolume history of Ukraine, where he challenged the imperial narrative, that treated the Ukraine and its history as an integral part of Russian imperial and national past.⁴¹ A short version of this study was published in St. Petersburg in 1904 and was further republished several times in Russian.⁴²

In 1899 Hrushevsky was among the founders of the Ukrainian National Democratic Party that united the representatives of both radical and populist (*narodovtsy*) trends of the Ukrainian movement.⁴³ Thus the party could take part in the competition against the Polish political parties at the elections to a regional diet. The

⁴⁰ For comprehensive study on Hrushevsky's biography see: Thomas M. Prymak, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky: The Politics of National Culture* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1987); Serhii Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia: Mykhailo Hrushevsky and the Writing of Ukrainian History* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 2005); Łukasz Adamski, *Nacionalista postępowy: Mychailo Hruszewski i jego poglądy na Polskę i Polaków* (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2011).

⁴¹ Plokhy, *Unmaking Imperial Russia*, 92-150.

⁴² Mikhail Grushevskii, *Ocherk istorii ukrainskogo naroda* (St.Petersburg: "Obshchestvennaia pol'za," 1904); Idem. *Illustrirovannaia istoriia Ukrainiskogo naroda* (St.Petersburg, 1913).

⁴³ Prymak, *Mykhailo Hrushevsky*, 57-59.

party proclaimed the independence of a united Ukrainian people as its final aim.⁴⁴ Yet, while this aim could only have a theoretical significance, within the borders of the Austrian Empire, the party stood for separation of the territories with Ukrainian population into a distinct province and providing it with “a widest possible autonomy in legislation and administration.”⁴⁵ The party’s program also expressed an intention to “develop a sense of national unity with the Russian Ukrainians and to engage themselves into a common work to accomplish cultural homogeneity.”⁴⁶

In the article, published in March 1905 in *Literaturno-naukovyi visnyk* Hrushevsky criticized a cultural trend in the Ukrainian movement that limited its aims to abolishing the Ems Edict of 1876 and developing of Ukrainian culture. To this trend Hrushevsky opposed an idea that the Ukrainian movement in Russia “should go beyond the idea of ethnographic nationality, become political and economic, and engage itself in organizing the Ukrainian society as a nation...”⁴⁷ Hrushevsky assumed, that “for the progress and development of the Ukrainian people, for transforming it into a nation... the Ukrainian word and the idea of Ukrainian nationality will not be enough.... Developing consciousness should not involve only national feeling, because it is weak among wider circles of intelligentsia in Ukraine. Similarly, it should not rely only on historical and ethnographic traditions, as they are even weaker. It should be carried out even more on the basis of regional interests: economic and practical interests of the Ukrainian territory, its emancipation from the state centers and from being used for the sake of the interests, which are foreign to the

⁴⁴ “Iz programy natsional’no-demokratychnogo (narodnogo) stronnnytstva” in: *Ukrains’ka suspil’no-politychna dumka v 20 stoletti: Dokumenty i materialy* (B.M.,1983) v.1., 57.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁷ Mykhailo Hrushevskii “Ukrainstvo i pytannia dnia v Rossii” Idem. *Tvory u 50 tomakh* (Lviv: “Svit,” 2002) v. 1., 296.

Ukrainian territory, foreign to its rational, cultural and economic development, its regional autonomy and self-government.”⁴⁸

It is important that Hrushevsky distinguished the Ukrainian nationality as an ethnographic community that still had to create a Ukrainian nation. Nationality is only a community that is linked only by loose national feelings and the remnants of historical and cultural peculiarities. By contrast, a nation was a community that was bound together by territory and with economic and political interests that were in opposition with the interests of the “state center.” Hrushevsky was anxious that such an evolution of the Ukrainian nation could face the impediment on the part of more developed nations that may draw it into an orbit of their interests. Thus, “the Russian-wide constitutional movement might attract the Ukrainian society and lead to forgetting the national needs, if the Ukrainian national movement would not be placed on political and economic basis.”⁴⁹ Hrushevsky was most concerned that the “Ukrainian question” could remain antiquarian, because alongside with Ukrainians there were other nations “whose national idea is so much developed and deep, that it is unconsciously assumed as a basis of political, economic, and cultural issues.”⁵⁰ In other words, Hrushevsky recognized that the Ukrainian nation was only a project. Its realization depended on the efforts of the Ukrainian intelligentsia to forge the interests of the Ukrainian territory not only as an ethnographic, but also as a peculiar economic and political space. Should these efforts be insufficient, the Ukrainian nation would not appear, and the Ukrainian nationality would be incorporated into other nations, preserving its antiquarian distinct features.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 297.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

In Hrushevsky's view, the present moment was critical, because it posed the question, what form the Russian constitution would take. "Along with the constitution, the steering wheel would pass on from the hands of government to the hands of the social classes or national groups. The struggle with them would be harder than with the government..."⁵¹ Until this moment the constitutional movement was driven by the true representatives of the Russian intelligentsia. It was possible to agree with them on the basis of national or generally human justice. However, when the constitutional forms are introduced... the bourgeois classes of most consolidated and nationally crystalized, most prepared for the political activity nationalities – Great Russian, Polish, Armenian and others might soon become the actual masters of the situation."⁵² Hrushevsky further brought the example of the Habsburg monarchy, where the Galician Ruthens realized themselves as the nation much later than other peoples. Therefore they were among the last to take part in political life and thus "condemned themselves for the role of pariah" among other peoples of Austria. For Hrushevsky, the Ukrainians should not allow the similar situation to be repeated in Russia. Here, Hrushevsky saw the Russia's future by analogy with Austria as a struggle of nationalities, rather than as consolidation according to class.

Further, Hrushevsky criticized the constitutional projects that had to be published by the editors of *Osvobozhdenie*. He was especially concerned with those plans, which presupposed that Poland, Finland and Caucasus would be provided with special diets, while the rest of the nationalities had to be represented in the common parliament without any national autonomy. Such an arrangement, for Hrushevsky, would divide the peoples of Russia into "privileged" and "non-privileged" similarly to

⁵¹ Let me remind, that the representatives of the Polish national movement expressed similar concerns.

⁵² Hrushevskii "Ukrainstvo i pytannia dnia..." 298.

Austria. Another danger of the project, for him, was that it suggested transforming the existing provinces (*gubernii*) into self-governing units without delimitation of national territories. This, as he thought, would lead to endless conflicts on national grounds. In addition, he was against providing a special self-government to the Kingdom of Poland, which would subject the Ukrainians in Chełm and Siedlce provinces and also the Lithuanians in Suwałki to the “unlimited power of the Poles.”⁵³ The main Hrushevsky’s conclusion: “Delimitation of the national territories was the prime condition of a successful constitutional development.”⁵⁴ Hrushevsky also rejected those projects, which were based on convening of the Constituent Assembly from the members of *zemstva*. He noted that *zemstva* represented mainly the nobility, while they did not have enough of the representatives of peasants or other labor classes, or non-noble intelligentsia. Moreover, large property holders and nobility on the left bank of Dnieper and on the South were russified, while on the right bank most of them were Poles and their attitude to the “Ukrainian national question” would be negative.

Thus, according to Hrushevsky, developing the Ukrainian nation required hard work on the part of the conscious Ukrainian intelligentsia. Moreover, they had to cooperate with other national, social, and political groups. For Hrushevsky, it was necessary to put the national territories into a foreground of the organization of the national self-government and representation. Meanwhile, in the territories with a mixed population the rights of minorities had to be protected. It was important to defend this claim in Russian society and among the representatives of other nationalities in order to work out a common formula for the future reorganization of the entire Russian empire. Thus, unlike in the Polish case, the leading Ukrainian

⁵³ Ibid., 299.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

thinker did not suppose that Ukrainians could fulfil their national task without Russia. For Hrushevsky, rearrangement of Ukraine required reorganization of the whole Russian empire.

The Spring of 1905

The further development of Hrushevsky's thought took place against the background of a heated discussion on question about recognition of the "Little Russian dialect" as a distinct language. The scholar debate was initiated by Hrushevsky himself and the Russian Academy of Science took it up later.⁵⁵ As the result, the imperial edict of December 12th 1904 abolished the censor restrictions for the Ukrainian as a written language, introduced in 1876.⁵⁶ At the same time, the growing activity of the political movements in the empire urged the Ukrainian groups to begin searching for the political allies.

Considering these circumstances, an important event for the representatives of the Ukrainian movement was the conference of journalists in March 1905. This conference aimed to formulate a common tactics of the Russian press in the struggle for the constitution, which would also consider the interests of various nationalities. One of the leaders of the Ukrainian Democratic Party, Evhen Chykalenko, represented the Ukrainian press at this congress. According to him, he was the only candidate for this role, because there were no other Ukrainian journalists among the members of his group.⁵⁷ At the conference Chykalenko proposed to organize a meeting of

⁵⁵ Ploky, *Unmaking Imperial Russia*, 51-53.

⁵⁶ *Ob otmene stesnenii malorusskogo pechatnogo slova* (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia Imperatorskoi akademii nauk, 1905), I; More about the Ems Edict 1976: Alexei Miller, *The Ukrainian Question...*

⁵⁷ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 290.

“*inorodtsy*,” where they could discuss common slogans regarding reorganization of Russia along federal lines. The representatives of the Poles and the Jews rejected the invitation. The rest of the national delegates gathered at a separate meeting, and together with Chykalenko passed a resolution that proclaimed the right of peoples for “independent cultural-state development (*samostoiatel’noe kul’turno-gosudarstvennoe razvitiie*).”⁵⁸ According to the resolution, the Russian Fundamental Laws had to guarantee this right.⁵⁹ Moreover, the resolution declared that each people had to be provided with “autonomy based on a special (“organic”) statute to be worked out by its own Constituent Assembly, elected by equal, direct and secret ballot and approved by the Russian-wide parliament.”⁶⁰

The expression “cultural-state development” expressed the striving of the representatives of “non-state” (*nederzhavnye*) peoples to acquire a similar political status as the peoples with a developed historical tradition of statehood. The last phrase of the resolution repeated word by word the paragraph four of the recently adopted program of the Ukrainian Democratic Party.

Taking into consideration the damage from the centralized system, we pose a claim that the state order in Russia would be arranged on the principle of the widest national autonomy.

4. Therefore ... we claim that the territory populated by the Ukrainian people would be provided with autonomy, based on a special organic statute, worked out by the future Ukrainian diet (elected on the basis of the previously mentioned law) and approved by the state-wide Fundamental Laws⁶¹

The expression the “organic statute” referred to the Polish case, moreover, in the archaic form of the legislation of Nicolas I. At the same time, it replicated, yet indirectly, the formula of Sieroszewski that was topical during the debates of the Poles

⁵⁸ Ibid., 291.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 292.

⁶¹ Chikalenko, *Tvory*, 280.

with the members of the Liberation Union.⁶² However, if the claims of the Poles to recognize their separate statehood with their own constitution referred only to the Kingdom of Poland, the authors of the resolution stood for a symmetrical arrangement of Russia with equal rights for each of its peoples.

The following quotation from the “Memoirs” of Chykalenko provides a clearer notion of a desirable federation of peoples of Russia:

We talked a lot at our meetings and in the dinners about contemporary conditions of non-state peoples of Russia; reflected on a possible federative arrangement, yet we expressed some fears to live in one country with semi-Asiatic uncivilized Muscovite people. A federative union with this people seemed rather dangerous, because uncivilized and disciplined it got used to obey the will of the oldest in the family, to a big father or elder brother. Therefore it obeys blindly to any state power. Moreover, it feels itself to be a master in Russia.⁶³

Shortly after the congress of the journalists, a meeting of the representatives of *zemstvos* in Kiev adopted a general declaration, proclaiming the necessity of decentralization in Russia. Ilya Shrah, the representative of the Chernihiv *zemstvo* had to deliver this declaration at the general meeting of *zemstvo* activists. The declaration repeated the contents of the resolution on behalf of “*inorodtsy*” at the congress of journalists, especially the part that suggested working out the Organic Statute by a special Ukrainian Constituent Assembly. The Russian-wide *zemstvo* meeting seemed to take seriously the earlier claims of the Ukrainian activists. At least the platform of the Union of Liberation⁶⁴ presupposed providing a wide regional self-government to Little Russia along with other regions like Poland, Lithuania, and Transcaucasia.⁶⁵ Yet, this formula was soon delited from the program of the Union.⁶⁶

⁶² RGASPI. f. 279. op. 1. item 39. p. 4.

⁶³ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 293.

⁶⁴ The platform was formulated shortly after the meeting of the *zemstvo* activists in April, 1905

⁶⁵ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 160.

⁶⁶ “Demokraticheskaia partiia i ee programma” *Osvobozhdenie* 67 (1905): 279.

The reaction of Struve regarding the initial project of the Union of Liberation demonstrated that the claims of the Ukrainians would not be accepted so easily. Struve argued:

From the very beginning of the liberated political life in Russia... the Kingdom of Poland must be provided with a similar state-legal status as Finland, which is absolutely inapplicable to such regions of Russia as Transcaucasia, and even more so Lithuania and Little Russia. One of two: either the paragraph regarding regional self-government provides very little for Poland, - little from the standpoint of real politics, rather than abstract justice - or, if this paragraph be treated too widely in regards to other regions of Russia, except Finland and Poland, it goes too far.⁶⁷

Struve's position was grounded in his distinction between already developed nations – regarding them assimilation had no prospects – and those peoples that only had the potential to become separate nations: otherwise they should be integrated into a common all-Russian nation.⁶⁸ A more detailed analysis of Struve's approach will be provided later. Here it is important to notice, that Struve tried to formulate a certain unified criterion that would define to whom the autonomy should or should not be provided. According to Struve, transforming Russia into a federation of peoples was unacceptable. However, the nationally distinctive borderlands with their own developed culture could have certain autonomy, similar to the autonomy that Finland had before the reforms of Bobrikov. This did not mean for Struve that apart from Finland and Poland no regional self-government be provided. This meant that the level of competence of self-governing institutions should be considered on the basis of other principles, rather than the aspirations of local national movements.

⁶⁷ Peter Struve, "K programme Soiuzu Osvobozhdeniia" Ibid. 69-70 (1905): 307.

⁶⁸ More developed and articulate position of Struve at this issue: Idem. "Velikaia Rossiia. Iz Razmyshlenii o probleme Russkogo mogushchestva" Idem. *Patriotika: Politika, kul'tura, religiia, sotsializm* (Moscow: "Respublika," 1997), 50-63.

Russian Constitutionalism along Federal Lines

As a reaction to these events in May 1905 Hrushevsky wrote an article, in which he suggested his own plan for the arrangement of the state-wide parliament. For him, the new parliamentary order had to be based on reorganization of Russia into a federation of national-territorial units.⁶⁹ Hrushevsky began his article with criticism of the Ukrainian national activists for they did not use the possibilities of semi-legal conferences for propaganda of their ideas. At the same time, he gave a positive evaluation of the results of the congress of journalists, and the attempt of Shrah to initiate the discussion about the future status of Ukraine at the meeting of zemstvo activists.⁷⁰ Hrushevsky reproached the Ukrainians, especially those linked with the Russian liberals, for their unwillingness to use these connections for the benefit of the Ukrainian cause. In his view, the Poles, who were even more influential, utilized all the possibilities to present their claims to the Russian society.

In the second part of the article Hrushevsky analyzed the constitutional projects prepared by the leaders of the liberation movement. He criticized the Struve's statement against providing Ukraine, Lithuania, and Caucasus similar rights as Poland. He further argued that in order to allow nationalities expressing their interests the rational organization of the parliament would require establishing small electoral districts with a small number of voters. The contemporary constitutional projects suggest about 600 members of the parliament. Consequently, the electoral districts would contain 250-300 thousand voters in the entire Russia. For Hrushevsky, such districts would not be able to secure the representation of minorities, giving the preference to the majority. In order to make the representation more flexible, the

⁶⁹ Mykhailo Hrushevsky, "Konstitutsionnyi vopros" Idem. *Tvory u 50 tomakh*, vol. 1 (Lviv: "Svit," 2002).

⁷⁰ Ibid., 303.

electoral districts must be diminished. Yet, in this case, it would be better to elect the deputies directly to a regional diet, rather than to the state-wide parliament. He further wrote: “No one doubts that certain territories will acquire their regional representative assemblies. The question is, whether these territories will be exclusion, or the whole Russia will be organized in accordance with the system of regional national-territorial self-government.”⁷¹ In the view of Hrushevsky, “... the Ukrainians and all other non-state (*nederzhavnye*) nationalities should put on their agenda the idea that the regional self-government would cease to be a privilege of certain nationalities. The whole Russia must be organized on the basis of self-government of national territories.”⁷² In defense of this statement Hrushevsky brought an argument: “... only organized on a national basis, in national territories, the self-government may neutralize and reduce the national struggle, having made the nationality what it must be – the basis and the ground of economic, cultural, and political development, rather than an object of struggle.”⁷³ Thus, Hrushevsky sought to convince the Russian liberals of expediency of federalization along national-territorial principle. In contrast to recent statements of the members of the Union of Liberation, such as Struve, he wanted to prove that any other solution of the national question would lead to a struggle between nationalities, which would be an impediment to resolving more urgent political and economic questions. In other words, Hrushevsky suggested to satisfy the national claims of the Ukrainians and this would be a condition for their support of economic and political agendas of Russian-wide parties, no matter whether this would be socialists or liberals.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Ibid., 307-308.

⁷² Ibid., 308.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Following this principle, Hrushevsky suggested a detailed project of how, according to his view, the central parliament of the Russian federative state should look like. First of all, it had to be one-chamber parliament.⁷⁵ This parliament had to be formed from the representatives of regional diets. Hrushevsky did not mention the exact number of representatives in his project, so as he did not specify whether this representation had to be equal or proportional to the size of the population in the regions. He only prescribed that the representatives of the regional diet in the central parliament should be elected not by the majority of the diet, but rather be delegated there in a certain proportion (one representative out of four deputies in the diet). Thus, the delegation of the diet in the parliament could be a mini-copy of the regional diet, reproducing all the existing political and social groups in the right proportion.

Referring to the experience of European states with autonomous provinces, Hrushevsky argued that “a homogeneous territory with a population more than a million, in which a certain nationality forms its basis and represents a strongly pronounced majority, *eo ipso* has to be separated into a distinct province with a special diet and self-government.”⁷⁶ For Hrushevsky, “subjecting the issue of separating of the province and providing it with a self-government to the permission of the central parliament, or likewise, to a special law, adopted by this parliament, is to unduly complicate this issue. A simple statement on the basis of general law would be quite sufficient.”⁷⁷ Thus, referring to something like the natural law (*eo ipso*), Hrushevsky easily challenged the logic of the Russian liberals, which they put in the foreground of their understanding of autonomy. This was an idea that, that autonomy

⁷⁵ For him, the two chamber parliament might be considered only as a compromise with conservative parties, while the progressive parties should not accept it as their ideal. Ibid., 307.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 308.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 308-309.

should be provided by the central authority and maintain the principle *Kompetenz-Kompetenz*.

The same general law, according to Hrushevsky, had to establish the minimum of the competence of the diet. The minimum of the smallest self-governing regions had to include schools, education, sanitary, philanthropy, roads, police and the right to send the representatives to higher administrative and judicial institutions. Larger territories, for Hrushevsky, required wider competences. According to Hrushevsky, “different volume of competence had to be applied *eo ipso* to the territories with the population of one million people and the territories with the population of 15 million.”⁷⁸ For the territories over 15 million Hrushevsky considered the right to introduce own taxes, and also the autonomy of church organizations of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox confessions.

Hrushevsky’s further reasoning was about the organization of the regional diet. He suggested stepping aside the rule to elect the delegates by a universal, direct, equal, and secret ballot. In the view of Hrushevsky, it was necessary to bring into the diet about a quarter of the delegates, who would be elected by assemblies of different social groups. At the same time, he argued, that the priority should be given to intelligentsia. According to him, “the circles with the higher scholar and cultural census” should stay above selfish interests and be a neutral element that would restrain the struggle of various material and class interests in the parliament.⁷⁹

Furthermore, Hrushevsky considered an electoral system, which would allow effective representation of a minority along with a majority in the diet. For this he suggested that each district would elect not one, but two or three deputies, in order to

⁷⁸ Ibid., 309.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 310.

bring into the diet those candidates who acquired the second or third place at the elections.⁸⁰ This would allow representing those social and national groups in the parliament, that were dispersed within the territory of the region and did not make a majority in any of the districts. Thus, in the view of Hrushevsky, it was possible to introduce a more flexible representation and to secure the advantage for the main nationality in the region.

For Hrushevsky, after the whole Russia would be reorganized along national-territorial principle the provinces would lose their meaning as artificial bureaucratic formations. The local self-government would also be organized along the national-territorial principle. Moreover, the self-governing institutions of higher levels would be formed of the delegates from elected bodies of lower level. Due to this, it would be possible, for Hrushevsky, to avoid proliferation of direct elections. At the same time, the elections to the regional diet had to be direct. Thus, the level of a national-territorial region was separated from lower levels of self-government. In other words, the state-wide parliament and the regional diet formed one level of authority. Meanwhile, the local self-government, starting from lowest units was another level of authority. Thus the self-government, formed from bottom up was separated from the state level, to which Hrushevsky referred the regional diet. This was an essential difference of Hrushevsky's model from the scheme of Bakunin and Dragomanov, where all the levels of self-government from lowest to the highest (including the regional diets) linked together in a hierarchy by delegating their representatives from bottom up.

In general, Hrushevsky's project was a consequent remaking of a hierarchical system of local self-government, in which the national principle acquired a more

⁸⁰ Ibid., 311.

prominent role. For Dragomanov, ethnicity was only one of the principles of organization of the self-government along with economic and geographic features of the region. In his turn, Hrushevsky based his argument on the idea of a distinctness of national composition of the population. Therefore, in his view, clear boundaries could exist between nationalities even at the lower levels of hierarchy. At the same time, the territory was not just as something that initially coincided with ethnicity, but rather was a condition for making the nation on the basis of ethnicity. In other words, first was the delineation of the territory with a dominant ethnic group, than within the borders of the established region the nation comes into being. This argument implied the possibility of transforming of “unconscious” part of a nationality into nation mainly as a result of creation of an autonomous region bounded by economic ties. For Hrushevsky, this would come true, if essential competences would be transferred to the level of the region. Moreover, receiving these competences should not depend on the decision of the central parliament so as the degree of “maturity” of a nationality. Rather this would depend on the amount of the population belonging to a nationality (a larger nationality, above fifteen million had to acquire wider competencies).⁸¹

Considering the intention of Hrushevsky to reorganize the entire Russia along federal lines, the weak point of his approach was that the entire territory populated by Great Russians had to remain a single unit. In this case it was unclear, how it would be represented in the central parliament along with Ukraine and other national regions. Regarding this issue, Dragomanov’s project was more consistent because it offered a division of both Ukraine and Russia proper along several regions with a relatively equal amount of population. Besides, Dragomanov suggested a two-chamber parliament, in which the interests of the region and the interests of the entire state

⁸¹ Ibid., 309.

would be represented by separate chambers. In Hrushevsky's project the interests of Ukraine took a prominent place. At the same time, the project did not pay much attention to the consequences for the rest of Russia. Neither it regarded the question of Kompetenz-Kompetenz, offering to divide the competencies on the basis of general principles on the level of state-wide legislation.

The Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party

The evolution of Hrushevsky's thought took place along with development of the ideas of the Ukrainian Democratic Party in Russia. The evolution of their program was connected with the merger of the Ukrainian Democratic and the Ukrainian Radical Parties, because separately they could not represent themselves at the elections to the State Duma.⁸² A result of inner debates and theoretical evolution, the final variant of this program was published in January 1905.

The preamble of the program said: "Along with the rights of individual citizen, the rights of a collective unit, the nation, should be granted."⁸³ It further brings the argument for decentralization of Russia, namely that common laws for the Russian state do not meet the needs of its peoples. It argues:

...decentralization has to be extended up to the point that each nationality would have autonomy on its territory with the right for local legislation. If now, not all the parts of the state realize the need of such an arrangement, yet in any case, the fundamental laws of the state should provide each nation, each republic a right to establish autonomy, when it would be necessary...⁸⁴

⁸² Strilets, *Ukrais 'ka radikal'no-demokratychna partiia*, 17-18.

⁸³ "Programma Ukrainskoi demokraticheskoi-radikal'noi partii" *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii. Konets XIX – nachalo XX vv.* (Moscow: POSSPEN, 1995), 166.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 167.

The program proclaimed that the “reorganized state should be a federation of equal autonomous national-territorial units.”⁸⁵ The program also claimed for “autonomy for... the Ukrainian People on the entire territory it compactly populates.”⁸⁶ In the next abstract, the authors of the program explained that they based their economic agenda on socialist principles, and claimed that soon the land and natural resources, manufactures and all means of production will have to become a nationwide property. The last phrase of the preamble emphasized the connection of the Russian Ukraine with those Ukrainians, who lived beyond the Russian state borders. “A thought of detached parts of a single national organism can never leave a living nation.”⁸⁷ This whole preamble is missing in the earlier program. Instead, the earlier program offered several paragraphs saying that centralization was incompatible with the needs of distinct peoples.

In general, this program suggested the idea of reorganization of entire Russia into a federation of national-territorial units for each nationality. Moreover, these republics had to obtain equal rights. It is possible to notice a contradiction with the idea of Hrushevsky, who argued that a region with a more numerous population would have a larger volume of competencies, than the region with a smaller population. Thus, the program of the activists in Kiev proceeded from an abstract principle of equality of nations, whereas Hrushevsky regarded this question in a more practical way. At the same time, the program of the Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party assumed that not all the peoples “understood the necessity” of this organization (federalism and autonomy). Thus, the initial claim of the division of the federation into the regions, may not presuppose autonomies for other peoples. Yet, in the future,

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

these bypassed nationalities could claim for autonomy, and this right had to be recognized in the constitution. Anyway, the program implied that the Ukrainian autonomy should be provided from the very beginning at the entire territory compactly populated by the Ukrainians.

In the main part of the program, the first article referred the general human rights and presupposed abolishing of all the privileges on class and estate basis. The second article specified the rights of nationalities:

Each of the nations in Russia should acquire autonomy on its territory with a distinct regional representative assembly (*Rada*). The latter would have the right to issue laws and manage all the affairs within the borders of its territory. Each such autonomous unit has equal rights along with any other unit. A reorganized state must be a federation of these national units.⁸⁸

In the main, this article repeats the general statement of the preamble. Yet, there is a hint regarding the competence of these autonomous units (“the right to manage all the affairs”). More precisely this competence is exposed in next paragraphs, which describe the organization of the statewide parliament. This parliament would be elected on the basis of the universal, equal, and direct and secret ballot, yet with a proportional system of suffrage, which would secure the representation for minorities. Yet, most important is that the paragraph mentions the competence of this parliament, which is reduced to “a) interactions with foreign states; b) statewide inventory of income and spending; c) customs and international trade; d) statewide army and the questions of war and peace.”⁸⁹ At the same time, it specifies that the “military service would be passed within the borders of the home region.”⁹⁰ In the future, the regular army would be transformed into militia; while the international disputes would be reconciled by diplomatic means, rather than by war.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 167-168.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 168.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Thus, the paragraph directly defined the competence of the central state institutions. Moreover, the article 7 offered: “The Ukrainian Popular Authority (*Ukrainskaia Narodnaia Vlast*) had the right to decide on all the questions, which lay beyond the competence of the central parliament.”⁹¹ This principle contradicted the notion of federation formulated by the German theoreticians of law and borrowed by Russian liberals. In their view, the polity offered by the Ukrainian Radical Democrats would rather be a confederation.⁹² In this vein, should be considered the article 6, stipulating that “The Ukrainian Popular Authority works out its own constitution, which cannot be neither abolished, nor rejected by the central parliament.”⁹³ Yet it specifies, “the constitution should not contradict... the state interests.”⁹⁴ In other words, the regional constitution could not intervene the sphere of the above mentioned competencies of the central authority. Let me remind, that the earlier project of the Ukrainian Democratic Party used the expression “organic statute,” which in the new version is replaced by the term constitution. Similarly as in the program of 1905, it presupposed that the local legislature should establish the local fundamental laws without a sanction of the central authority.⁹⁵ The latter had to acknowledge (or guarantee) the solution of the diet. And, in this case, the competence of the regional institutions is not delegated from above, but is established by the region itself.

As for the regional institutions and the institutes of local self-government, neither the project of 1904, nor project of 1905 provided any detailed vision. It only said “the regional constitution should provide the right of a wide local self-

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Fedor Kokoshkin, *Lektsii po obshchemu gosudarstvennomu pravu* (Moscow: Izd. Br. Bashmakovykh, 1912), 302-303.

⁹³ “Programma Ukrainskoi demokraticheskoi-radikal’noi partii...,” 168.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 280.

government to village and town societies, and to those districts, where the societies can unite.”⁹⁶ By analogy with earlier projects of Bakunin and Dragomanov, the Radical Democratic Party gave a significant preference to representative authority over the executive one. One can notice it from the following statement:

The Regional Popular Authority (the Diet), regional councils and societies would delegate the execution of their decisions to the elected persons, responsible to the assemblies, which elected them.⁹⁷

It does not offer any special executive institutions, but only individuals, who would have to execute the decisions.

A large section of the program of 1905 is devoted to “economic tasks,” which have a clear socialist orientation. According to this program, the private landholding should be purchased and distributed among those, who will work this land. Moreover, the land would belong to the region and be managed by the elected representative institutions. The property of the region should also include the railroads, steamships mines, and electric power stations. Besides, the program contained a claim of 8-hour workday, pensions for disabled and retired, and an independent organization of elected inspectors at manufactures. Thus, the competence of the regional authority was much wider in the program of the Ukrainian party than in the projects of Russian liberals, and even the Polish nationalists, exactly because it included the distributary rights over the region (or nation) - wide property.

In general, comparing to the project of Hrushevsky, this program pays less attention to juridical details of the functioning of the chambers of the parliament and their competencies. At the same time, it displays a larger influence of the programs of socialist parties and their economic and social claims. It can be explained by fact that

⁹⁶ “Programma Ukrainskoi demokraticheskoi-radikal’noi partii...,” 169.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

many of the representatives of the Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party took part in the activity of various socialist parties.

The Kadets and the Grounds for an Alliance

The Kadets highlighted their principles of the question of nationalities at the September meeting of zemstvo and city activists. At this meeting Kokoshkin suggested to distinguish the national question from the question of administrative decentralization.⁹⁸ For Kokoshkin, the issue of delimitation of autonomous regions in Russia was more complicated than in Western Europe, because in Western Europe “at the moment of defining their relationship to the state the autonomous units had their independent life and quite clear borders.”⁹⁹ By contrast for Russia the task is not only to define the relationship of the parts of the state to the whole, but also to create these parts anew. For Kokoshkin, the autonomy was impossible within the artificial administrative borders. The only homogeneous and distinctive region in Russia, for Kokoshkin, was the Kingdom of Poland. Its population was solidary in their striving for autonomy. Establishing the borders for other regions was more problematic, considering that the leadership of the Union of Liberation had at their disposal only the information about the claims of certain groups, but not the entire population.¹⁰⁰

The programmatic statement of Kokoshkin’s contained a hint that the future Kadets would be ready to discuss the question of autonomy only in the case, if their partner would represent the interests of a certain considerable group of the population,

⁹⁸ For detailed analysis of this project see in chapter 5.

⁹⁹ Fedor Kokoshkin, “Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro s”ezdu zemskikh i gorodskikh deiatelei...,” 3338.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

rather than the views of a narrow circle of intelligentsia. For Ukrainians this condition was critical. At that moment, the number of the adherents of their party was limited mainly by the members of this party. Moreover, considering the actual balance of the political forces in the region the position of the Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party in the dialogue with the Kadets was rather weak.

In contrast to the Kingdom of Poland, where the membership of the local organization of the Kadets did not exceed 20 people, in Little Russia, the Kadets had a more developed network of local chapters. It was mostly due to cooptation into their political organization the members of zemstva in certain “Ukrainian provinces” (Chernihiv) and city dumas (Odessa, Kiev).¹⁰¹ In Kiev alone, the membership of the Kadets local branch counted 1400.¹⁰² A certain part of the Kadets’ adherents in Little Russia were Ukrainian activists. Some of them belonged to the Ukrainian Democratic Party (Ilya Shrah, Mohyliansky etc.) However, the majority of the local organizations were Russians, Poles, and Jews. The latter, according to the statistics of the Kiev branch counted 39 %. Moreover, the local groups of the Kadets intended to create an electoral coalition with the local Jewish union.¹⁰³

The negotiations of association between the Kadets and the Ukrainian groups had been discussed during the autumn 1905. In a conversation with one of the members of Kadets’ local branch Evhen Chykalenko proposed that the Kadets include the idea of the Ukrainian autonomy into their program, and close local branches in Little Russia. Instead, he offered to “join a federative union” with the Ukrainian

¹⁰¹ Hillis, *Between Empire and Nation*, 423.

¹⁰² GARF. f. 523. op. 1. item 216. p. 7.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Radical Democratic Party.¹⁰⁴ According to Chykalenko, the Kadets rejected his offer, insisting that the Ukrainian Democratic Party would merge with the Kadets' local branches and join a federative union with the Kadets.¹⁰⁵ Finally, both parties reached a compromise of an electoral union, i.e. an agreement that the Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party would support the Kadets at the elections in the State Duma, while the Kadets would take the Ukrainian deputies into the Duma.¹⁰⁶

On October 12-18th 1905 the first (constituent) meeting of the Constitutional Democratic Party took place. The meeting adopted the party program, in which they included the claims of autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland and a special status of the Grand Duchy of Finland. In addition, the meeting accepted the paragraph 24 of the program with the following formulation:

After the rights of civic freedom and proper representation with constitutional rights for the entire Russian state would be established, at the level of state-wide legislation there should be opened a legal way for establishing local autonomy and regional representative assemblies with the rights to participate in execution of legislative authority regarding certain subjects, in accordance with the needs of the population.¹⁰⁷

This statement of the possibility to consider the autonomous status for certain borderlands in the future provided a space for maneuver both for the leadership of the Kadets and the representatives of various national groups seeking to cooperate with the Kadets. In this regard, the Ukrainian version of the Kadets' program was very illustrative. The translation published by the members of Kiev branch in 1906 was literal. For example, the Ukrainian version of the paragraph 24 was the following:

¹⁰⁴ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 300.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 301.

¹⁰⁶ *Hromads'ka dumka* 60 (1906).

¹⁰⁷ The Russian version: "После установления прав гражданской свободы и правильного представительства с конституционными правами для всего российского государства должен быть открыт правомерный путь в порядке общегосударственного законодательства для установления местной автономии и областных представительных собраний, обладающих правом участия в осуществлении законодательной власти по известным предметам, соответственно потребности населения." *S'ezdy i konferentsii konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*, vol. 1 (Moscow: ROSPEN, 1997), 37.

After the civil rights and well-ordered regime for the whole Russia would be established, there must be demonstrated the ways, how to establish regional autonomies and regional assemblies with legislative rights in accordance with the needs of the people.¹⁰⁸

It should be noticed, that the expression “local autonomy” (“*mestnaia avtonomiia*”) was translated as “regional autonomy” (“*kraieva avtonomiia*”), and the expression “regional representative assemblies” (“*oblastnye predstavitle’nye sobraniia*”) was rendered as “regional assemblies” (“*kraievye rady*”). At the same time, the translators used the phrase “local self-government” (“*mistseva uprava*”) to denote the institutions of local self-government. Moreover, the whole paragraph 24 was considerably shortened. In the Ukrainian translation there missed the expressions “at the level of state-wide legislation there should be opened a legal way” for establishing autonomy, while “the rights to participate in execution of legislative authority regarding certain subjects” was replaced with “legislative rights.” Thus, the Ukrainian version of the program proclaimed the regional assembly with legislative rights and omitted the details that stipulated the limitations of the rights of this institution by the state-wide legislative assembly and also the restriction of its competence by “certain subjects” (probably questions of exclusively local significance). Therefore, it is possible to assume that the Ukrainian translators tended to give a wider definition of autonomy.

In general, it is possible to say, that the Kadets and the Ukrainian activists could not negotiate on equal grounds, due to a relatively low bargaining capacity of the Ukrainian party. The Ukrainians could only express their claims and needs, which the Kadets could take or not take into consideration. At the same time, the local group of the Kadets in Little Russia was interested in maintaining the contacts with the

¹⁰⁸ The Ukrainian version: «Після того як будуть установлені громадянські права і упорядкований лад для всієї Росії, повинні бути показані способи, яким чином мають заводитись краєві автономії і краєві ради з законодавчими правами, відповідно потребі люду». GARF. f. 579. op. 1. item 1844. p. 4.

Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party because of the close friendly and organizational ties that existed between a certain group of local Kadets and the Ukrainian national activists. Moreover, the Kadets saw the Ukrainians as a potential ally in the context of a gradual activation of the right-wing Russian national groups in the region during the electoral campaign in the First Duma.¹⁰⁹ In these particular circumstances the Kadets sought for a compromise with the Ukrainian parties and made a few verbal concessions.

The Window of Opportunities: The First and the Second Duma

In general, the situation after the issuing of the Manifesto of October 17th and before the dissolution of the Second Duma could be characterized as a “window of opportunity” for the Ukrainian movement. This is exactly how its leaders tried to present it. Freedom of speech, declared by the Manifesto opened the opportunities for the Ukrainian groups to issue their own newspapers in Ukrainian and made it easier for the Ukrainian groups to propagandize their ideas among the readers. However, the audience of the Ukrainian newspapers was relatively narrow, mainly because the majority of the population in the left-bank Ukraine had serious problems in comprehending the Ukrainian language of the newspapers. It was because their language was seriously affected by the Galician dialect.¹¹⁰

At the elections to the First Duma the Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party won only one seat on its own.¹¹¹ Another five representatives of the party¹¹² won their

¹⁰⁹ Hillis, *Between Empire and Nation*, 420-432.

¹¹⁰ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 357.

¹¹¹ Volodymyr Shemet

¹¹² Ilya Shrah, Pavel Chizhevsky, Mykola Biliashovsky, Andrei Viazlov, and Grabovetsky

seats under the banner of the Constitutional Democratic Party.¹¹³ According to Chykalenko, many of the Ukrainian deputies were peasants, but all of them were “unconscious” Ukrainians and were interested only in agrarian issues.¹¹⁴ With the opening of the Duma Hrushevsky moved to St. Petersburg. He and Shemet, Shrah and Chizhevsky founded a special Ukrainian faction the “Ukrainian Club,” which counted 44 deputies.¹¹⁵ However, Unlike the Polish *koło*, the Ukrainian Club did not have a strong discipline. Any attempts to formulate any draft bill on Ukrainian related issues provoked controversies, mainly because the participants belonged to different parties and were limited by the political agenda of their parties. As the result the meetings of the Club took the form of a forum to exchange the opinions regarding the pressing needs of the Ukrainian people. Meanwhile, the aim to organize a detailed discussion of particular projects failed to be realized.¹¹⁶ Organizational ties of the Ukrainian Club to with the Kadets can be demonstrated by the fact that the meetings of this club took place in the apartment of the St. Petersburg branch of the Constitutional Democratic Party.¹¹⁷

Since May 1906 the Ukrainian Club issued a journal *Ukrainsky Vestnik* in Russian, which foremost addressed to a Russian “progressive” public opinion.¹¹⁸ However, the journal could not exist more than a year, because of lack of funding. It was renewed only in 1912 under the title *Ukrainskaia zhizn'*. In the Second Duma, none of the members of the Ukrainian Radical Democratic Party won a seat in the

¹¹³ Oleksander Lototsky, *Storinky Mynuloho*, vol. 3 (Warsaw, 1934), 6-7.

¹¹⁴ Chykalenko, *Tvory*, 323.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ For clear notion of format of the meetings see: “Piershy sbory ukrains'koho parlamens'koho klubu” *Hromads'ka dumka* 101 (1906); Ibid. 117 (1906).

¹¹⁷ Ibid. 101 (1906).

¹¹⁸ “Zadachi Ukrainskogo Vestnika” *Ukrainskii Vestnik* 1 (1906): 3-7.

parliament. Yet, the membership of the Club increased up to 47. There was also launched a special newspaper *Ridna sprava. Dums'ky Visty*, which informed the readers of the activity of the Ukrainian deputies.

Autonomy as a Form of National Self-Determination

A further development of the theoretical understanding in the Ukrainian discourse of this period is connected with a series of publications of Hrushevsky in *Ukrainsky Vestnik*, which were later reprinted in a volume “National Question and Autonomy.”¹¹⁹ If the Kadets’ theoreticians tried to distinguish the issues of the rights of the nationalities and the forms of local self-government Hrushevsky, on the contrary, having posed a claim of national-territorial autonomy merged these two issues into one. At the same time, territoriality was only one of the aspects of nationality.

In the first of his articles in *Ukrainskii vestnik*, Hrushevsky opposed the centralist tendencies in the Russian constitutional movement. Particularly, he argued with those politicians, who thought that the question of satisfying the national claims could be postponed until a complete victory of the “liberation movement” in the entire Russia. The article looks like a response to the recent published statements of the Kadets, where they tried to persuade the nationalities of the importance to fulfil more urgent constitutional tasks first, leaving the consideration of the claims of autonomy for the aftermath.¹²⁰ Hrushevsky offered an opposite opinion. According to him, the nationalities would join the common struggle for liberation and would not press the

¹¹⁹ Mikhail Grushevskii, *Natsional'nyi vopros i avtonomiia* (St.Petersburg: “Obshchestvennaia pol'za,” 1907).

¹²⁰ Pavel Miliukov, “Fraktsiia avtonomistov” Idem. *God bor'by*. Publitsisticheskaia khronika, 1905-1906 (Moscow: Kniga po Trebovaniu, 2013), 390-391.

national issues, if constitutionalists would guarantee the realization of their basic claims.”¹²¹

At the same time, the entire polemics of Hrushevsky was not so much against the tendency to disregard the national question, as against the willingness of the liberals to provide the autonomy to the Kingdom of Poland, while rejecting the similar claims of other, particularly, “non-state” nationalities. This can be inferred from the following passage:

“Wise rulers,” who begin to think it is necessary to do “something” for national demands, when dissatisfaction with the national claims... draws the national feelings out of natural bounds, causes hypertrophy of nationalism and makes the society to develop its energy in the sphere of national strivings at the expense of other more positive sides of social development – will not entice by their wisdom the people, who seriously concerned of the condition of the latter. ...is not it in this direction many leading representatives and organizations of the liberation movement went and go at this moment, who recommend refusing from forging the national question in general, and in particular, the question of national-territorial self-government now, but postponing it for indefinite time, who recommend to discern those claims of autonomy, that are dictated by the “national instinct,” from those, that emerge not from the influence of nationalistic passions, but from recognition the national-territorial autonomy to be one of the basics of normal state order, and conditioning acquiring of it by the tension of the “national instinct,” and the presence of a “big agitation,” with a clearly expressed “desire of the population”?”¹²²

In the view of Hrushevsky these activists of the liberation movement “make the elements, for whom the national question stands along with the political one, to divide their energy between the defense of the former and the latter. Thus they force to unfold the front not only regarding the centralism from the right but also the centralism from the left.”¹²³

The phrase of a clearly expression of the desire of the population refers directly to the documents and publications of the Kadets. The former quotation may be compared with the fragment of the speech of Kokoshkin at the meeting of zemstvo and city activists in September 1905.

¹²¹ Mikhail Grushevskii, “Natsional’nyi vopros i avtonomiia” *Ukrainskii Vestnik* 1 (1906): 14-15.

¹²² Ibid., 14-15.

¹²³ Ibid., 15.

Ten provinces that form the Kingdom of Poland, in their most part represent a homogenous whole, which is very distinct from the rest of the state in ethnographic, economic and cultural respects. A solidary striving of its population towards autonomy is almost undoubtful now.¹²⁴

At the same time, the tension of a national feeling and the striving of the population towards autonomy were not a decisive point in Kokoshkins' argumentation. More important for him was the territorial distinctness of the Kingdom of Poland, its historical past and the significance of the Polish question for Russia's international position.¹²⁵ Yet, for Hrushevsky, this was not a solid reason to oppose the "Polish question" to solution of all other "national questions" in the empire. Hrushevsky emphasized that there had to be a single principle for all nationalities.

... one of the first laws of the new order will have to establish as a general norm the self-government of national territories everywhere, where a certain nationality prevailed at a compact territory, defined by national borders and large enough to organize there a regional self-government... Another fundamental law will have to define the rights of national elements, forming a minority of the population, or living in the territories with a mixed population, and unsuitable for demarcation... I make a special emphasis of the **universality** of such law: it will have to encompass all nationalities. There are no any reasonable and fair grounds to make a choice between the nationalities and ask from them any cultural or historical metrics, or substantiate the providing of national autonomy with a special tension of national strivings...¹²⁶

Thus, the essence of the polemics between Hrushevsky and the Kadets' theoreticians was that Hrushevsky insisted on a consequent realization of the idea of autonomy, without providing any special privileges either to the Poles or to any other nationality. In his view, it was impossible to accomplish a fair reorganization of Russia by the way of exclusions and privileges. It could only be accomplished on ground of national autonomy and federalism.

In his next article "Unity or Disintegration" Hrushevsky emphasized the image of contemporary Russia as a "prison of peoples."¹²⁷ He portrayed Russia as a

¹²⁴ Fedor Kokoshkin, "Doklad k ocherednomu sobraniuu...", 3341-3342.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 3342.

¹²⁶ Grushevskii, "Natsional'nyi vopros...", 10.

¹²⁷ Idem. "Edinstvo ili raspadenie" *Ukrainskii Vestnik* 3 (1906).

conglomerate of various nationalities and historical regions, which were not bound together by any internal connection. The only factor that in the view of Hrushevsky kept all these nationalities and peoples together were the power of bureaucracy and a brutal police force. Moreover, certain leaders of the liberation movement assumed that the Great Russians were the dominant nationality in this state. Yet, for Hrushevsky, this was a false impression, even though it is exactly this impression, which influences the striving of the liberal activists to preserve Russia as a unitary state. For him, this striving may be sincere, but this aim could be accomplishable only if the nationalities in Russia would be sure, that the unity of Russia would serve their own interests. This is how Hrushevsky displayed the behavior of these nationalities:

“Now, when the insurgent people break the doors of la Bastille, the jailers begin to shout and frighten the people that in the case of its destruction all these imprisoned “duchies and kingdoms” and “defeated peoples” would be ready to run away... The representatives of the “defeated peoples” assure that they do not think of running away from the detention house... and will stay loyal to the unity and indivisibility of Russia.”¹²⁸

In the view of Hrushevsky, such assurances are not trustworthy. These “assurances..., which are given by the captives before letting them out do not convince... A complete independence is a consequent logical realization of the questions of national development and self-determination of any nationality, which occupies a certain territory and has sufficient qualities and energy for the development.”¹²⁹ He openly declares that national independence is a natural striving of any people. The only factor that can restrain this aspiration towards independence is awareness of the benefits of the state union with other peoples, the union that would not infringe the yearning for cultural, economic, and political development of its members. Hrushevsky wrote:

¹²⁸ Ibid., 8.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

...belonging to a large and well-organized state union may provide many benefits for economic and cultural development of the peoples of this union, which would not be a result of exploitation of other peoples and regions. Large space and freedom of economic exchange, establishing more cultural institutions, securing from international complications and oppression are, for example, such benefits.¹³⁰

For Hrushevsky, in the present, the peoples of Russia were united by common struggle against the repressive bureaucracy. However, as soon as they would win, they might drift apart – or, on the contrary, try to establish a genuine unity. This unity could be achieved only through federalization. Moreover, the territory with the Great Russian population should be divided into autonomous regions.

The Great Russian nationality takes a smaller part of the population of the empire. There are no common strivings towards a centralist unity inside this nation; on the contrary there is a clear tendency towards regional autonomy.”¹³¹

Hrushevsky thought that “a wide implementation of a principle of national-territorial and regional autonomy” was the only way to preserve the unity of the Russian Empire. Such a way, for Hrushevsky, would transform the “cells of a prison into free apartments, where the members of the state union would enjoy their full rights and feel themselves free residents, rather than imprisoned captives.”¹³²

In the article “On Maturity and Immaturity” Hrushevsky welcomed the establishment of the “Union of Autonomists and Federalists” and offered his recommendations regarding the general principles of this faction.¹³³ Above all, Hrushevsky argued, it was important to follow the principle of equality of all nationalities and refuse the special privileges to distinct nationalities on the ground of an allegedly better preparedness to acquire the autonomy. At the same time, Hrushevsky saw a certain terminological vagueness in the program of the Union. In

¹³⁰ Ibid., 10.

¹³¹ Ibid., 14.

¹³² Ibid., 14-15.

¹³³ Mikhail Grushevskii, “O zrelosti i nezrelosti” *Ukrainskii Vestnik* 4 (1906).

his view, the expression “regional or national-territorial units” was unclear as the notion “regional” was often in opposition to the idea of “national-territorial” autonomy.¹³⁴ For Hrushevsky, “one has to face a hostile attitude towards the national-territorial autonomy and the striving to replace it with the autonomy of regions. The latter tend to bind together the pieces from various ethnographic regions; moreover, one of the nationalities plays a role of “master” in the whole region.”¹³⁵ Hrushevsky thought that such claims could seriously complicate the cause of national liberation. In this reasoning, one can find a hidden polemics with the postulates of Russian liberals, who opposed the principle forming self-governing territories along the national lines.¹³⁶ At the same time, in this reasoning Hrushevsky seems to contradict his previous article, where he advocated the idea of federation of both national and regional units. This contradiction, however, becomes less obvious if to suppose, that Hrushevsky regards the territorial principle only for the Great Russian part of Russia, while for the rest of the regions he offered the national-territorial principle.

The concluding article of this series was “Our Claims.” It specified the meaning of the national-territorial autonomy. According to Hrushevsky,

...the territory with a prevailing Ukrainian population has to be driven out of the contemporary administrative divisions... Because establishing the borders in precise coherence with the national composition of the population should require a certain time, the empire-wide law that would reform the organization of local self-government... may be confined to a principle decree about the alteration of the borders between the existing administrative divisions in accordance with the ethnographic composition of the population (while inside the ethnographic territory the division would be in accordance with the economic conditions and convenience of communication).¹³⁷

Comparing with the Dragomanov’s project, it is possible to see, that the ethnographic principle, which Dragomanov considered along with the economic and

¹³⁴ Ibid., 204 footnote.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 205.

¹³⁶ Kokoshkin, “Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...,” 3330-3332.

¹³⁷ Grushevskii, “O zrelosti i nezrelosti...,” 270.

geographic peculiarities of the regions, in Hrushevsky's articles acquires a prominent role. The economic connections become important only for further division of the autonomous national region into lesser self-governing units.

In this article, Hrushevsky suggested the major condition, which would lie in the ground of defining the competence of autonomous national-territorial units. In his view, "the state-wide constitution has to leave the local institutes a wide space for arranging and defining the local relations... provide an order, in accordance with which, the economic means of the region, except for a fair participation in state-wide expenses, would be used to satisfy the needs of local cultural and economic needs."¹³⁸

In contrast to Hrushevsky's project published in May 1905, his new series of the essays offered a less detailed vision of the Ukrainian claims. Presumably, this reflected purpose of the edition of *Ukrainisky Vestnik* that addressed mainly to the Russian audience and had to justify the Ukrainian national claims. Avoiding the details allowed widening a space for possible compromises. Moreover, his persistence on fiscal federalism proved that the principle of delegating authority from bottom up was a central place of his national program.

In general, the series of these essays demonstrates an evolution of Hrushevsky's views towards defending the priority of the interests of distinct peoples over the interests of the entire state. Preserving the unity of the state ceased to be an assumption in his reasoning on the fate of the peoples of the empire. It rather was one of the possible variants of the future. For him, this variant could only be realized, if preserving the unity becomes beneficial for each of the peoples. Otherwise, the peoples would have the right to pursue their independence. What exactly would be the

¹³⁸ Ibid., 207.

benefit, the people will have to decide itself. Therefore, it would be impossible to define once and forever the conditions for preserving the nations within the union.

In the Second Duma, the Polish Koło put their project of the autonomy at the agenda of the parliamentary discussions. Reacting on this move of the Polish delegation, Hrushevsky called the Ukrainian deputies in the Duma to use the moment as an opportunity to declare the “claims of non-state nationalities of Russia” along with the claims of the Poles. He motivated this request on the newspaper “Rada”:

It would be an unforgivable sin of the Ukrainian faction regarding the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian idea, if it will not remember now its obligation, and raise the Ukrainian claims along with the Polish ones. It should set the question of autonomy at a wider ground and pose the claims of non-state nationalities of Russia.¹³⁹

The Duma was soon dissolved and Hrushevsky's claim did not find any response. This only proved the weakness of the Ukrainian faction in the Duma. The only reaction to his appeal to formulate a certain project was a brief note in “*Ridna sprava*” with a reference to Galician newspapers. According to the note, the conference of the Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party decided:

...to work out the project of “general points” of the Ukrainian autonomy and give it for the consideration to local hromady. After they send their recommendations the new conference of the party will discuss the law and submit it to the Ukrainian labor faction in order to introduce it in the Duma.¹⁴⁰

Thus, a certain project existed. Yet, it could take a long time before this project would acquire any tangible form. Meanwhile, the political situation was changing rapidly. The second Duma was soon dissolved. Reluctant to pursue the political struggle in the conditions of the reaction, the Ukrainian Radical-Democratic Party ceased to exist. It took the form of an unofficial organization the Society of Ukrainian Progressists (*Tovarystvo Ukraïns'kikh Postupovtsiv, TUP*), which regained the former

¹³⁹ Mikhail Hrushevsky, “Pol'skii zakonoproekt i Ukraintsy” *Rada* 94 (1907).

¹⁴⁰ *Ridna sprava. Dums'ki visty* 9 (1907).

organization of the Ukrainian movement as an amorphous association of the circles of intelligentsia that existed before 1904.¹⁴¹ Thus, the window of opportunities closed, having left only the abstract theoretical reasoning of Hrushevsky. Any political force that could bolster these ideas was now absent.

A Turn to the Right and New Hopes

The new electoral law had dramatically changed the political composition of the deputies from Little Russia in the State Duma. The only “conscious” Ukrainian in the Duma was a member of the Kiev branch of the Kadet party Ivan Luchitsky.¹⁴² The rest of the deputies from the region represented large landowners, many of whom linked up with the right wing of the Octobrists and the newly emerged Party of Russian Nationalists.¹⁴³ Such a consolidation of Russian nationalist groups in the center increased the influence of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists in the region. The success of the organization during the elections to the third Duma gave its leader Anatoly Savenko a reason to claim that Kiev and Little Russia were the stronghold and the center of the “‘all-Russian’ patriotic movement.”¹⁴⁴

The rhetoric of the members of the Club was focused on the accusations of the Ukrainian movement in undermining the organic unity of the “All-Russian nation.” They portrayed the Ukrainian activists as a result of the Austrian and German intrigue, which aimed at to split off the Little Russian population from Russia, having imposed

¹⁴¹ Strilets, *Ukrais'ka radikal'no-demokratychna partiia*, 41-49.

¹⁴² Lototsky, *Storinky Mynuloho*, 61.

¹⁴³ Robert Edelman, “The Russian Nationalist Party and the Political Crisis of 1909” *Russian Review* 34: 1 (1975): 32-54.

¹⁴⁴ Anton Kotenko, Olga Martyniuk, Aleksei Miller, “Maloross...,” 437.

on them a “foreign” language and culture.¹⁴⁵ Published in the same vein, Sergei Shchegolev’s “The Ukrainian Movement as a New Stage of a South-Russian Separatism,” provoked a heated debate in 1912.¹⁴⁶ The author worked in the Kiev department on the press and had an access to all Ukrainian publications. His book was a sarcastic attack on the Ukrainian activists, not only denying the existence of the Ukrainian nation, but representing the Ukrainian movement as an artificial product, funded by foreign powers.

Both the growing significance of the right-wing representation from Little Russia and their strong anti-Ukrainian stance posed a serious challenge for the Kadets. On the one hand, they needed the support of “conscious” Ukrainians to withstand their conservative rivals. On the other hand, the denunciative rhetoric of the Russian nationalists threatened to alienate the moderate groups of electorate. As a result, the Kadets had to change their agenda in the general debate on the “Ukrainian question.” Instead of the question of autonomy, the key issue of the debates became the question of the Ukrainian language. On March 28 1908, thirty seven deputies of the State Duma, mainly the Kadets and Trudoviks, proposed a draft bill on education in Little Russian schools in the native language.¹⁴⁷

In autumn 1910, the State Duma discussed the general question of the instruction in primary schools in the native language. However, the Ukrainian deputy Luchitsky failed to take part in the proceedings of the Duma throughout the whole course of the discussion. He only managed to come in at end of the discussion, where

¹⁴⁵ For the rhetoric of Kiev nationalists see the daily newspaper *Kievlianin*, which was a mouthpiece of both the Kiev Club and the local branch of the Union of the Russian People. And also: *Sbornik kluba russkikh natsionalistov*. Vol. 1-3 (Kiev: Tipografiia “N.I. Kushnerev i Ko.”, 1909-1911).

¹⁴⁶ Sergei Shchegolev, *Ukrainskoe dvizhenie kak sovremennyi etap iuzhnorusskogo separatizma* (Kiev, 1912).

¹⁴⁷ The full text of the draft bill: “Bor’ba za iazyk: publikatsiia dokumentov” *Ab Imperio* 2 (2005).

he offered an amendment in favor of allowing the instruction in the Ukrainian language. The amendment was rejected by the majority, which aroused the suspicions of the Ukrainian activists that the Kadets intentionally prevented the defense of the Ukrainian cause in the Duma.¹⁴⁸ The situation got even worse when Peter Struve and the like-minded Kadets initiated a public polemic, denying not only the expedience of the Ukrainian language, but also the very existence of the Ukrainian nation.¹⁴⁹ This opinion, however, departed from the general view of the Kadets on the “Ukrainian question.” Yet, Struve’s publications seriously antagonized the Ukrainian groups and threatened to call into question the alliance between the Kadets and the Ukrainians on the eve of the elections to the fourth Duma.¹⁵⁰

A Debate on the Limits of the Russian Nation

Unlike the Ukrainian nationalists, who treated the Ukrainian nation in its “ethnographic borders” as an empirical fact, the debate of Bogdan Kistiakovsky and Peter Struve was based on other theoretical assumptions. Both supposed that the Ukrainian culture and consequently the Ukrainian nation were only in the making, rather than an accomplished fact. For Kistiakovsky, even the Russian culture was not fully established, whereas for Struve, it was the culture of an accomplished nation that was linked with the “Great state” (*velikim gosudarstvom*) produced by this nation. This was the culture of “Pushkin and the Complete Collection of Laws.”¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Lototsky, *Storinky Mynuloho*, 61-63.

¹⁴⁹ Pipes, *Struve: Liberal on the Right*, 214-216. The views of Struve on the “Ukrainian question” alienated Struve from the majority of the party. This was the cause of his resignation from the party in 1915. *Ibid.*, 218-219.

¹⁵⁰ *S’ezdy i Konferentsii Konstitutsionno-Demokraticheskoi partii*. Vol. 2, 377-383.

¹⁵¹ Peter Struve, “Obshcherusskaia kul’tura i ukrainskii partikuliarizm. Otvet Ukraintsu” *Russkaia mysl’* 1 (1912): 66.

Contrary to primordial views of Russian nationalists, who thought that the Russian nationality had been forming through a long historical process, starting from the times of the Kievan Rus', both Struve and Kistiakovsky treated the nation as a modern phenomenon. According to Kistiakovsky, "... the true culture of Russia, as the culture of popular masses has not yet come into being. Only now it can arise."¹⁵² Kistiakovsky thought that the Russian national culture that Struve referred to, was only an accomplishment of intelligentsia.

To a "number of ethnographic terms" - "Great Russian," "Little Russian," and "White Russian" you oppose a "significant historical fact: the existence of the Russian nation and Russian culture. However, these "Russian nation and Russian culture" do not exist anywhere, but only among the Russian intelligentsia and its consciousness. Meanwhile, behind these ethnographic terms stay the popular masses that form the peoples of Russia."¹⁵³

In contrast to Struve, who was concerned about a possible "fragmentation" of the Russian nation into three independent parts, Kistiakovsky apprehended that "intelligentsia was breaking away from the people."¹⁵⁴ He wrote:

Is it possible to imagine a greater gap between the people and intelligentsia, than when they speak not metaphorically, but literally two different languages? Exactly this is happening in Little Russia. Or, in your opinion, having an intelligentsia, which is close by spirit and language, is a privilege of only the Great Russian people?¹⁵⁵

For Kistiakovsky, the main task of intelligentsia was getting closer to the people, learning their language and elevating the people in their language to a higher level of culture.

Struve had a different understanding of the task of intelligentsia. Knowing of Kistiakovsky's enthusiasm about the ideas of Dragomanov, Struve referred to the authority of the latter to substantiate his position. At the same time, he used those

¹⁵² Ukrainets (Bogdan Kistiakovsky) "K voprosu o samostoiatel'noi ukrainskoi kul'ture (Pis'mo v redaktsiiu)" *Russkaia mysl'* 5 (1911): 138.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 142.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

articles of Dragomanov, where he recognized the significance of “all-Russian literature and all-Russian language” for the Ukrainians.¹⁵⁶ In general, Struve’s position was as follows: at the moment there was a relatively developed all-Russian culture, which was a common accomplishment of all three branches of the Russian people. A special Ukrainian culture was rather an ethnographic one. So, it made no sense to invest not so strong forces of their intelligentsia to construct parallel “Ukrainian” and “White Russian” cultures. Instead they could endow these forces to develop a general cultural level of the whole people. In the view of Struve, the German intelligentsia made a wiser effort:

Creating a single national language, while preserving local peculiarities that do not pretend to national state significance, was a great patriotic endeavor of the German intelligentsia. With this they did a great service to their people, to its political and cultural development. Under a dynastic fragmentation of the political body it created a unity of national spirit.¹⁵⁷

For Struve, the Little Russian language was doomed for gradual extinction under the influence of “natural” economic and social processes linked to capitalism. Struve assumed that the “process of absorption and extinction of the Little Russian language among the popular masses” was the “process that affects many dialects which are under the pressure of more powerful, and, at the same time, kindred bookish and colloquial language, which is at one time the language of the statehood, the language of higher culture, and finally, the language of new economic forms.”¹⁵⁸

A strong emphasis of the importance of “natural” economic processes seems to reflect Struve’s earlier engagement with Marxism. In this sense, the dispute between Struve and Kistiakovsky reminds the argument between Marxists and narodniks. The former sought to bring in consciousness to the people, which it did not possess.

¹⁵⁶ Struve, “Obshcherusskaia kul’tura i ukrainskii partikuliarism...,” 75.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 70.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 71.

Meanwhile the latter, called the intelligentsia to learn from the people. Struve criticized Dragomanov for his “narodnik” position, emphasizing the contrast between the theory of narodniks and democratism. For Struve, “the democratism of both Dobroliubov and Dragomanov contained many elements of narodnik theory. Therefore, in the process of democratization of literature and culture they were not sensitive and attentive enough to a phenomenon, which can be characterized as *equalization at a higher level* (italics mine – T.Kh).”¹⁵⁹

Struve assumed that the process of creation of national culture included both the ascending movement from the “people” to “aristocracy” and descending movement from “aristocracy” to the “people.”

Luther and Pushkin learned from a street boy and woman making communion bread (*prosvirnia*), yet they also obliged the boy and the woman to learn from them... The language of higher classes may conquer the lower ones; similarly the language of the few (*izbrannye*) may win the masses. Dobroliubov, Dragomanov and narodniks in general tend to see only how Pushkin learns from the woman that makes communion bread. And they don't notice how the woman that makes communion bread learns from Pushkin.¹⁶⁰

Generally, Struve tried to consider the question from the “truly statist” standpoint, which did not mean, that he was in complete agreement with reactionary politicians:

When reactionaries yell about “mazepinstvo” and display fantastic pictures of Austro-Polish-Ukrainian war with Russia aiming to take the Ukraine of Russia... reactionary fury does double harm to the all-Russian culture.¹⁶¹

According to Struve, the political repressions against the Ukrainian culture, on the one hand, could provoke a radical Ukrainian nationalism and, on the other hand, could make it hard for “statist thinking” Russians to realize the possible harm from the emergence of a separate Ukrainian nation along with the Russian one. If the “thought

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 77.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 85.

of the Ukrainian intelligentsia would take roots in popular soil and inflame it with its Ukrainianness, - for Struve – this would be the greatest and unprecedented split of the Russian nation, which would be... a true state and national trouble. All our questions of borderlands would seem complete nonsense as compared to a perspective of division of the Russian culture into two and – if the “White Russians” would follow the “Little Russians” – into three cultures.”¹⁶²

The argument between Kistiakovsky and Struve brought the question on the perspectives of the Ukrainian and Russian cultures into another dimension. From a dispute on the language and territorial reorganization, they transferred it into an argument regarding the future of Russian statehood. Would the new and liberated Russia be a national state according to the German model? Whether the Russian multinational state had to preserve a strong national core? Or, by analogy with Austria, it was to be transformed into a conglomerate of national regions, yet without a national core and unitary high culture? At the same time, Kistiakovsky regarded a compromising variant of the state on the model of Switzerland, where the regions were connected into a federation, yet none of the regions had a “dominant nationality.” This variant did not exclude the existence of the all-Russian high culture, yet the latter did not have to eliminate or assimilate other national cultures. Likewise, in Switzerland, the German culture did not exclude the French and Italian ones.

Mutual Reeducation

One of the most significant events, related to the discussion of the “Ukrainian question,” were the so-called “Ukrainian days” in the State Duma in February 1914.

¹⁶² Ibid.

These debates were initiated by the inquiry of the Kadets and Trudoviki “on the occasion of the upcoming celebration of the memory of the poet Shevchenko,” which was addressed to the Chair of the Council of Ministers and the Minister of Internal Affairs. On the eve of the Duma discussion Paul Miliukov went to Kiev to meet with Hrushevsky and the members of the Society of the Ukrainian Progressivists (TUP) together with the Kadets from Kiev.¹⁶³

The parliamentary debates over this issue took place in the changed political circumstances. The domination of the right-wing majority, which in the Third Duma gave way to a relative equilibrium of forces between the left and right. Despite the pressure of the government during the elections, the left wing of the Fourth Duma increased.¹⁶⁴ The Octobrist position considerably weakened. They lost a clear understanding of their political aims. Moreover, their leader Alexander Guchkov lost his seat in the Duma.¹⁶⁵ At the same time, within the Duma a new alliance was emerging, that could include the Kadets, Progressists and a certain part of the Octobrists. This group was very close to forming a left center (as opposed to the right center in the Third Duma). Regarding many questions, they confronted the government. Meanwhile the government, relying on the support of the right-wing parties and the tsar himself more often tended to decide the state-related issues apart from the Duma. This circumstance caused discontent even among the deputies of the center.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶³ Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 381-382.

¹⁶⁴ Anatolii Smirnov, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma Rossiiskoi imperii, 1906 - 1917* (Cheliabinsk: Sotsium, 2010).

¹⁶⁵ Willian Gleason, *Alexander Guchkov and the End of the Empire* in: Transactions of the American Philosophical Society vol. 73. part 3 (Philadelphia, 1983), 48.

¹⁶⁶ Smirnov, *Gosudarstvennaia Duma*, 442-466.

A ban on the Ukrainian celebration of the Shevchenko's jubilee was initiated by the letter of Anatoly Savenko to the government on behalf of the Kiev Club of Russian Nationalists. In this letter, Savenko accused the Ukrainians of separatism and the attempt to subvert Russia's unity in favor of Austro-Hungary.¹⁶⁷ The Ukrainians, who had earlier organized agitation in Little Russia and a rising funds for the celebration of the jubilee, asked the Kadets and Trudoviks for the support to oppose the ban. Having foreseen a heated discussion in the Duma, Miliukov accepted the invitation of the Kiev branch of his party and used it as an opportunity to meet with Hrushevsky in Kiev.¹⁶⁸

The diary of Evhen Chykalenko provides the details of this meeting. There were 10 representatives of TUP and 10 members of the Constitutional Democratic Party, yet seven of the Kadets were Ukrainians. The meeting took place in the apartment of Fedor Steinheil a member of the Kadets in Kiev, who at the same time was an activist of the Ukrainian movement. Hrushevsky opened the meeting, declaring:

We, conscious Ukrainians, with minor exceptions, are united on the principle of parliamentarism, autonomy of Ukraine and a federative organization of the Russian state: it is clear from that, we are not separatists, we do not have any plan to separate ourselves from the Russian state, and all the declarations of the Russian press, that we have secret separatist intentions and receive the German marks and Austrian kronen is a complete slander.”¹⁶⁹

The next speakers recounted the success of the Ukrainian movement and the futile attempts of government repressions. Miliukov made detailed notes of the speeches, using his skills in stenography. He often asked to repeat points, in order to clarify them. Obviously, he intended to use this data in his parliamentary speech, which subsequently pleased the members of the meeting.

¹⁶⁷ Rossiia. *Gosudarstvennaia Duma IV Sozyv. Stenograficheskie otchety. 1914 g. Sessii 2. Chast' 2* (St.Petersburg: Gosudarstvennaia tipografiia, 1914), 706-707.

¹⁶⁸ Miliukov, *Vospominaniia*, 381-382.

¹⁶⁹ Evhen Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk*, vol. 1 (Kiev: Vydavnytstvo "Tempora," 2004), 308.

When the speeches ended, Miliukov said that he could not make comments regarding the specific points that he wrote down in his notes, yet he felt the need to respond to the programmatic claims of Hrushevsky. Miliukov emphasized that he could not at all agree with autonomy of Ukraine or a federative reorganization of Russia. In his view, a federative reorganization of Russia could lead it to disintegration.¹⁷⁰ In a professor's manner he declared that Ukrainians poorly understood "federation." According to him, federation was a means of unification, rather than decentralization. In this dispute, Miliukov identified his view on the federation with the one in the recently published scholarly account by Alexander Iashchenko. The latter supported a centralist position regarding the organization of the Russian empire, which denied the necessity of autonomy for certain regions. For him, the federative states, such as the United States of America, or Germany were a conglomerate of independent states before they formed a federation in the process of their unification.¹⁷¹ From this perspective, the Ukrainians offered an unrealistic claim, as they tended to create a federation by breaking up a unitary state. Miliukov, further mentioned, that this idea would damage the Ukrainian cause, because it would incite the Russian progressive public opinion against Ukrainian claims.¹⁷²

Miliukov's speech caused a heated response by Hrushevsky. He argued that the struggle for autonomy was the aim of the Ukrainians starting from the Society of United Slavs until the present time, and this slogan did not intend to break up Russia, but, on the contrary, to strengthen its unity.¹⁷³ In this statement, Hrushevsky repeated the rhetoric of Kokoshkin in 1905-1906 when he advocated the idea of decentralization.¹⁷⁴ Miliukov was

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 312.

¹⁷¹ Aleksander Iashchenko, *Teoriia federalizma* (Juriev: Tipografiia K. Mattisena, 1912).

¹⁷² Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk*, 312.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Kokoshkin, *Oblastnaia avtonomiia i edinstvo Rossii*, 3-13.

evasive in his reply, saying that the Kadets would might agree with the Ukrainians on such an understanding of federation, yet he could not discuss this question at that moment, because he was short of time. In the end, the Ukrainians made again several short speeches, expressing the hope that the Kadets would finally accept the idea of federative reorganization of Russia, similarly as they agreed to support the Ukrainian “program-minimum.”¹⁷⁵ Finally, according to Chykalenko, Miliukov declared, “he had never been the adversary of the Ukrainian self-determination, and now after the information he has heard, he sympathizes their ideas even more. Yet, the Ukrainian ideals so distant, that real politicians should not argue about them.”¹⁷⁶ The note on February 16th 1914 in Chykalenko’s diary ended by a phrase: “When the meeting ended, we said to each other laughing, we have stuffed Miliukov so much that now he wonders how he will pass through the doors of the Duma.”¹⁷⁷

The debates in the Duma took place in the course of four meetings from 11th to the 26th of February 1914. In the course of these debates the deputies revealed a variety of opinions. Moreover, the position of the right wing politicians did not acquire a decisive support of the majority. The left-wing parties, the Trudoviks and the Kadets sympathized with the Ukrainians and opposed the ban on the Shevchenko jubilee. They argued that such restrictions could only provoke the Ukrainian agitation for separatism. In their view, the Ukrainian movement, except for small isolated groups, did not aspire for independence of the Ukraine, and even more so, they did not seek to make it a part of Austro-Hungary. The slogan of “autonomy” of Ukraine within Russia proved that. The right-wing politicians, and above all Purishkevich accused the Ukrainians of separatism and emphasized their link with the revolutionary movement. The main spokesman of the Octobrists was Kapnist. Having expressed his Ukrainophile position and respect for

¹⁷⁵ Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk*, 312.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 312-313.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 313.

Shevchenko, he tried to dissociate himself from the Ukrainian movement as a political trend, which, in his view, was directed against the Russian statehood.¹⁷⁸ In the same spirit, several priests from Little Russia denied the separatist strivings of the Little Russian people, yet at the same time, they spoke about the love of Ukrainians for their small motherland, which was, in their view, the basis for Russian-wide patriotism.¹⁷⁹

Considering the situation in the Duma, Miliukov resorted to a sophisticated strategy. On the one hand, he advocated the attempts of the Ukrainians to defend their language and culture and argued that the separatist strivings, if they exist, were a reaction to the police repression. On the other hand, Miliukov decisively dissociated himself from the Ukrainian claims for autonomy and federation, and even called them “dangerous” for Russia’s state unity, although he declared that he understood the psychological grounds for such claims. In the view of Miliukov, if the Russian government would stop its repression against the Ukrainian movement and prove that the Russian society was friendly, rather than hostile toward the Ukrainians, it would be possible to moderate the Ukrainian claims. Similarly, it would be easier to prove the Ukrainian leaders, that their use of the slogans of autonomy and federation was incorrect and contradicted the science of state law. He said:

I do not share the strivings of autonomists-federalists and I think their political program could be detrimental and dangerous for Russia. Yet, at the same time, I have to say that there are shades and varieties in understanding of this position. The traditional term “federation” which had been living for 70 years could not stay unchanged, could not preserve its initial meaning, the meaning that the founders of the movement invested in is, inspired by Bakunin’s anarchism. This is not the “federation,” which the science of the state law is studying. I think that federalists-autonomists-Ukrainians did not follow enough the development of this term. And, I assume, that further evolution of their political formulas would lead them to cut off the term and the concept of “federation” from their programs. This is my hope and desire.¹⁸⁰

The result of the Duma discussions was an adoption of an interpellation by the majority of votes, yet with certain corrections. Mentioning of a ban on a church

¹⁷⁸ *Rossia. Gosudarstvennaia Duma IV Sozyv. Stenograficheskie otchety*, 710-711.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 712-713.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 906.

service in the name of Shevchenko was eliminated as the “inner affair” of the church. Thus, the rhetoric of Miliukov, addressed to the deputies in the center brought its results along with Ukrainophile position of the part of the Octobrists. The attempts of the right-wing politicians to convince the Duma majority that the Ukrainian movement was an outcome of an “Austrian intrigue” failed. However, Miliukov’s speech caused a protest among the Ukrainians. In a most negative form, Chykalenko expressed it in his diary:

I do not know, why did he leaped out with it in order to persuade the Russian progressive and non-progressive circles, that Kadets think above all of Russia’s unity, or it is just a Muscovite centralist spoke in him. Yet, a scholar historian should know, that autonomous-federative order does not lead to disintegration of the state, but on the contrary... Whatever you may say, inside every Russian (*katsap*), no matter how progressive he is, there sits a centralist!¹⁸¹

Hrushevsky was more diplomatic. In his letter to Miliukov on March 4th 1914, recognizing the positive significance of Miliukov’s speech in the Duma, he expressed several objections to him. He did not approve of the tactics. Besides, he did not agree with certain details in his speech. Particularly, Hrushevsky said, that it was not Bakunin, who inspired Ukrainians in the question of federalism. He latter pointed to Kostomarov as a source of these ideas.¹⁸² Generally, Hrushevsky was concerned the Miliukov’s position appeared too close to the viewpoint of Kapnist. Without denying the right of Miliukov to have his own position regarding autonomy and federation, Hrushevsky, however, supposed that Miliukov’s public polemics with the Ukrainians in the Duma would only provide the arguments for their common enemies. Hrushevsky reminded Miliukov his own words at the meeting in Kiev: “Why we, friends, will argue and give the aliment to our future enemies.”¹⁸³ Responding to Miliukov’s statement that “Ukrainian federalists did not follow well the evolution of

¹⁸¹ Chykalenko, *Shchodennyk*, 319-320.

¹⁸² GARF. f. 579. op. 1. item 1879. p. 4.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p. 4 ob.

the term,” Hrushevsky mentioned that having no time “you did not have an opportunity to see, whether the Ukrainian federalists understood this question well enough.”¹⁸⁴ In the conclusion Hrushevsky expressed the hope, that further meetings with Miliukov, would eliminate their differences and establish common principles for further collaboration of the Ukrainians and the Kadets.¹⁸⁵

The hope of Hrushevsky was soon realized. By the end of the month, the delegation of the Ukrainians led by Hrushevsky met with the members of the Central Committee of the Kadets, including Miliukov, Kokoshkin, Rodichev and Vernadsky. This meeting took place at the party conference in St. Petersburg on 23-25 of March 1914. The shorthand report of the meeting of the Central Committee on March 22 noted: “P.N.Miliukov personally supposed that if the Ukrainians demonstratively insist on their wider claims, the Kadets would have to dissociate from them.”¹⁸⁶ Two days later, when both sides exchanged their principal statements the Kiev members of the Kadets threatened to leave the party, if the Central Committee ignored their needs. Particularly, Steinheil “...asked to avoid negative decisions and resolutions, which would be obligatory for all the members of the party, because such decisions would force the Kadets in the South-West region to leave the party.” He stated, “he was a confirmed Kadet member, but he would also have to leave the party, as he had observed a large growth of the Ukrainian movement, which a person, who lives in Ukraine would not bear to oppose.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 5.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ *Protokoly Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii, 1912-1914* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 1997), 289.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 303.

In course of the discussion, the Kadets, however, failed to suggest any concession, except the one by Kokoshkin “a wide local self-government in Ukraine (not connected with present provinces).”¹⁸⁸ Commenting on the situation, Hrushevsky expressed a concern “haven’t all who gathered there work in vain, failing to move forward regarding the positions we took before.”¹⁸⁹ After a further exchange of opinions, Vladimir Vernadsky formulated a general viewpoint of the participants of the meeting, he “thought, that at the moment the question was regarded through the wrong perspective. We need to formulate questions that are more realistic in order to define the political minimum and maximum of the claims. And for now, he like A.M.Koliubakin requested Miliukov not to make public statements denying autonomy and federalism. That would prevent a deep cleavage within the Kadets.”¹⁹⁰

At the next meeting on March 30th the Central Committee and the Ukrainian delegates were focused on more practical issues, particularly they discussed the preparation of the bills on introducing the Ukrainian language at schools, courts and opening of Ukrainian chairs in universities.

The contents of the discussions above suggests that despite the intentions of the Ukrainians and the Kadets to cooperate in realization of the Ukrainian “program minimum,” the alliance between the Ukrainians and the Kadets could only be tactical and directed against their common enemy – the Russian nationalists and “reactionary” government. At the same time, between the majority of the Central Committee and Ukrainians, including the Ukrainians in the Constitutional-Democratic Party existed irreconcilable differences regarding the future organization of Russia. Miliukov and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 317.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 321.

the majority among the leadership of the Kadets, including their main spokesman on the national question Fedor Kokoshkin took a more centralist stance. They recognized the need for “broad local self-government,” but rejected the idea of national-territorial autonomy. Hrushevsky, in his turn, insisted that the Kadets, if they sought an alliance with the Ukrainians, should at least restrain themselves from public denunciations of the principles of autonomy and federalism regarding the Ukrainian case. At the same time, he left for himself the right to proclaim these slogans publicly. This put Miliukov in quite uncomfortable position, considering the sentiments of the Ukrainian members of the Kadets. In essence, he had to choose either to break with the Ukrainian members of the party or see the break away of the Great Russian Kadets, who supported the rhetoric of Struve. Moreover, Miliukov, though he avoided principal arguments out of tactical concerns, supported the centralist position. The practical solution of the question was in the sphere of rhetoric. Speaking in the Duma, Miliukov sought to make an impression that in cooperating with the Ukrainians the Kadets would “reeducate” them and convince to give up their radical claims. At the same time, dealing with the Ukrainians, including the Ukrainian members of his own party, Miliukov sought to demonstrate his disposition towards their claims for autonomy in the future. Yet as a practical politician he warned his Ukrainian partners from an “incorrect” use of the terms, which could undermine their reputation in the eyes of progressive Russian public opinion.

Conclusion

The relationship between the Kadets and the Ukrainian advocates of the autonomy and federation was not inconsistent and depended on the changing

circumstances. Initially, the Kadets were seemingly ready to make certain concessions to “non-state” peoples, who following the Poles, claimed autonomy. With all the stipulations of restriction of the competence of autonomous institutions, it seemed that there was no unsurmountable gap between the Kadets’ idea of decentralization and the hopes of the Ukrainians to acquire an autonomous status. As the position of the Kadets on the national question became more precise, contradictions emerged. The Kadets opposed the principle of national autonomy and tried to replace it with the idea of territorial self-government, which would not be related with the needs of a certain nationality. The program of the Ukrainians at this stage was still very unclear, preserving the features that related the program with Bakunin’s theory of federation. Up to a certain moment, this allowed the possibility of a compromise with the Kadets. Yet, at the same time, Hrushevsky developed the whole program of establishing the Ukrainian autonomy that required reorganization of the entire Russia along the national-territorial principle. He also offered the principle of equality of all the peoples in the empire, irrespective of their “maturity.” The principle suggested dividing the Russian empire into national territories that might wish to enter to a voluntary federative union. He compared Russia with the “prison of peoples,” where after the liberation the residents would have to decide, whether they would want to live further in their cells, or they would want to break away. This new statement of the question was radicalized, that it made impossible reconciliation with the Kadets.

It seemed that Russian liberals did not regard the Ukrainian activists as a serious political force and acted on the principle of political realism, refused to discuss, what they saw as utopian projects. The Kadets were ready to support the claims of nationalities in protecting their cultural rights. Yet, in the view of the Kadets, decentralization in Russia was the question that lay on a different level. It was

a more effective way of administering the empire, rather than resolving the question of nationalities in Russia. For the Kadets, the theories of the German theoreticians of law took precedence over the romantic theories of Bakunin and Kostomarov.

Apart of this general position, it is possible to discern other voices in the Kadet party. Particularly, Peter Struve, who advocated granting Poland similar rights as the Grand Duchy of Finland, appeared to be a staunch adversary of not only Ukrainian autonomy, but also the very existence of the Ukrainian nation. In opposition to Struve, Bogdan Kistiakovsky defended the legitimacy of the Ukrainian national culture both as popular culture and the culture of intelligentsia. Yet, regarding the, question of state organization, Kistiakovsky was also a centralist. He supported cultural rights for local assemblies, while the questions of land distribution and labor legislation were to be concentrated in the central legislative institution. At the same time, he referred to the ideas of Dragomanov, suggesting a liberal interpretation of his intellectual heritage. He presented him as a defender of individual freedoms both from the pressure of the state instructions, and from possible abuse at the local level. At the same time, for Kistiakovsky, the Dragomanov's project could become the basis for a reconciliation between the Ukrainians and the Kadets. Yet, his view did not prevail, due to his marginal position in the Kadet party. The role of a leading theoretician in the questions of nationalities and territorial decentralization was taken by Kokoshkin.

Finally, in the period before the World War I the hopes to restore the alliance between the Kadets and the Ukrainians reappeared. Due to the threat of separation of the Kiev branch from the main Kadet organization. Many of the members of the Kiev branch were conscious Ukrainians, who expressed their discontent with the passivity of the party center regarding the Ukrainian claims. In this situation, Miliukov, as the leader of the party, had to define his position. Particularly, he declared that the party

was willing to support the cultural claims of the Ukrainians, while the slogans of autonomy and federation, in his view, were not only utopian, but also dangerous. Thus, regarding this issue, Miliukov's position approached the position of the right-wing activists. The Ukrainian members of the Kadets had insisted that Miliukov would not make his position public, otherwise they threatened to quit the party. Thus, even on the situation, when the tactical compromise was reasonable and possible for both sides, the ideological differences urged the sides to avoid the public discussion of essential questions.

Chapter 5.

When the Eyes Opened: Inner Challenges of the Liberal Theory

As it was mentioned earlier, after the Russian-Polish meeting had adopted the resolution, recognizing the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, the representatives of other national movements in the empire began to formulate their criticism of the results of the meeting. They opposed the privileges that the liberals offered the Finns and the Poles, while neglecting the demands of other national movements in the empire.¹ Proceeding from the idea of equality of all the peoples in the empire, the representatives of the national movements sought to forge their own projects of autonomy for their regions. These projects had been sent to the bureau of the Zemstvo meeting in response to the project of the Fundamental Laws, suggested by the leadership of the Zemstvo movement in June 1905.² Thus, the Russian constitutionalists seemed to heed the warning of the right wing of the Zemstvo movement that recognition of the autonomy of Poland would open a “Pandora’s box” and would lead to the disintegration of Russia along national lines.³ In response to this situation the liberal part of the Zemstvo movement sought to develop a comprehensive theoretical position, which would formulate criteria to define when the autonomy was appropriate and when it was not. Likewise, they proposed a clear meaning of “autonomy” in order to distinguish it from “regional self-government,” on the one hand, and from “federation” as a union of states, on the other. The leadership of the

¹ GARF. f. 579. op. 1. item 1842. p. 1.

² Kokoshkin, “Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...,” 3323-3329.

³ *Napadki na partiiu narodnoi svobody i vozrazheniia na nikh* (Moscow: Tipografiia G. Lissnera, 1906), 50.

Russian constitutionalist movement hoped that this clarification would indicate the limits of the concessions they would be ready to make in regard the national movements, except for the Finns (and partially the Poles), where the limits of the concessions were more or less defined. The main problem was that the demands of the national movements went too far for the constitutionalists.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how the Russian liberals responded to this challenge and analyze the variety of the notions of “autonomy” and “federation,” which they finally formulated.

From Self-Government to Autonomy

In order to understand the evolution of the views of the Russian constitutionalists on reorganization of the Russian empire it is important to analyze their earlier projects of Russian Fundamental Laws, which generally reflected their political vision. The first project of constitution was adopted at the Zemstvo meeting in November 1904.⁴ The authors of this project were a group from the “Liberation Union,” where Fedor Kokoshkin played a prominent role.⁵ This project did not mention regional autonomy. The only reference to a similar notion may be found in the chapter 7 (“Local Institutions of the Russian Empire”). Article 67 declared that the provinces (*gubernii*), *uezdy*, *volosti*, and *cities* were to “[establish] special self-governing unions,” or zemstvos. The imperial laws were to define the arrangement and the competencies of these institutions. In addition, the article 70 suggested that “the provincial (*gubernskie*) zemstvos could conclude agreements between one

⁴ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie Rossii*, 83-90.

⁵ Fedor Kokoshkin, “Avtobiografiia” *“Russkie vedomosti” 1863-1913. Sbornik statei.* (Moscow: Tipografiia “Russkikh vedomostei,” 1913), 87.

another for regulating common issues for several provinces.”⁶ This, in fact, implied the creation of self-governing regions. However, the project assumed that these regions were to be based on temporary agreements. Moreover, it did not specify either the arrangement or the limits of their competence.

The second project, adopted at the meeting of zemstvo and city activists in July 1905⁷, did not add anything new into the previous version.⁸ The only difference was that the new edition introduced the term “region” into the general list of administrative units. However, the authors of the project did not identify whether this would be a union of several provinces or a unit equivalent to the province. They only mentioned that the regional zemstvos, along with the provincial ones, could conclude agreements between each other (as well as with provincial zemstvos) and to create the proper institutions. Similarly, the authors were silent about the limits of the competence of these institutions. The project preserved the former formulation that the imperial law would define limits of the competence. The zemstvos in their turn could make ultimate decisions about their competence within the bounds established by the law.⁹

Having adopted the project in the first reading, the organizers of the meeting sent the text to the regional committees, inviting them to send their comments and

⁶ “Proekt osnovnogo zakona Rossiiskoi imperii” Gessen I.V., Kaminka A.I (eds.) *Konstitutsionnoe gosudarstvo. Sbornik statei* (St.Petersburg: “Pravo,” 1906), 540.

⁷This version of the project was prepared by Sergei Muromtsev. However, his team involved the authors of the former project as well. He revoked the initial version in accordance with the principle of supremacy of law (the former project had more positivist features). Nonetheless in the main, the project preserved the general structure and the formulations of certain articles of the previous version. For more details see: A.N.Meduchevskii, “Sergei Andreevich Muromtsev” B.S. Itenberg, V.V.Shelokhaev (eds.) *Rossiiskie Liberaly* (Moscow: ROSSPEN, 2001), 283-304.

⁸ “Proekt osnovnogo zakona Rossiiskoi imperii, izmenennyi zemskim biuro” *Konstitutsionnoe gosudarstvo*, 572-573.

⁹ Ibid.

corrections back to the bureau of the meeting.¹⁰ The bureau received a number of regional responses, which proposed reorganizing the Russian empire according to national principle; they supplemented their claims with detailed projects of autonomy for their respective borderlands.¹¹ His reaction to these comments, Kokoshkin reported to the meeting of the zemstvo and city activists, which took place in September 1905. He expressed the mainstream position of the Russian constitutionalists regarding the national question and territorial decentralization of the Russian empire and set forth the principles, which the constitutional party in the making would pursue in these questions. In addition, the bureau suggested four resolutions that summarized the main theses of Kokoshkin's report.¹²

Kokoshkin declared that "the national and the regional questions could not be completely explained at the moment."¹³ In his view, "reconciliation between nationalities and distinct parts of the state territory... is always a result of an agreement of the interested parties."¹⁴ However, for him, it was impossible to guarantee a full and equal representation of the territories and nationalities for the time being. Therefore he refused to provide a detailed project and only sought to formulate the general principles that could be laid in the ground of Russia's territorial reorganization.

Kokoshkin regarded the national question and administrative decentralization as two linked, yet different issues. According to him, the autonomy as such did not

¹⁰ Fedor Kokoshkin, "Raboty zemskikh s"ezdov i 'Russkie vedomosti'" *"Russkie vedomosti" 1863-1913*, 92.

¹¹ These were the project of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland, the project of the autonomy of Georgia, two projects of the Ukrainian autonomy, and an anonymous project of federalization of the entire Russia. Kokoshkin, "Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...", 3323-3329.

¹² *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 395-396.

¹³ Kokoshkin, "Doklad organizatsionnogo biuro...", 3329.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

resolve the national question. Moreover, under unfavorable circumstance it could even aggravate the latter. He cited the example of the Habsburg monarchy, where the national conflicts were transferred to the provinces. For Kokoshkin, the national question was reduced to the following three fundamental questions: “1) the equality of all citizens irrespective of nationality; 2) abolishing the impediments to the preservation and free development of the language, literature, and culture of each nationality; 3) the equality of the languages of all nationalities in local state and public institutions, as well as at schools.”¹⁵ According to Kokoshkin the third question was the most complicated, because it required, for example, that local officials could speak all the languages, which were used in a particular region. Besides, the establishment of secondary and higher schools in the local language would necessitate greater expense, than the local national communities could afford. In this case the state would have to subsidize these schools. Moreover, in the view of Kokoshkin, the state was obliged to assist citizens of the empire to learn Russian as a state-wide language, “without any additional efforts and spending.”¹⁶

Kokoshkin also reflected on the possibility of establishing regional autonomies or reorganize the empire along the principle, “which would approach federalization.” He mentioned that previous constitutional projects considered the possibility of a transitory stage towards autonomy, namely the creation of the unions of provincial zemstvos to resolve certain common matters. Yet, after the bureau had learned the opinion of the local activists in the borderlands, the leadership of the Russian constitutional movement was ready to articulate their principal view of autonomy.

¹⁵ Ibid., 3331.

¹⁶ Ibid., 3335.

For the author, the need of local independence could be satisfied for the larger part of the empire, if the institutes of local self-government would acquire greater competency. At the same time, he assumed a correct understanding of local self-government blurred a clear line with what was usually regarded as autonomy. In the view of Kokoshkin, it would be possible to extend the competence of the self-governing institutions for the whole range of questions of local administration, excluding the spheres that required a centralized approach (the customs, post, telegraph, common railways etc.). For him, issues as the “protection of forests and water, regulating hunting, agriculture, communications and their use” could be exempt from the central legislation and transferred to local institutions. However, the central parliament would establish the general rules for these institutions.

In this case, for Kokoshkin, the role of local executive authorities would consist “not in the active administration, but rather in the surveillance of the activity of local self-government in terms of legality.”¹⁷ The conflicts between the self-governing institutions and the local administration would have to be decided by the independent judiciary authority. For Kokoshkin, the limits of the competence of the self-government would approach the competence of autonomous institutions.¹⁸ Moreover, for the most of Russia’s regions it would be possible to set these limits by a single imperial law. The application of this law in each problematic case would be defined by the decision of judiciary institutions.

The competence of local institutions would be harder to define for those parts of the empire, which were far remote from the center. For such borderlands, Kokoshkin considered autonomy. According to him, autonomy was necessary, when a

¹⁷ Ibid., 3336.

¹⁸ Ibid.

region required a legislative regulation of those spheres of life, which could not be treated equally in all parts of the empire. He cited the example of special civil legislation in the Kingdom of Poland. Thus, for Kokoshkin, the semantic border between the notions of autonomy and local self-government was the functioning of a distinct local legislation at the region. Although Kokoshkin did not define clearly, the difference between the local laws and the decisions of the institutes of local self-government, it followed from his texts that the decision of local self-governing institutions referred more to particular issues, whereas the local laws had more universal character (such as the alterations in the civic legislation).

Kokoshkin declared, that “the ideal of the political organization of Russia [consisted] in both administrative and the legislative decentralization.”¹⁹ If the former implied the development of the zemstvos and urban self-government, the latter presupposed the creation of local representative assemblies. However, he warned, that it would be almost impossible to implement this principle immediately throughout the entire territory of the empire. Above all, this was because the territorial composition of the Russian empire did not correspond to the historical borders of the regions. Unlike in the countries of Western Europe, where the autonomous units initially obtained a certain degree of independence, in Russia these regions still had to be created. The existing administrative borders, in Kokoshkin’s view, were not acceptable as the basis of such division. The author considered them artificial, whereas any attempt to create political units artificially could lead to various conflicts either on the national basis or due to inconsistency between the territorial division and the actual needs of the population.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibid., 3338.

²⁰ Ibid.

In order to avoid mistakes in defining the region Kokoshkin proposed to postpone this question until Russia's complete political liberation. "[As] soon as the major goal is accomplished, as soon as civil freedoms and the democratic representation with constitutional rights are established for the whole empire" Kokoshkin recommended opening "*a legal way to create autonomous regions*," provided that the central parliament would acquire the all-round information regarding "*the natural borders and the needs of the local population*."²¹ Thus, Kokoshkin clearly indicated that only the central parliament had to make a decision about the autonomy and only after it would get the necessary information regarding the local needs.

Kokoshkin then expounded a procedure for defining the autonomous regions. According to the author,

There is no need to establish regional autonomies on the whole space of the empire in the nearest future. It is possible to do it gradually each time issuing a special imperial law on establishing of a given autonomous region. Meanwhile, the constitution should allow such kind of laws.²²

One should note that Kokoshkin's report expressed a response of the Russian liberals to the projects of autonomy, which they acquired from the national borderlands. By analogy with the project of Wacław Sieroszewski in the Polish case, these plans for autonomy suggested that the local diet would proclaim autonomy and define the limits of its competence. As a result, rather than a state with autonomies, Russia was to become a form of federation. According to this model, local units would delegate their competences to the center from below; consequently, the central institutions had to acquire only those competencies, which the local authorities would give up in favor of the latter. Kokoshkin offered the opposite formula. For him, the

²¹ Ibid., 3339.

²² Ibid., 3340.

local institutions would obtain the competencies, which the central authorities would consider necessary to renunciate in favor of the regional institutions. Moreover, the volume of these competencies had to be different in each particular case as it would be defined by special agreements with each of the autonomous regions.

For these agreements Kokoshkin prescribed a complex procedure that recalled the idea of parallel legislation, which the Kadets advocated later regarding Finland. He wrote:

Particular imperial laws on autonomy would also define the limits of the autonomy and divide the functions between the central and the local representative assemblies. After that, the local legislation would have to... take further decisions regarding the arrangement of the autonomous region. In the case if the decisions of the latter would depart from the imperial law on the autonomy, the law would be revised in the empire-wide parliament. Additional negotiation between the local and central parliaments should be carried out by common meetings of specially elected delegations. Until the final agreement is accomplished, the region would enjoy the autonomy in the limits, defined by the imperial law.²³

One can see, Kokoshkin aimed to set a rule that the attempts of local legislative assemblies to extend their competence would come into force only after the central parliament would approve them. Thus, the center retained *Kompetenz-Kompetenz*, yet in each particular case the central institutions could make certain concessions.

To substantiate his position, Kokoshkin argued that for the time being the constitutional movement did not have adequate information regarding the need of the population for autonomy or the possible borders of the regions. According to Kokoshkin, the Russian constitutionalists had to deal with “the demands of particular social groups and parties,” whereas the “actual needs of the population” could not be obtained “until the democratic constitution [was] accomplished and the personal and social freedom [was] guaranteed.”²⁴ Finally, Kokoshkin asked the representatives to

²³ Ibid., 3340.

²⁴ Ibid., 3339.

support the Russian-wide democratic movement and restrain from any prior conditions, like autonomy or federation. In return, he promised to provide autonomy afterwards, yet in a form, which would meet the actual needs of the local population, rather than the one based on utopian projects.²⁵ This appeal seemed to reverse the request of Hrushevsky, which the latter addressed to Russian constitutionalists in May 1905. The spokesman of the Ukrainian movement suggested that the Russian constitutionalists would support the national claims of autonomy first, and the national groups would be able to support the empire-wide liberation movement.²⁶

It can be noted, in his project Kokoshkin rejected the idea of a symmetric reorganization of Russia; instead he suggested the model of a state with autonomous regions with varying degree of local authority. He admitted the possibility for each autonomous region to negotiate the competence with the center. Within the given limits the autonomous institutions were allowed to issue laws. The contradiction between the local and the empire-wide laws was excluded due to the division of the spheres of competencies between the two levels of legislations. At the same time, according to Kokoshkin, the empire-wide laws had to be applied differently in each region depending on particular competencies of the regional legislation. The idea of parallel legislation reduced the question of *Kompetenz-Kompetenz*. Nonetheless, this was a complex model, which was hard to implement in practice. Therefore the constitutional expert suggested postponing this issue until the general liberation in Russia. The only urgent question, for Kokoshkin, was the issue of the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland. Yet, for him, this autonomy had to recognize the existence of

²⁵ Ibid., 3342.

²⁶ Hrushevskii "Ukrainstvo i pytannia dnia...", 299.

clear administrative borders and striving of the whole Polish population, rather than the special features of the Polish people, as the Polish nationalists sought to present.

For the Russian constitutionalists this report was the first official statement, where they formulated the limits of autonomy, which they were ready to provide to the borderlands (excluding Finland). Moreover, the report set forth the conditions, when, in their view, the autonomy was possible. Because these conditions required the possibility for the local population to express their will, the constitutionalists postponed the discussion on autonomy until the general liberation of Russia. Semantically they linked their definition of autonomy to the notion of extended local self-government and opposed it to federation. The latter was implicitly understood in accordance with the German legal theories, which described the process of unification of formerly independent states. In the view of Kokoshkin, federation was inappropriate concept for the Russian case, because there the autonomous regions still had to be created from the very beginning. Delegating inexistent sovereignty of the regions to the center was out of the question. Therefore, for the Russian constitutionalists, the only possible model for Russia's reorganization was state with autonomies.

Theoretical Approach to Autonomy and Federation

Kokoshkin's report and the resolutions adopted at the September meeting of zemstvo and city activists provoked a huge amount of publications accusing the Russian constitutionalists in an "attempt to disintegrate a unitary Russian state" and

replace it by a union of independent regions.²⁷ Moreover, the persistence of the organizing core of the meeting in providing the autonomy for the Kingdom of Poland caused a serious split within the zemstvo movement.²⁸ A leader of a moderate wing of the constitutional movement Alexander Guchkov used this issue as a pretext for the final break with the majority of Russian constitutionalists (the future Kadets) and to form a separate party of Octobrists.²⁹ The program of this party emphasized the unity of the Russian empire and condemned any attempt to divide the state along federal lines, recognizing the autonomy only for the Grand Duchy of Finland.³⁰ The criticism of the Kadets' and their slogan of regional autonomy became a crucial aspect of the Octobrists' electoral campaign.³¹

In his article "Regional Autonomy and Russia's Unity," Kokoshkin rejected the accusations of his party's critics and proved that the latter misunderstood the essence of the resolutions, which were adopted at the meeting in September. Kokoshkin argued that their opponents confused the notions of "autonomy" and "federation" and then equated the "federation" to abolishing of the state unity. Consequently, Kokoshkin saw his aim to explain the difference between the above mentioned notions.

The author declared that autonomous provinces enjoyed only a local legislative assembly, whereas the constituent parts of a federal state (the states or cantons) had

²⁷ Kokoshkin, *Oblastnaia avtonomiia i edinstvo Rossii*, 3. The example of the rhetoric against the Kadets' program of decentralization: "Vopros ob okrainakh Rossii v sviazi s teoriei samoopredeleniia narodnostei i trebovaniiami gosudarstvennogo edinstva" *Okrainy Rossii* 22 (1906): 382-384.

²⁸ *Liberal'noe dvizhenie v Rossii*, 396, 482-495.

²⁹ For the essence of the conflict between the two trends of the Russian constitutional movement see: Terence Emmons, *The Formation of Political Parties and the First National Elections in Russia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: Harvard University Press, 1983), 87-129.

³⁰ "Programma 'Soiuz 17 Oktiabria'" *Programmy politicheskikh partii Rossii*, 342-343.

³¹ *Napadki na partiiu narodnoi svobody*, 50; *K chemu I po kakim prichinam stremitsia Soiuz 17 Oktiabria i chto on otvergaiet* (St. Petersburg: Tipografiia "Tovarishchestva Pechatnogo Stanka," b.d.), 4-5; *Ob avtonomii Pol'shi. Izdanie Soiuz 17 Oktiabria* (Moscow: "Pechiatnia S.P. Iakovleva," 1906).

two essential characteristics that distinguished them from the provinces of non-federal states.

First, they enjoy not only their local legislative assemblies, but also their special governments, independent from the central power... Second, in federations only the local institutions issue local laws without any participation of the central authority... In a state with autonomies, the local legislation is based on interaction of provincial institutions and the central authority.³²

According to Kokoshkin, there was no any clear juridical border between the regional autonomy and local self-government. To prove this statement, Kokoshkin mentioned that zemstvo assemblies and city dumas could “issue mandatory decrees... regarding the subjects, which in the non-zemstvo regions [were] regulated by laws.”³³ The difference between mandatory decrees and the laws was that former required the approval of a governor or minister, whereas the latter needed consent of the supreme authority. Thus, for Kokoshkin, the critics of the September meeting were wrong, when they blamed the supporters of autonomy for being federalists. At the same time, Kokoshkin denied that federation as such could undermine the unity of Russia. Besides, in his view, the idea of gradual establishment of regional autonomies would differentiate Russia from a federal state. For Russia the issue of decentralization had to be reduced to recognition the necessity of local laws and, consequently, the local legislative institution, which would issue these laws in accordance with the peculiar geographic, economic, and ethnic characteristics of the regions. According to the author, “where the local needs can be satisfied by local legislation, a proper relationship between the state and its parts could only be accomplished by autonomy. In this case, it will be an essential means to enable and enforce the state unity.”³⁴

³² Kokoshkin, *Oblastnaia avtonomiia i edinstvo Rossii*, 5-6.

³³ Ibid., 6.

³⁴ Ibid., 12.

Thus, to defend idea of autonomy from the critics of the right-wing intellectuals, Kokoshkin equated it with the concept of local self-government and opposed it to the notion of federation. At the same time, one can see through Kokoshkin's reasoning a very accurate implementation Georg Jellinek's definition of autonomy. For the German legal theoretician, this was exactly as a self-governing unit, which enjoyed the local legislative authority that could issue local laws.³⁵

A somewhat different interpretation of the concept "autonomy" was suggested by another member of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, a Russian legal theorist Nikolai Lazarevsky. In his article "Autonomy," he argued that autonomy could be delimited juridically both from the notion of local self-government and a constituent part of federative state (*non-sovereign state*).³⁶ Similarly as Kokoshkin, Lazarevsky assumed that the existence of independent legislative authority distinguished the autonomy from the local self-government. However, in contrast to Kokoshkin, he saw a huge difference between mandatory decrees of local self-governing units and local laws. According to Lazarevsky,

...mandatory decrees...issued by zemstvos and city dumas could not contradict to any laws, because these were administrative acts. Meanwhile, the local legislation can issue the laws regarding any question in its competence, even if there are these or other decrees of the central legislative authority.³⁷

Thus, for Lazarevsky, within the limits of a given competence in the autonomous region, the local laws could contradict the laws, issued by the central legislative authority. The author illustrated this by the example, according to which the state-wide legislation could establish a mandatory three-year period of primary

³⁵ Georg Jellinek, *Die Lehre von den Staatenverbindungen* (Wien, 1882), 40.

³⁶ Nikolai Lazarevsky, *Avtonomiia* (St.Petersburg, 1906), 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

education, whereas the autonomous province could shorten or extend this period to two or four years respectively.

A closer analysis demonstrates that the difference between the Lazaervsky's and Kokoshkin's positions was not that much significant. Both authors assumed that in the state with autonomies the competence of the central institutions would be varying for different regions. For non-autonomous regions the state laws would regulate the issues, which in autonomous regions would be controlled by local laws. Similarly, in the Russian empire the laws, referring to the sphere of competence of the zemstvo institutions, for non-zemstvo provinces were issued by the central authority. Thus, Kokoshkin proceeded from a different practice of legislation for various regions of the empire. By contrast, Lazaervsky considered that the central authority issued general laws for the whole states, which, nonetheless, admitted the exemptions for autonomous regions. Thus, the difference was in terminology, rather than in the principle. This means, that Lazarevsky's distinction between the notions of autonomy and self-government was not that clear.

However, more essential was the way Lazarevsky defined the upper limit of autonomy. In his view, autonomy implied a form of self-administration within the competence, provided by the central authority. Federal states, according to Lazarevsky, offered the opposite principle. In these states, the central authority acquired only those competencies, which particular states had delegated to it. Thus, Lazarevsky extended the concept of autonomy to those parts of states, which enjoyed not only the legislative, but also the executive authority (in the case, if the central institutions had delegated these functions to the local level). Although Lazarevsky did not articulate this possibility, yet it followed from his theoretical principle, which he

used to distinguish between autonomy and federation. Thus, one can note, that the terminology of Lazarevsky was not quite clear. For example, he wrote:

[The composite parts], which enjoy greater degree of independence as compared with autonomous provinces are the states. Among them, the closest to an autonomous province are “separate states” which constitute federal states (*soiuznye gosudarstva*)... The distinctive line between these states and autonomous provinces is that these states have their rights, whereas autonomous provinces cannot have the rights on their own.³⁸

In this passage, Lazarevsky implied that each unit of such a federative state could issue its own laws, including constitutional, without any interference of the central authority. Each of these units formed its own legal order, which did not depend on the central state. By contrast, the legal order of an autonomous province emerged a result of functioning of central legislative institutions and could be altered in any time. Regarding this point, one can see not only formal, but rather an essential difference between the theories of Kokoshkin and Lazarevsky. In particular, Lazarevsky qualified Finland as autonomous province and mentioned in the same semantic category as the Baltic region, Armenia, and Georgia.³⁹ Because the Kompetenz-Kompetenz belonged to the Russian empire, for Lazarevsky, Finland was an autonomous province, despite that it had both the legislative and executive institutions of its own. According to Lazarevsky, unlike Bavaria, Finland could not be a constituent part of a federal state. In the view of Kokoshkin, Finland enjoyed greater degree of independence, than it was supposed by the notion of autonomy. Following Jellinek, Kokoshkin classified Finland as *Staatsfragment*.⁴⁰

A significant contribution in the debate of the Russian liberals on the notion of autonomy was the article of Bogdan Kistiakovsky “Regional Autonomy and its

³⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

³⁹ Ibid., 24.

⁴⁰ Fedor Kokoshkin, “Nemetskie professora...”

Limits” (1907).⁴¹ In this article, Kistiakovsky argued that Lazarevsky’s definition of autonomy was too broad and suggested an additional notion of a “fragmentary state” (“*fragmentarnoe gosudarstvo*”). Jellinek’s term, in his view, allowed distinguishing more precisely the peculiar forms of state organization, which would be wrong to refer to the category of autonomy.⁴² However, the main endeavor of the author was not to define the concept of autonomy, but rather to decide about the most appropriate form of autonomy for Russia.

Kistiakovsky offered to exclude the sphere of civil legislation from the competence of autonomous institutions. For him, this was the general tendency of modern European state, like Germany and Switzerland. Moreover, for Kistiakovsky, the central representative institutions had to control the criminal and social legislation as well. In particular, he wrote: “Now it has become a truism, that social legislation can be set widely and rationally only if it is regulated by international legislation. This international unification of the social legislation should follow after the one’s unification in federal states.”⁴³ Earlier he mentioned the attempts to “create an international civil legislation.” Thus, Kistiakovsky’s attempt to exclude the civil, criminal, and social legislation from the competence of local legislative assemblies reflected his centralist position. Yet, rather than advocating the idea to preserve the unity of the Russian empire, this position expressed the striving of an internationalist to subordinate these spheres of legislation to universal human principles. According to the author,

[No doubt] the contemporary industrial circulation and economic development lead to unification of civil and criminal legislations, rather than to ones’ particularization. These spheres

⁴¹ Bogdan Kistiakovsky, “Oblastnaia avtonomiia i ee predely” *Moskovskii ezhenedel’nik* 4 (1907).

⁴² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17.

of legislation tend to lose their national character and use to express universal human principles.”⁴⁴

Following this argument, Kistiakovsky refused to provide the legislation in the sphere of economic and social relations even to the Kingdom of Poland. He wrote: “No doubt an attempt to particularize the civil and social, as well as agrarian legislation in the Kingdom of Poland is reactionary both by content and form.”⁴⁵ In the author’s view, the Code Napoleon had not become Polish only because it had been applied on the territory of the Kingdom of Poland for more than a hundred years. Kistiakovsky recognized that the Code was more progressive than the Russian civil legislation. Yet, according to him, the “situation may change, if the Russian revolution would develop strong creative potential in the sphere of civil and social legislation. One can expect this, judging from the project of agrarian reform in the first State Duma.”⁴⁶ In this case, Kistiakovsky feared, “the energetic minority of the class of landholders would fight against the progressive civil and social legislation. Thus, for Kistiakovsky, if the provincial autonomy acquired authority in the sphere of civil legislation, conservative elites in the borderlands would use it to preserve their privileges. Such an autonomy would only be a means to protect these elites against the progressive laws issued in by the central legislative institutions.

At the same time, Kistiakovsky opposed the principles offered by the Polish and Ukrainian projects, which had been regarded at the meeting of zemstvo and city activists in September 1905. These projects presupposed a positive definition of the competence of the central institutions. They enumerated the functions of the central authority, whereas all unmentioned issues had to fall by convention in the competence

⁴⁴ Ibid., 17.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 18.

of the autonomous institutions. For Kistiakovsky, this system was unnatural for the Russian case. Moreover, these projects “had to drive all the hesitant and unconvinced autonomists in the camp of centralists.”⁴⁷ According to the legal scholar, in Russia, the autonomous regions had to be derived from a unitary state. Therefore, the proponents of such a form of decentralization had to mention only the competencies of autonomous institutions, whereas the rest issues should belong to the central authority. By contrast, the projects at the September meeting, for Kistiakovsky, witnessed of “an extreme poverty of their authors’ knowledge regarding the issues of federation and autonomy.”⁴⁸

Following the centralist stance, Kistiakovsky addressed the issue how to define the competence of autonomous institutions, if the civil legislation had to be excluded from the latter. He noted:

...it is wrong to forge the right of autonomous regions to issue own laws... and to downplay another side of any autonomous arrangement, namely the right for self-government... The delegation of widest self-government to an autonomous region is necessary; moreover, the principle of self-government should imply the creation of such institutions and execution of such issues, which, like social legislation, are regulated by the central legislation.⁴⁹

Thus, Kistiakovsky reduced the concept of autonomy to the notion of local self-government, however, with one essential difference, that autonomous institutions had the right to issue local laws related to “cultural life of society and the people.”⁵⁰ He wrote: “It is natural and normal to limit, if possible, the competence of the central institutions in the issues of culture and education and delegate [these] issues... to autonomous authorities.”⁵¹ In particular, the author offered to define the autonomy of the Kingdom of Poland exactly in this way. For him, “if one would not invest in the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 21.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁵¹ Ibid.

autonomy the meaning, which does not belong to it, the autonomy, say, of the Kingdom of Poland, should imply the right of its autonomous institutions, and, above all, the Polish and regional diet to regulate the whole sphere of cultural life and manage all the issues of local administration.”⁵² According to Kistiakovsky, the Poles proceeded from another meaning of autonomy. He argued:

The autonomy is sometimes attributed the meaning, which is closer to the notion of a real union, rather than an autonomy in its actual sense; sometimes, the advocates of autonomy tend to substantiate it by international treaties, which allegedly cannot lose their juridical force. ... [The] Polish faction in the State Duma suggested this in its declaration on May 30th. However, it is clear, that such an approach to autonomy is either a consequence of an absolute ignorance of the principles of federative or decentralized state organization, or it is a means to forge other goals under the cover of a popular, but not quite clear slogan of autonomy.⁵³

Kistiakovsky concluded his article with a statement, that “only in these limits the autonomy of the regions would not impede the economic development of each particular region and the whole country; it would not weaken the forces of the central authority and, besides, it would guarantee the normal development of independent culture... of distinct parts of the empire and constituent nationalities. Moreover, in these limits, the autonomy would have an advantage, that it would be equally required to all the parts of the empire.”⁵⁴ Thus, instead of an asymmetrical state with autonomies proposed by Kokoshkin, Kistiakovsky offered to reorganize Russia into a symmetrical decentralized state, in which the local self-government would be supplemented with the right of local legislative assemblies to regulate cultural issues. At the same time, his refusal to provide the local assemblies the right to issue laws related to social and economic issues Kistiakovsky justified by the necessity of economic development. For him, the latter presupposed close integration and cooperation of various regions. It is notable, that Kistiakovsky’s article shared the zeal

⁵² Ibid., 23.

⁵³ Ibid., 24.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 25.

of Ukrainian nationalists, demanding to regard them on equal terms with the Poles. However, similarly to the members of Old Hromada, he defended exclusively the cultural claims. This made his position different from the standpoint of Hrushevsky, who alleged that the autonomy in the economic sphere was an essential condition to create the Ukrainian nation.

Sergei Korf formulated an opposing view on autonomy and federation in his book “Federalism” (1908).⁵⁵ Korf was a professor of state law in the University of Helsinki and studied the juridical status of British colonies.⁵⁶ He paid special attention to recent attempts of British liberals to organize an all-round discussion on imperial federation, which aimed to consolidate Britain and its dominions and into a firmer political union.⁵⁷ He cooperated with the Constitutional Democratic Party regarding the “Finnish question.” In particular, he was among the founders of the journal *Finlandia*, in which the Kadets and Finnish activists advocated the special status of the Grand Duchy of Finland and discussed the pressing needs of the Finnish people.⁵⁸ Besides, Korf took part in the Peace Society in Helsinki and developed the links with many representatives of the Kadets through the pacifist activity as well.⁵⁹

Korf’s book “Federalism” was devoted to the analysis of an international practice of federalism. The author did not draw any direct conclusions regarding Russia, although it is possible to find in his text certain references to the Finnish case.

⁵⁵ Sergei Korf, *Federalism* (St.Petersburg, 1908).

⁵⁶ Idem. *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Avstralii* (Helsingfors: tov. Vladimir Chicherin, 1912); Idem. *Gosudarstvennyi stroi Kanady* (Helsingfors, tov. Vladimir Chicherin, 1911).

⁵⁷ Idem. *Kolonial’nye konferentsii* (Iaroslavl’: Gubernskoie pravlenie, 1911). For the details of the discussion see: Michael Burgess, *The British Tradition of Federalism*, pt. 1. (London: Leicester University Press, 1995).

⁵⁸ *Finlandia* (1908-1910).

⁵⁹ See for example: A.S. Korf, “Aeroplany v sovremennoi voine” *Vestnik Mira* 12 (1912); “Obshchee sobranie 27 apreliia 1913” *Obshchestvo Mira v Moskve*. Vol. 3 (Moscow, 1913).

His general understanding of federation Korf formulated in the final chapter of the book. In this chapter, generalizing the experience of Great Britain he offered a radically different perspective on the issue of organization of complex states.

In the author's view, the main contributors to the theory of federal states and confederations, the German legal scholars relied on the practice of the unification of Germany. However, the author addressed a great many of examples, "when life initiates a growth of a distinct province or a part of a state, and they gradually acquire all necessary attributes of statehood, turning themselves into non-sovereign states."⁶⁰ Korf mentioned the cited above article of Lazarevsky and his attempt to distinguish the notions of self-government, autonomy, and federative state. The author agreed with Kokoshkin, that the autonomy was only a higher stage of self-government. Yet, for himself, he formulated the task to distinguish between the autonomy and a constituent part of a federal state.

In opposition to Lazarevsky, Korf considered the difference between the states, which emerged as a result of a treaty, and the states, which were created by common constitution. In accordance with the terminology of the German scholars, Korf called the composite parts these states non-sovereign states.⁶¹ At this point he still did not depart from the framework of his colleagues as well as the German federative theory. However, his next argument seriously challenged the latter's approach to the issue. According to him,

The recent history of states took another path. The further it goes... the more examples of emergence and growth of federative trend can be traced within the state... Gradually and unnoticed, many provinces release themselves from the tutelage of the state and acquire more new functions of self-government and new autonomous rights.⁶²

⁶⁰Korf, *Federalism*, 78.

⁶¹ Ibid., 79.

⁶² Ibid., 80.

Therefore, in Korf's opinion, the theoretical distinction of German theoreticians between the autonomous province and the state "[did] not meet the contemporary demands of life." He mentioned the examples of Canada, Australia, and Austro-Hungary, where the parts of states gradually transformed themselves from autonomy to non-sovereign states.⁶³ In particular, Korf was sceptic about the possibility of the central authority to abolish the constitution of Canada, despite the theoretical notion that the center could change the competence of autonomy. Moreover, he argued, in these provinces the executive authority acquired more characteristics of a proper authority of these states. For him, "when the governor-generals of Canada and Australia ceased to be the institutes of the metropole and became independent state bodies of the colonies, their position acquired a status equal to the status of a monarch of constitutional and non-sovereign state."⁶⁴ At this point, one can draw an analogy between Korf's argument and the ideas of the Finnish theoreticians, who considered the Russian emperor to be a constitutional monarch of non-sovereign Finnish state.⁶⁵ Consequently, this statement may be interpreted as an indirect reference to the case of Finland in the Russian empire.

According to Korf, at the moment, when Canada and the New Zealand acquired new constitutions the "from autonomous provinces the colonies turned into non-sovereign states; now they issue their own laws, they have their own legislative bodies, their constitutions and their own subjects."⁶⁶ For the author, similar processes took place in "the development of distinct lands of the Austro-Hungarian empire." And further he offered his own interpretation of Jellinek's notion of *Staatsfragment*.

⁶³ Ibid., 81.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁵ Germanson, *Gosudarstvenno-pravovoe polozheniie Finliandii*, 23.

⁶⁶ Korf, *Federalism*, 84.

Not without reason, having considered the real situation, Jellinek had to create a new notion of underdeveloped, fragmentary state (Staatsfragment), and later on “lands,” which are somewhat transitory stages from autonomy towards non-sovereign state.”⁶⁷

For Jellinek, Staatsfragments implied the remnants of former states, which had been incorporated into other states, but had preserved the elements of their previous state institutes.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, Korf’s interpretation is important to characterize his vision of a trend of historical development – from provinces to non-sovereign states.

Korf mentioned that the German scholars considered the British case an exception and explained it by geographical remoteness of colonies from the metropole. Kistiakovsky expressed a similar opinion regarding this case.⁶⁹ However, in Korf’s view, “the geographical position of a province or a state cannot influence the juridical construction of the notion of a state.”⁷⁰ For him, “from social and political point of view, in between self-governing provinces and sovereign state we face a whole endless range of transitory stages of development of state independence.”⁷¹ He emphasized a “general irrepressible process of growth of an independence of various provincial units.”⁷²

Analyzing these theoretical constructions, one can note, that such an approach to autonomy could enforce the fears of the right-wing critics of liberals. The latter expressed their concerns that offered by liberals restricted autonomy could not satisfy national movements in the borderlands and it would only become a first stage on the way to a complete secession from the empire.⁷³ However, in his theory, Korf did not

⁶⁷ Ibid., 85.

⁶⁸ Jellinek, *Ueber Staatsfragmente*, 11.

⁶⁹ Kistiakovsky, “Oblastnaia avtonomiia...,” 23.

⁷⁰ Korf, *Federalism*, 88.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ See, for example, A.B. “Samoopredelenie narodnostei” *Okrainy Rossii* 9 (1906): 150-154.

share such fears. He opined that the process of separation of national states from multinational empires went along with trend of unification of the states on the basis of common culture. Ultimately, Korf envisioned the realization of the idea of “a universal union, a common federation of all nations and states.”⁷⁴ In his view, the contemporary federative unions were a transitional stage towards the universal federation. Yet, applied to the Russian case this theory did not suggest that would be former parts of the Russian empire would want to unite into the federative state in the same composition. For Korf, who, above all, pursued the goal of international unification, the issue of the unity of the Russian empire was not relevant at all.

The Kadets and the Union of Automists

The relationship between the Kadets and the representatives of the national movements allowed the functioning of a special faction in the first and the second State Dumas the Union of Autonomists and Federalists. Founded by the Kadets Alexander Lednicki, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay and Ilia Shrag, this faction involved the people of various nationalities, who belonged to different parties.⁷⁵ This was not a party with strict discipline, but rather an association, which aimed to discuss and formulate common national issues. Although, in general the participants of the Union recognized the idea of Russia’s reorganization along the principles of autonomy and federation, regarding particular questions, they voiced opposing views, which ultimately impeded their joint initiatives in the Duma. To understand the nature and

⁷⁴ Korf, *Federalism*, 91.

⁷⁵ APAN (The Archive of the Polish Academy of Sciences). I-123 Materiały Aleksandra Lednickiego. item. 9. p.1.

the aims of the Union the following passage from the article of Alexander Lednicki is worthwhile citing:

These national and regional organizations composed a “Union of Autonomists,” which aimed to discuss and advocate the rights of nationalities and... decentralization. Such an organization... [was based on] the feeling and understanding of the commonality of the interests, and, above all, the need to subject the striving of particular regions and nationalities to the principle of graduality. Otherwise, there was a threat that most impatient could raise a local issue, which at the same time was common for the others. Consequently, unfavorable decision of this issue, either due to a wrong moment, insufficient preparation, or weak defense could be detrimental all other nationalities.⁷⁶

According to Lednicki, the Union of Autonomists did not pursue an independent politics and among its members there were many Kadets. One can infer from this passage that the Union played a role of a restraining factor, which did not allow the representatives of particular nationalities to go far in their claims of national self-determination. Otherwise, the latter threatened to cause a negative reaction of the Great Russian majority in the Duma. At the same time, one can note that the Kadets sought to put the activity of national groups in the Duma under their control. At least the Constitutional Democrats had an opportunity to influence indirectly on the Union’s parliamentary activity. In particular, contrary to the Polish delegation, which presented its declaration at the plenary meeting, the autonomists failed to articulate their specific projects of autonomy and initiate any public discussion. Moreover, the participants of the Union found it difficult to formulate any common project, because its members had to follow the discipline of their respective parties and could not support the ideas beyond the limits of their programs.

The materials of Lednicki’s collection suggest a few drafts of the documents related to the activity of the Union. One of these drafts is the statute of the Union of Autonomists and Federalists. The second paragraph of this statute declared, that the

⁷⁶ Aleksander Lednitskii, “Natsional’nyi vopros v Gosudarstvennoi Dumie” *Pervaia Gosudarstvennaia Duma* (St.Petersburg: “Obshchestvennaia pol’za,” 1907). 161.

Union “[sought] to fulfil in Russia the principle of the widest possible decentralization in the form of autonomy of particular regions on democratic basis.”⁷⁷ According to the third paragraph, “self-government and regional autonomy [was] the immediate goal of the Union. Its ultimate goal [consisted] in reorganization of the Russian state along federal lines as the only possible at such a vast territory.”⁷⁸

From this statute, one can not reveal the meaning of the terms autonomy and federation. The next two documents are the drafts of “General Principles of the Faction of the Union of Autonomists.” A longer version of this document announced:

The parliamentary faction of the Union of Autonomists unites on regional basis for mutual support and defense... The parliamentary faction regards the principles of the unity and inviolability of the borders of the Russian state... the Union claims for the widest decentralization of state administration... The decentralization should follow the principle of a widest autonomy of separate regions... [the Union] recognizes a complete juridical equality of... not only individuals, but also various self-determined collective units... The Fundamental Laws of the Russian empire have to protect the rights of minorities... both in the whole state and in its distinct parts... It is necessary to provide the citizens the right for cultural self-determination immediately by the way of legislation.⁷⁹

In the second draft seems to be a revised version of the first one. It added that the Union united not only along the regional, but also national-territorial principles. Instead of inviolability of the borders the draft pursued the idea of “indivisibility of the Russian state as a single whole.” Regarding the principle of the widest autonomy it said that the latter had to be established by the Russian Fundamental Laws. Finally, the new version contained an additional paragraph:

The geographical borders and the legal limits of the autonomy of each region or national-territorial unit have to be defined in accordance with the will of its population... The faction of the Union of Autonomists will fully support the strivings of regional units, which would not go beyond the principle of a wide self-government.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ APAN. I-123 Materiały Aleksandra Lednickiego. item. 9. p.1

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 10-10 ob.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p.10.

As one can note, both projects suggested a vague understanding of the limits of the competence of autonomous regions. They only stipulated that these limits had to reflect the strivings of the population. At the same time, the strivings did not have contradict the main principles of the Union, namely to preserve the unity of the Russian state and to prevent the suppression of minorities.

The brochure of the founder of the Union Jan Baudouin de Courtenay provided a more detailed explanation of the general principles of the Union. Initially, the author intended it as a publication in the “Volume of Autonomists” in 1907, but due to the changed political situation the work on volume stopped. The brochure was published only in 1913 under the title “National and Territorial Principles of Autonomy.”⁸¹ One should note, however, that in this work Baudouin de Courtenay expressed his own opinion, rather than the general view of the Union.

Baudouin de Courtenay’s peculiar interpretation of autonomy suggested that nationality was a question of a personal choice of each person. Therefore he refused to identify people in accordance with external criteria, biological or social. He argued that “national belonging had to be defined by a free choice and self-determination of each particular individual.”⁸² At the same time, he admitted that a person could belong to several nationalities or not to belong to any. According to the author, the national question could be reduced to the issue of the freedom of associations, and regarded similarly as the question of belonging to a religious confession or political party.

⁸¹ Ivan Boduen de Kurtene, *Natsional'nyi i territorial'nyi priznak v avtonomii* (St.Petersburg: Tipografiia M.M.Stasiulevicha, 1913), iii.

⁸² Ibid., 15.

Thus, Baudouin de Courtenay offered to replace the issue of national-territorial autonomy exclusively by the idea of territorial autonomous regions.⁸³

The most essential part of brochure was devoted to a practical implementation of the principle of autonomy. For the author, “nationality as such cannot be regarded as a ground to provide an autonomy.”⁸⁴ Similarly, Baudouin de Courtenay denied the principle of “historical rights” of distinct regions and claimed that this principle suggested the right of repressive elite to control “a two-legged animal of another nationality.” Besides, he wrote that “the ‘historical rights’ of Poland collide with similar ‘historical rights’ of Lithuania and Ukraine.”⁸⁵ He also refused to define the regions in accordance with ethnographic principle as well as geographic or economic conditions.⁸⁶ Instead, he considered the “right of economic welfare and peaceful cohabitation of all the members of the state and its distinct parts.”⁸⁷ He offered to replace the “historical rights” with “the rights of a given historical moment,” namely the “sentiments and strivings of the population of a given administrative region.”⁸⁸

However, for Baudouin de Courtenay, the autonomy was only an immediate goal. For the remote future, the author considered Russia’s “federalization.” He wrote: “By ‘federalization’ of Russia we mean its disintegration into a number of states or politically distinct regions, which would be united by a treaty. Altogether they would form a single state body, a single sovereign whole.”⁸⁹ According to Baudouin de Courtenay, federative states should have equal amount of population. This, however,

⁸³ Ibid., 24-25.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 31.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 32.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 40-41.

contradicts to his above mentioned principle of self-determination of the local population. In his view, the federation could be accomplished only in two cases: “Either Russia would dissolve into distinct parts as a result of prevailing centrifugal forces and these distinct parts, pursuing common good, would want to unite into federation; or the benefits of federative arrangement would become obvious for conscious people and they would accomplish this arrangement by means of legislation.”⁹⁰ In the former case, the author predicted “aggravation of present turmoil and disasters,” whereas if Russia followed the latter scenario, it would accomplish federalization peacefully and would, finally, “recover.”⁹¹

For Baudouin de Courtenay, Russia’s federalization implied that “for the sake of the unity of the state and practical good, distinct independent regions would renounce some of their sovereign political rights and give them up to the central institutions.”⁹² One can see that the author envisioned the federation in accordance with the model of *Bundesstaat*, although he did not use the German terminology. Moreover, he left beyond the consideration the issue of the competencies of distinct regions and rather sought to formulate some abstract principles regarding Russia’s reorganization.

Thus, one can conclude, that Kokoshkin’s definition of autonomy was not the only possible within the theoretical framework of the Russian liberals. Lazarevsky presupposed inclusion into this notion such forms of regional organization, which Jellinek called *Staatsfragments*. By contrast, Kistiakovsky offered to limit the competence of autonomous institutions to the issues of culture and education.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 41.

⁹¹ Ibid., 42.

⁹² Ibid., 43.

Referring to the experience of British colonies, Korf emphasized the process of transition from local self-government through autonomy to non-sovereign states. Contrary to the German legal theoreticians, he suggested regarding this process not as an exception, but as a natural and inevitable trend in the development of the states. Finally, Baudouin de Courtenay and other autonomists, although vaguely, treated the autonomy almost in the same way as Kokoshkin. However, for Baudouin de Courtenay the autonomy was only the first step on the way to the final goal – federalization of the entire Russia. Moreover, he admitted the possibility of Russia's disintegration into a number of independent regions as a transitory stage.

Taken altogether, this discussion could only enforce the concerns of “hesitant autonomists” (by the expression of Kistiakovsky), who feared that inclusion of even a restricted notion of autonomy into the program of the Constitutional-Democratic Party would provoke its further widening. As a result the autonomy might become a synonym for a part of a real union, federative state, or even a confederation. Proliferation of the meanings of autonomy not only weakened the position of the Kadets vis-à-vis the critics from the right, but also inspired new “utopian” projects within very group of the Russian liberals. Thus, regarding the issue of autonomy the Kadets along with the external challenge on the part of the representatives of the national movements, encountered the challenge from within.

The minutes of the second meeting of the Constitutional Democratic Party provide a key to understanding the reaction of the leadership of the party to this peculiar circumstance. At the evening session on January 10, 1906, Baudouin de Courtenay presented a report, highlighting the main principles of the Union of Autonomists. Except for the concluding passage, the report does not require a detailed

examination here. In a more developed form these ideas have been analyzed earlier in this chapter. The final part of Baudouin de Courtenay's speech contained a question,

Will the [Constitutional Democratic] Party defend... autonomy and equality of nationalities in any parliament, or it will confine itself to formal expression of "sympathy to repressed and humiliated" postponing the practical solution until the convocation of the "constituent assembly"... i.e., might be, *ad calendas graecas*?⁹³

The member of the Central Committee, Sergei Kotliarevsky responded with the following statement: "The most peculiar part of our program is the issue of autonomy of the regions... The only question is where will we defend these principles – in the nearest Duma? However, the one is not a genuine representation, the will of the people. We need to wait until the convocation of the Constituent Assembly or the second convocation of a genuine representation..."⁹⁴ The next speaker Paul Miliukov declared: "As for the issue [raised by Baudouin de Courtenay], in our program and during negotiations with other nationalities we offer more definite statements, than above mentioned suggestions."⁹⁵ Here, it is worthwhile to quote the relevant part of the Kadets' program to which Miliukov referred.

24. After the rights of civic freedom and regular representation with constitutional rights for the entire Russian state would be established, at the level of state-wide legislation there should be opened a legal way for establishing local autonomy and regional representative assemblies with the rights to participate in execution of legislative authority regarding certain subjects, in accordance with the needs of the population.⁹⁶

This paragraph suggested many "protective mechanisms" against, what the Kadets called, an untimely way to provide an autonomy. Only for Poland the Kadets admitted an exception. One can see it from the next 25th paragraph of their program.

⁹³ Ivan Boduen de Kurtene, "Po voprosu ob avtonomii i ravnopravii natsional'nostei" *Ukrainskii Vestnik* 1 (1906): 32-33.

⁹⁴ *S"ezdy i konferentsii Konstitutsionno-demokraticheskoi partii*. Vol. 1., 161-162.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 162.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 37.

Immediately after establishment of the empire-wide democratic representation... there would be introduced an autonomous arrangement in the Kingdom of Poland... under the condition of preserving Russia's state unity and participation in the central representation...⁹⁷

Similarly as in the Polish case, the Kadets postponed the autonomy until the convocation of a "regular democratic representation." Yet, afterwards, if the Kingdom of Poland acquired an immediate autonomy, for the rest parts of the empire there only opened a "legal way." The authors of the program envisioned the autonomy under the control of the central authority. According to the program, the local assemblies rather than fulfilled the legislative authority in the region had only to "take part in the execution of legislative authority." Finally, the passage limited the competence of autonomies to "certain subjects," moreover the regional representatives had to prove that such competencies reflected the "needs of the population."

The paragraph about the Kingdom of Poland did not contain these restrictions. The authors mainly sought to preserve the unity of the state and secure the representation of the Polish deputies in the state-wide legislation. Thus, having promised an autonomy to the borderlands in an abstract form, the Kadets sought, above all, that the local assemblies would not exceed the limits of the local competence and stay under the control of the central legislative institutions.

If Fedor Kokoshkin was the author of these formulas, Miliukov took for himself the task to prevent them from any further alterations. The leader of the Kadets exposed his position in the article "The Faction of 'Autonomists'", published in *Rech'* for May 12th 1906. In particular, he called a mistake the initiative to single Autonomists into a distinct parliamentary faction and argued that putting the autonomy into the foreground would complicate other more relevant issues. For him,

⁹⁷ Ibid.

the very idea to make an autonomy a general program of the whole faction could be politically detrimental. He wrote:

“Autonomy” is a very unclear principle, and the groups, which unite themselves under this slogan, pursue completely different goals. Some of these goals are posed by the life and supported by the national instinct; the other are abstract and take an origin from books. Ones are shared by the people; others circulate only among the groups of intelligentsia ... Finally, the decisions regarding the ones are prepared by agitation and all-round discussion in press; the others rather have a form of sentimental dreams, than serious political tasks. All these varieties now have to be drawn under a common program. As a result, either some of these tasks would be deprived of their personal character, or the other would be inflated...⁹⁸

One can see, that Miliukov offered to take a particular approach to each of the potential autonomies. For him, the volume of regional competencies had to depend on the “maturity” of a given national movement. In this passage, one can find an allusion to “immaturity” of, for example, the Ukrainian movement. In particular, Miliukov mentioned that this movement was confined to intelligentsia and inspired by “sentimental” motives, rather than by the needs of the population.

At the same time, Miliukov feared that a special faction of Autonomists could threaten the Constitutional-Democratic Party and wrote: “In the majority, the Autonomists already belong to other parties. Having joined a new party, one still has to relate himself with the old one. Sooner or later one has to face a question, which party discipline one has to obey...”⁹⁹ Knowing, that many members of the Union of Autonomists, including Baudouin de Courtenay, belonged to the Kadets, one may interpret this passage as a reminder to follow the discipline of his party.

⁹⁸ Pavel Miliukov “Fraktsiia avtonomistov” *God bor’by: publitsisticheskaia khronika, 1905-1906* (Moscow: “Kniga po Trebovaniu” 2013), 391-392.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 392.

Conclusion

Once agreed to include the slogan of the Polish autonomy into their program, the Russian liberals found that other national movements began to demand similar autonomous rights, referring to the principle of equality of all nationalities. In response to this challenge, the Russian liberals offered the notion of autonomy, which excluded widening of this term. Moreover, it implied that local representative assemblies would stay under control of the central parliament. The leadership of the Kadets strove to preserve this notion from further changes, despite that it could not satisfy the representatives of the national movements, which the Kadets regarded as their allies. Following this line, the Kadets sought to defend their position from the criticism of the right-wing parties, who accused the latter in the attempt to disintegrate the empire. At the same time, the leadership of the Kadets feared a split within the party and wanted to marginalize those of its projects, which either widened or narrowed the adopted meaning autonomy. The leadership insisted on the initial version of the program. They refused to regard the autonomy to be primary issue and offered to postpone it until the final establishment of the constitutional order. Thus, the need to preserve the unity within the party made the Kadets less flexible regarding the claims of national movements in the borderlands.

Conclusion

In 1925 Paul Miliukov published the book called *The National Question*, in which he summarized the evolution of the views of the Kadets regarding the national movements they had been interacting with.¹ This work is important as an indicator of the experience, which the Russian liberals acquired in the years that followed after the revolution 1905, as well as of their reaction to the World War I and the new revolution. Did they understand the reasons, why they could not find the common ground with the national movements in the borderlands? Did they see this failure as their own fault or did they put the blame on certain exterior forces or circumstances?

In his book, Miliukov considered two types of nationalism. The first type of nationalism was a natural national feeling of the masses, which was an expression of an objective historical process. It was possible to conduct an “objective observation” of this nationalism and treat it in a scholarly manner as a social phenomenon.² Another type of nationalism was “voluntarist.” For Miliukov, this nationalism had been born in the circles of the intelligentsia, which imposed it upon the people. Such a type of nationalism presupposed a hypertrophy of the national feeling and tended to suppress other nations whenever possible.³ Miliukov compared this national feeling to a disease:

In a general number of cases, hypertrophy of the national feeling could be not useful, but even detrimental for the nationality, which became ill with this disease. For example, this could be the case when:

- 1) the national feeling develops into the striving for annexations in foreign policy...

¹ Pavel Miliukov, *Natsional'nyi vopros. (Proiskhozhdenie natsional'nosti i natsional'nye voprosy v Rossii)* (Moscow: Gosudarstvennaia publichnaia istoricheskaia biblioteka Rossii, 2005).

² Ibid., 120.

³ Ibid.

2) the national feeling becomes attached to the relics of the past.

3) the feeling of national pride or offence pushes other feelings and needs of a modern normal person, into the background, namely a) when nationalism puts itself above the state and begins a struggle against the state, b) when nationalism ignores the higher interests of spiritual life and creativity... that go beyond the interests of a certain nationality...”⁴

In this quotation, it is notable that Miliukov used the word “disease” to designate a situation when nationalism opposed itself to the state. He apparently implied the Russian state, which was under attack of the nationalisms in the borderlands. This does not mean that the national movements in the borderlands were against the statehood as such. On the contrary, in most cases they sought to create their own states. However, according to Miliukov, the struggle against the existing state was reprehensible and destructive by nature.

Further, bringing the examples of various national movements in Russia, Miliukov formulated a clear statement. Until these movements were united together in a general trend of the liberation movement in Russia, their claims remained rather moderate. However, during the period of reaction that followed the temporary defeat of the liberation forces, the government followed the path of repression of nationalities in pursuit of the wrongly understood interests of the Russian nation. In these circumstances the national movements in the borderlands became more radical; some of them began to pursue separation from Russia. Thus Miliukov laid the blame to the government and the Russian nationalists for the radicalization of nationalisms and the failure to identify interests that would be common to different nationalities in Russia. Later on, his list of culprits came to include foreign powers that used the radical nationalists in their selfish interests. According to Miliukov, “it was not hard to predict that such a systematic employment of aggressive nationalist tendencies [by the government] would lead to a new burst of intolerance and separatist sentiments among

⁴ Ibid., 120-121.

the nationalities of the Russian state...⁵ He further concluded that “whereas the nationalism of pro-government parties led from autonomism toward separatism, the war and the intervention of foreign powers led from separatism to actual separation.”⁶

These passages indicate that Miliukov did not believe the liberals were to blame for the failure of the national movements to find a common language with the Russian public opinion. On the contrary, he tried to lay the blame on others, rather than to analyze the liberals’ own mistakes.

This dissertation argued that one of the reasons of failure of the dialogue between the Russian liberals and the national movements consisted in the fundamental incompatibility of their initial assumptions. Moreover, the degree of this incompatibility varied from case to case, which made the tactical alliance in a common struggle against “autocratically-bureaucratic” regime more or less probable.

The main illusion of the liberals consisted in their belief in the possibility to “re-educate” their allies among the national movements. The liberals, whose typical representative Miliukov was, assumed that the “excesses” of the national feeling would be easily overcome, if the Russian authorities guaranteed the legal equality of all the nations. Convinced that the rights of individuals and the supremacy of law were the fundamental principles of the modern civilization, the liberals ignored that the representatives of other ideological trends may not accept these assumptions. This may seem rather strange, given the fact that the main opponent of the liberals – the Russian autocratic government (which relied on the Russian nationalists) openly criticized the liberals’ initial assumptions. However, the representatives of the

⁵ Ibid., 141.

⁶ Ibid.

liberation movement thought that they dealt with anachronistic forces, which fought to protect their privileges against the general flow of social development.

Nevertheless, the Russian liberals perceived the nationalists in the borderlands as their natural ally. The liberals considered such nationalisms progressive, even if in the Polish case the predominant political force, the National Democratic Party, defended the interests of the privileged strata and impeded their dialogue with the rest of the Polish leaders. The liberals were willing to cooperate with them, hoping to re-educate their activists in order to devoid from the “hypertrophy of national feelings.” Thus, the major oversight of the liberals was their failure to estimate the force of the principled of the national movements in the borderlands, which were incompatible with the worldview of the Russian liberals. Particularly, they disregarded the latter’s belief that the world consisted of separate nations understood as organic units, which were in a constant struggle for existence.

Finland offered the most successful example of a dialogue. In this case, the Kadets and the advocates of a special status of Finland based their arguments on similar theoretical assumptions, although they interpreted them differently. The principal dispute took place not between the Kadets and the nationalists, but between the supporters of a special status of Finland and their opponents among the official theoreticians of law. The latter argued that Russia’s sovereignty over Finland signified the right of the Russian state to define unilaterally the sphere of competence of the central administrative institutions on the territory of Finland. According to this theory Finland acquired a status of an autonomous province of Russia, with its own legislative body. Moreover the competence of this body had to be defined by Empire’s central institutions. The proponents of this view grounded their arguments on the declaration of the emperor Alexander I to the Finnish estates. In their interpretation,

this declaration defined Finland's status as a kind of a gift, which could be taken back at any time. In opposition to this, the Finns advocated the idea that Finland was a separate, yet non-sovereign, state in accordance with terminology of Georg Jellinek. In practice, this statement implied that any changes of the competence of the Finnish state institutions might occur only with the consent of the Finnish institutions.

The liberal theoreticians of law, who formulated the position of the Kadets on this issue, offered another interpretation of the status of Finland. It was closer to the original view of Jellinek. In particular, for Kokoshkin, Finland was a *Staatsfragment*, rather than a separate state. However, in practice he advocated similar principles as the Finns – any alterations in the status of Finland could take place only by the way of parallel legislation, with the mutual consent of the Russian and Finnish legislative institutions. In the long run, the position of the Kadets boiled down to postponing the resolution of theoretical controversies and the ultimate decision on the status of Finland within the framework of Russia's new constitutional institutions. For the present time being, the Kadets advocated a formal recognition that the status of Finland could not be altered without the Grand Duchy's consent. Such a compromise between the Russian liberals and the Finns would seem almost ideal if it had not been complicated by a practical circumstance. None of these political forces had any sufficient political influence during the parliamentary discussion on the "Finnish question" in 1910. The government, supported by the right-wing and centrist majority had a free hand regarding Finland. Meanwhile, the liberals could only defend the principles, without any possibility to implement them in practice.

The Polish case essentially differed from the Finnish one. Yet, the Polish politicians appealed to historical rights of the Kingdom of Poland and claimed on this ground a juridical status for Poland that would be similar to that of Finland. Yet, this

was only one among a whole range of arguments that the Poles used. The position of the exponents of the Polish autonomy was more complicated due to the fact that a significant Polish minority lived beyond the borders of the Kingdom of Poland (mainly in the Western provinces). Therefore, for the Poles to insist on a status similar to the Finns meant to forego the possibility of sending their representatives to the central parliament; this would mean leaving their co-nationals in the Western provinces without support. For these reasons, the Polish representatives in the State Duma became involved in the Russian politics. This made it necessary to find a common ground with the liberals. However, this interaction was complicated by the position of the Poles themselves, whose ideological premises diverged from those of the Russian liberals. The Poles asked for too much and their claims went far beyond the limits of what the Kadets understood under the term autonomy. According to the Kadets, the Polish demands weakened the former's own position in the polemics with the right-wing Russian parties, in which they tried to prove that the Polish autonomy did not lead to Russia's disintegration, but on the contrary, it helped to strengthen the country. In this situation, the policy of the Kadets was reduced to the attempts to "re-educate" the Polish delegation in the Duma. These attempts were unsuccessful, because the Poles did not regard the Kadets as a serious partner and sought to bargain directly with the government. However, the Poles were no more successful in such attempts. Meanwhile, time was lost. The Poles and the Kadets did not manage to make any serious agreements, regarding the concept of autonomy.

Attempts to reach an agreement between the Ukrainian groups and the Kadets were likewise complicated, because the latter did not regard the former as a serious partner. At the same time, initial ideological positions were also incompatible. In their understanding of autonomy and federation, the Ukrainians referred to the tradition of

Bakunin and Dragomanov. The latter implied the delegation of sovereignty from the bottom up, from the local communities, by way of larger associations, up to the level of the state-wide institutions. The latter were understood as a federation of communes. This theory was hardly compatible with the Kadets' understanding of statehood. In their view, statehood meant a legal order embodied, above all, in the activity of state-wide institutions. For the Kadets, autonomy was the attribute of the local authorities, whose sphere of competence was defined by the central state institutions. Besides the Kadets' legal theorists, referring to the German experience, regarded the federation as a transitory stage from a union of states towards a unitary state. Therefore, in their view, the idea of federation was irrelevant for the Russian case, although the Kadets allowed for the autonomy the above mentioned sense. The difference of theories reduced the possibility of a continuous alliance with the Ukrainians, although this did not exclude the possibility of tactical agreements. At the same time, the Kadets hoped to "re-educate" the Ukrainians. For this, as they thought, they needed to move from theoretical discussions to a practical solution of the questions of state reorganization. Yet, in their view, it was possible only after liberalization of the Russian political regime.

In view of the failure of the dialogue between the liberals and all the national movements, with the exception for the Finns, one may wonder how feasible was the task of preserving the integrity of the Russian empire while transforming it into a constitutional state? The liberals argued that this was possible. They assumed the possibility of finding a ground for uniting the nations in the empire on the basis of common interests. The right-wing opponents of the liberals, the Russian nationalists, thought that this was impossible and that the borderlands could only be retained by force. From their point of view, the national movements would want to separate the

borderlands from Russia no matter how much autonomy the center would be ready to give. This view questioned the very idea of “liberated Russia,” since for the right-wing parties, the liberation would inevitably lead to Russia’s disintegration. The outcome of the debate between the liberals and the right-wing politicians, in many ways, depended on the political behavior of the national movements. The question at stake was, whether they were ready to compromise on their initial claims. In their dispute with the right-wing parties, the liberals sought to prove that the autonomy of the borderlands did not lead to disintegration, but rather to strengthening the inner ties between nationalities in Russia.

The analysis of the three cases in this dissertation demonstrated that with the exception of the Finns, the national movements followed the aims that were hardly compatible with the initial beliefs of the liberals. Their aims and their understanding of autonomy did not conform the understanding of autonomy that the liberals were ready to admit. The hope of the Kadets to “re-educate” the national activists by means of practical political experience was not realized, which, however, does not mean that it was unrealistic in principle. At the same time, the constitutional Russia, if only one admits that such a thing existed for some time, emerged in absolutely specific circumstances of the world war, when foreign occupation led to the de facto separation of certain borderlands. Therefore the question of preserving Russia’s integrity as a result of a compromise between the nations can never lose its purely theoretical character.

One might ask a more specific question: was it possible to achieve a rapprochement between the liberals and the national movements on the ground of formulating common aims in a common struggle with the “autocratic-bureaucratic” regime? Generally, it is possible to conclude that there were serious impediments on

the way towards such an agreement. The problem was that the final aims of the liberals and the national movements did not coincide, which only left an opportunity to agree on the level of tactics.

To reach an agreement each side had to have an adequate perception of the partner and its aims. However, neither in the Polish, nor in the Ukrainian case such an understanding was ever reached. To use the terminology of the “game theory,” it is possible to imagine a non-zero sum game, when there is a possibility of a compromise that would be mutually beneficial for both participants of the game. By meeting each other half-way, the participants may find a point of equilibrium (for example, an autonomy with a certain competence of the local institutions). Diverging from this point would be disadvantageous for both sides. However, such a compromise may be reached only in the case, when both sides are aware of the “rules” of the game. These rules must be the same for both partners. Moreover, both parties should understand, what, in accordance with these rules, would be favorable for each of the participants. However, it may well happen that the notion that each side holds about the rules of the game are not identical. This means that each of the sides plays its own game, in which case it becomes more difficult to reach an agreement.

What does this mean in the context of the present study? The members of the Polish *koło* perceived themselves as a “delegation of a foreign state,” which sought to negotiate with Russia the question of autonomy. The Poles assumed that Russia, weakened by inner conflicts, would be willing to make concessions in order to find an ally in the struggle against the revolution. Thus, for the Poles, the Kadets were not an adequate side for a dialogue even though they assisted pursuing the Polish aims. They could become one only in the case of a complete defeat of the government. The Kadets, in their turn, represented themselves as the future government of the liberated

Russia and discussed the future status of Poland as if they had the right to decide it. At the same time, they thought that the Poles were the natural allies of Russians in their common struggle against the autocracy. Thus, each party in this dialogue perceived itself not the way it appeared in the eyes of its counterpart.

A similar situation occurred in the Ukrainian case. The Ukrainian activists saw themselves as representatives of the Ukrainian nation, whereas, for the Kadets, they were only a group of intellectuals. In the view of the Kadets, they still had to prove their right to represent the population of Ukraine. Therefore, according to the Kadets, any talk of autonomy was premature until one could see a clear striving for such autonomy of the entire population of the Ukraine. In this situation, a compromise was impossible, because each side did not consider the other side as authorized to make any decision.

What conclusions could be made in order to understand the significance of the projects of autonomy and federation in the context of Russia's political transformation? The answer is that this transformation was but beginning. At this stage, the main actors only began to emerge and various projects that they formulated were often incompatible with each other. Many of these projects were also hard to implement in practice. However, this does not mean that these projects were meaningless for no idea can be implemented without this preliminary stage. Without formulating initially even unrealistic projects no idea can be realized. As the latest events in Russia and Ukraine demonstrate, the ideas of federation and autonomy remain relevant in the space of the former Russian empire.

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