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FRESH LOOK

AT

LIBERATION



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A FRESH LOOK AT LIBERATION

“Evolutionary change, generated by pressures from within and from without, hopes and yearnings of the oppressed, kept alive by the friendships of the free peoples of the earth, will eventually destroy despotic power . . .”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower

WHIL political liberty one day flourish in the countries now under Communist domination?

Deeply informed, sober-minded fugitives from the Soviet Union are certain that the Communist yoke will eventually be thrown off, and in many cases are dedicating their lives to hasten that event.

Prominent American leaders as well as students of Soviet affairs share this view. Some of them are members of the American Committee for Liberation, a private organization devoted to aiding the oppressed peoples of the Soviet Union in their historical task of self-liberation.

The will to liberation in the East European satellite states has been unmistakable from the day of their enslavement by the Kremlin. Any doubts on this score have been dissipated by the Hungarian revolution and the near-revolution in Poland in the autumn of 1956, by the uprising in East Germany in 1953, by impressive evidence of popular pressure against the Red regimes in all other puppet states.

But the peoples' yearnings for greater freedom and ultimate liberation from Soviet despotism have been no less manifest in the USSR itself. The intensity of this liberation movement has been steadily increasing over the 40 years of Soviet power. The whole history of the Soviet period, indeed, can best be understood in terms of a continuing struggle between the Kremlin hierarchy and its subjects—as a “permanent civil war,” at times open, at other times concealed, but violent and always costly in life and suffering.

The Record

THE Soviet regime was born of a civil war which raged for years. Ever since, the war has persisted by other means and with other weapons. In 1921 the Kronstadt sailors, who had played a key role in helping the Bolsheviks seize power, revolted against the Lenin-Trotsky tyranny and were slaughtered by the thousands. The peasants resisted forcible collectivization, paying with millions of casualties, and have never entirely capitulated. Battles between peasants and Red Army troops were commonplace in the 1920's and 1930's.

When the Germans invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the world saw—without always comprehending—a test of the real sentiments of the Kremlin subjects. In the early stages of that war, millions of Soviet citizens in the aggregate, both soldiers and civilians, deserted to the German side, in the tragically naive hope that the invaders would liberate them from the hated police-state. Hundreds of thousands of them actually donned German uniforms, in the so-called Vlasov movement and other anti-Soviet formations, in order to fight Communism.

These are no more than a few of the myriad expressions of the ever-growing liberation movement. In nearly four decades of a monopoly of power, the Soviet regime has failed to acquire legitimacy. It must still depend for survival on the physical terror of a swollen police establishment and the mental-psychological terror of massive and unrelenting censorships, propaganda and indoctrination. In relation to the people, the Kremlin has been from the start, and remains today, *on the defensive*, aware that it could not last without colossal and pitiless repression.

But the entrenched dictatorship, exploiting the resources of a

great country and utterly disdainful of the staggering costs in life and suffering, succeeded in industrializing the country. By the end of World War II, the Soviet Union emerged as a mighty nation, second only to the United States in military and economic strength. The upper segments of its society—officials, economic managers, military leaders, some intellectuals—have developed a powerful stake in the survival of the system on which their new powers and privileges rest. It can be inferred, moreover, that millions of others—regardless of their secret opinions of the regime and its methods—take patriotic pride in the enhanced power and international stature of their native land.



Outside observers, looking at the outwardly solid monolith created by Stalin, impressed by its war-making potentials and the magnitude of its police forces, took it for granted that the elements arrayed against liberation in the USSR far outweighed those favoring liberation. The Soviet regime seemed strong enough not only to impose itself permanently on its direct subjects but to prevent the colonial or satellite peoples from breaking out of the Soviet orbit.

Thus hopes for liberation languished.

But after Stalin's death those hopes were revived. Slave revolts in Vorkuta and other Soviet forced-labor camps were symptoms of pressure under the policed surface inside the USSR, just as the East German uprising and disturbances in other satellite countries were outside the USSR. The 20th Party Congress in February, 1956 climaxed by Khrushchev's shattering "secret speech" denouncing some of Stalin's crimes, set in motion forces of doubt and rebellion that continue to shake the Soviet empire to its limits. These hopes in no small measure are reflected in the power struggle between Khrushchev and the Molotov, Malenkov, Kaganovich group, which has resulted in the exile of the latter.

Today, liberation prospects appear more impressive than ever in the past. And the road to liberation can be discerned more clearly than in the past.

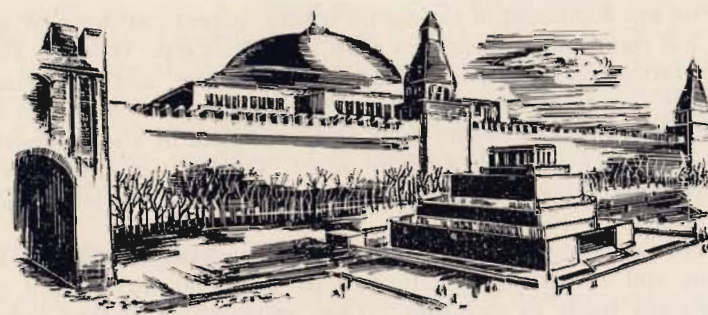
First, since the Khrushchev "de-Stalinization" speech the strong currents for change, long existent at the strategic points, have become more sharply apparent. The fury with which the Hungarians fought for their freedom, the determination with which the Poles struck out for greater independence, are merely climactic expressions of impulses toward freedom and human dignity existing in the Soviet Union itself. The alacrity with which Soviet writers took advantage of the brief "thaw" in their area, the boldness with which Soviet students asked embarrassing questions and demanded truthful answers, indicate a significant intellectual ferment. Traditionally in Russia the intellectuals and artists have *expressed* what great masses of their countrymen *felt*.

Second, it is clear that the forces for change are indigenous—that they are not Western infusions. The Kremlin's attempts to blame the Hungarian uprising upon foreign broadcasts are merely ludicrous. While the sympathy and moral encouragement of free men abroad can stimulate movements for freedom in the Soviet sphere, they cannot create such movements. De-Stalinization itself was primarily a response to domestic pressure, an effort to placate and reassure various groups inside the country, among these the Communists themselves. The events in Poland, leading to the victory of Gomulka, obviously were generated by hopes and despair inside that country. In short, liberation forces are local, related to internal conditions and emotions.

Third, it is now evident that the crux of the liberation prob-

lem lies in the USSR, not in the satellites—this despite the stronger freedom movements in the satellites. Peripheral uprisings are usually foredoomed as long as the *center* remains immune. And the satellites are in this context peripheral. The detachment of one or another puppet state is possible, but only liberation of Soviet Russia itself can guarantee the larger success. Were a Hungarian-type uprising to occur in the USSR, with the military forces joining the people, there would be no external force to put it down. The pace of across-the-board liberation therefore depends largely on the liberation process in the USSR.

Fourth, a fresh appraisal of what the free world can do to accelerate the indigenous changes looking toward liberation is today possible and necessary. In the 1920's and 1950's the non-



Soviet world on the whole regarded the USSR as beyond the reach of outside influence. But since the latter 1940's the free world, seeking relief from the burdens imposed by the so-called Cold War, slowly came to recognize that it can play a role in evoking and nurturing liberation sentiments already in existence behind the Iron Curtain. Today it is apparent that a true partnership can and must be created between liberation-seeking forces in the USSR and liberation-fostering forces outside. For the first time since 1917 the bond between impulses to freedom in the USSR and the active traditions of the free world has been established.

Let us cite an example. The "secret" Khrushchev speech was provoked by wholly internal conditions. But its effectiveness in

releasing liberation forces was then vastly magnified by the action of the U. S. State Department in making the text public. This pattern, where an internal Soviet maneuver is converted into a victory for liberalizing and liberating forces through free world action, is significant. It points to the potential interplay between Soviet and Western developments toward liberation.

Against this background, a useful definition of liberation suggests itself, in terms of this interplay of freedom forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain: *The Liberation movement is the interaction of pressures toward freedom in the Soviet orbit with the forces of freedom in the free world, looking to the displacement of the Communist despotism by a system of political liberty.*

The New Mask

THE top command of the Soviet regime appears, at this writing, less rigid and less ruthless than in Stalin's day. Whether this transformation—relative at best—will continue, and how long, no one can say. The changes are wholly external; the system of rule, the monopoly of one party and its control by a self-perpetuating oligarchic clique, remain intact. Yet the terror has been measurably relaxed and for the time being the Soviet people breathe more easily.

Stalin's successors have made some visible concessions both at home and abroad. They admitted to Tito that there could be "different roads to socialism." They retreated in Poland when Gomulka, backed by the nation, defied their orders to crush the popular movement for a measure of independence. At home, they released many prisoners from the slave camps and put some curbs on the secret police.

True, *Pravda* has warned that "the Communist Party has been and will be the only master of minds and thoughts." In the creative fields, the "thaw" is hardening again into the familiar wintry forms. The limits of free expression, narrow at best, have been narrowed even more. Yet a residue remains; the rigors of the Stalinist era continue to be tempered by marginal concessions.

Such concessions, of course, are not favors that the new rulers grant in a burst of benevolence. They are adjustments forced upon them by decades of human development. The Soviet

regime through the years has raised literacy, and thereby aroused the thirst for more freedom of inquiry and expression. Soviet industrialization brought into being vast numbers of skilled workers, engineers, technicians, scientists—and these were bound in time to claim a better life and more dignified social status. The huge Soviet armed forces gradually developed vested interests, with officers concerned for their special status, privileges and prestige.

Thus, in one area after another, Soviet society became more multiple, more differentiated. The result is a rudimentary growth of individualism with which the dictatorship, however reluctantly, must try to come to terms.

Today it is no longer easy to mobilize the energies of Soviet citizens by simple, sloganized appeals to ideology. Fanatic ideologies have a way of burning themselves out. The Soviet ideology, however, has been so abused as a crass tool of power that it has lost its earlier idealistic mystique. Soviet youth and workers, for example, are no longer ready to work overtime and as "volunteers" on jobs just for the glory of the revolution. Soviet students are openly cynical about Marxist-Leninist clichés. Increasingly, it would seem, people insist on personal incentives, rewards, and even rights.

The Changing Dictatorship

THE dictatorship today must deal with a different population. An essentially agrarian country has changed in a generation into a country with an urban population of some 80 million. The Soviet townsman, despite the planned isolation from the outside world, has a certain sophistication, certainly as compared with yesterday's peasant. He knows about Hemingway and TV, about jazz and vacuum cleaners and the Olympic Games. He yearns for travel abroad. He is still in awe of the state, but a host of new impressions urges him on toward the new, the untried.

To curb these new appetites for living would require the full terror of the Stalinist era. But it is unlikely that Khrushchev & Company will dare to reimpose unlimited terror, or that they would succeed if they tried. The secret police specialists themselves may be sufficiently aware of the popular mood to counsel

a measure of restraint. Even the bloody Beria is known, in some cases, to have intervened against police crackdowns which he judged would cause more unrest than they would allay. Besides, once self-expression has been cautiously allowed, it is difficult to restore the climate of all-encompassing fear. It is quite possible, therefore, that Soviet terror has met the law of diminishing returns.

The Kremlin in the next years may possibly wish to become, by easy stages, a more enlightened—and hence more efficient—dictatorship. This, of course, not because the ruling oligarchs have had a change of heart but because they are compelled to release more popular creative energy in order to operate a modern technological economy.

The question, however, is whether a totalitarian dictatorship is really capable of harnessing free energies to its service. A little liberty, far from reconciling people to tyranny, emboldens them to demand more and yet more. The dictatorship, in stimulating individual trends for its own purposes, may well be touching off processes it will be unable to control.

A rough contemporary analogy is provided by the current fate of colonial empires. Willingly or otherwise, imperial powers in this generation embarked on policies of concessions to their colonies. The hope was to fortify the colonial system by making it softer and more and more flexible. But their subjects invariably accepted the concessions as mere down payments on eventual liberation. All through history, pressures for a change of regime increased when things were getting better, but not getting better fast enough. Will the Khrushchev policy of limited concessions, similarly, prove to be too little and too late?

The outside world, by its mere existence, affects the answer to that decisive question. As contacts with the West are widened, appetites for Western amenities and freedoms will grow inside the USSR. Without being indiscriminately imitative, the Soviet citizenry is likely to press for some features of democratic societies. No nation is forever immune to the general climate of the surrounding world.

Consider as simple a thing as the recent U.S.-Soviet agricultural exchanges. Though the Soviet "farmers" sent across the ocean were really officials and secret policemen, they did have to report that corn grows better in Iowa than in the Soviet

Union, that American cattle yield more meat and milk, etc. Khrushchev's vow that his country will catch up with the U. S. in food production *per capita* perhaps was influenced by this Soviet glimpse of American productivity.

Naturally, Khrushchev did not dare acknowledge the obvious fact that *private* farming plays a major part in American agricultural superiority. But this economic moral, we may be sure, has not been lost upon the Soviet peasantry, which has never freely accepted collectivization and in whose mind, as Khrushchev once put it, "the little worm of private ownership stirs."

Internal Pressure

IN THE cities, even more than on the land, indigenous pressures and foreign examples could conceivably so modify popular attitudes that the position of the dictatorship would become untenable. The regime would be compelled to make and tolerate changes, always with the intention of keeping them under control, and suddenly discover that a preponderance of power was in other hands. The Soviet overlords—like those in Poland today—would then be forced to walk the frayed tightrope between those who would turn back the clock to old-style Stalinism and the "revisionists" who want to turn the clock forward faster and faster.

In the USSR revisionists might be found in the intermediate levels of the bureaucracy, caught between fear of those above them and pressures from the masses below. They might come to feel (as many of them undoubtedly feel already) that a large degree of self-government was the only way for the USSR—and themselves—to survive.

Or, as the climax of a long process of slow piecemeal change, popular revolution might break out in the USSR. This could happen because of a realization that the Kremlin leopards really could not change their spots. It could happen because the dictatorship, even if it so wished, could not bring prosperity and human dignity without becoming so obviously weak and outmoded as to invite a *coup d'état* by opposition forces.

It is only in such broad, tentative strokes that the process of liberation can be sketched. The most that can be said with assurance is that the ingredients of far-reaching change, looking

to the end of the Communist period, are abundantly at hand. The more Soviet groups and individuals acquire an interest and a stake in change, the less costly will be the final liberation; and the wider the support for the liberation movement, the broader will be the human base out of which new leaders will emerge.

The Nature of Outside Help

Now, what can people outside the USSR contribute to liberation? They can operate on two levels—official and private.

The foreign policy of democratic nations vis-a-vis the USSR needs to be far-seeing, firm, wary and flexible.

A far-seeing democratic foreign policy must implicitly and, where appropriate, explicitly affirm that the Soviet dictatorship is temporary and its eventual demise a certainty. It must affirm the inevitable unity of the world in liberty and deny the validity of a globe forever divided into free and unfree halves. It must take no short-run actions, for whatever temporary convenience, that block the overriding objective of liberation.

A firm democratic foreign policy, backed with strength, will set limits to the expansion of the USSR. It will affirm that the USSR is illegally in possession of many areas it now holds. It will draw a clear line between the Soviet regime and the people, always dramatizing the elementary fact that the ruling power is imposed and has no legitimacy.

A wary democratic foreign policy will appraise a *détente* in East-West relations primarily in terms of its effects on the ultimate goal of liberation. This means that it will rule out actions or policies that raise the prestige and power of the regime. Whatever the forms of a *détente*, the free world must keep up its vigilant guard against the disruptive foreign ambitions of the Kremlin.

A flexible democratic foreign policy will foster *selective* contacts with the USSR and its people. It will not be concerned with the advertisement of foreign ways *per se*, but will show the USSR those aspects of foreign life that are potentially meaningful to the Soviet people. A flexible foreign policy will not expect sensational, immediate results from such exchanges but will have a patient confidence in the power of their example. In receiving visitors from the USSR, democratic governments should examine

such visits on their merits; they will not go overboard on accepting them on the theory that all exchanges are good *per se*; they will accept those exchanges that facilitate making a democratic impact on the USSR and denying the USSR a chance to wage pure propaganda abroad.

But official actions have their limitations. A government-sponsored communication of policies or ideas, from the side of the democracies, at best injects a kind of collective foreign consensus into the atmosphere of the USSR. If liberation is to succeed, that atmosphere also needs individualistic impulses.

Here is where privately sponsored assistance to progressive, liberating tendencies in the USSR comes in. The American Committee for Liberation, founded in 1951 by American individuals deeply concerned for the future of the Soviet peoples, has had substantial experience in working for liberation.

Partnership

THE cornerstone of the American Committee's work is a partnership with leading elements of the emigration from the USSR. The emigration, in its various waves before, during and after World War II, has totalled some two million. The emigration attests to the crimes and failures of the dictatorship, especially its failure to meet human aspirations. It is a living witness, it represents forces dedicated, in terms of patriotism as well as self-interest, to liberation.

That the Kremlin is profoundly disturbed by the existence of a huge, politically conscious emigration is clear enough. On the one hand, Soviet propaganda brands the fugitives as "social refuse . . . traitors . . . mad dogs." On the other hand, it conducts a gigantic and costly campaign to lure this "social refuse" back, using threats and promises to promote repatriation.

Partnership of the free world with the democratic elements in the Soviet emigration is meaningful for the future in that larger cooperation between the peoples now subjected to the Kremlin and those of other nations will have been achieved when the former are liberated. Soviet propaganda at home dismisses the emigres who fuse their efforts with the American Committee as "fascist hirelings." But the Soviet citizen has learned to discount such Kremlin talk. He is likely to see in the

association of his countrymen abroad with Americans a piece of teamwork, a sample of international understanding, propitious for a future without dictatorship.

The emigre-American partnership manifests itself in a broad range of activities; practical projects calling for the cooperation of democratic elements in the emigration. The Committee publishes twice monthly a Russian-language newspaper, *Our Common Cause*, circulated to over 13,000 readers in many countries. The paper not only provides essential news and information to emigres unfamiliar with foreign languages but a discussion forum on current problems directly or indirectly related to the liberation movement. Other joint activities counter the Kremlin's repatriation drive. Also, a series of efforts have been launched to bring the emigration into closer touch with native groups in many countries. Such evidence of cooperation between the emigres and the peoples of the free world countries will show citizens of the USSR their potential of living in harmony not only with the United States, but with all nations.

Neither the American Committee nor the responsible emigration leaders look toward an eventual restoration of the emigres in their former positions of influence or authority in their native land. All that is sought is an equal grant of human rights in a liberated USSR for people of a wide variety of views, including emigres who differed so sharply with the dictatorship that they had to escape from its intolerance.

Learning in the Cause of Liberty

ONE of the free emigration's most significant enterprises is the Institute for the Study of the USSR, located in Munich, Germany. The Institute is an academic corporation under the West German laws, governed by its own Learned Council elected by the membership consisting of former Soviet scholars and scientists, and it receives an annual grant from the American Committee. The Institute has a resident academic staff of some 35 emigre scholars, each a specialist in his field. The more or less regular contributors to its studies number about 300 and it can, when needed, draw on the help of some 1,000 scholars located throughout the world. The researches of the Institute are published in a series of its journals, the monthly English-

language *Bulletin*, the quarterly *Ukrainian Review*, *Belorussian Review* and *Caucasian Review* in English, three other quarterlies in Russian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian; a semi-annual publication in German, and a Turkish-language bulletin called *Dergi*. Symposia in French and Arabic are also published. In addition, the Institute prints significant monographs and conducts conferences on topics of major interest in Soviet affairs.

The purpose of the Institute is to provide information of maximum reliability on the USSR, so that interested elements in the democracies may have as realistic a picture as possible of



what is happening on the shifting Soviet scene. Reliable information is critically important since what the democracies do to assist liberation must be closely in tune with what people inside the USSR are doing. The Institute staff and its correspondents, most of whom are emigres, have a unique background in and "feel" for the realities in the USSR.

Radio Liberation – The Free Voice

THE principal current enterprise of the emigration and the American Committee is *Radio Liberation* which speaks as a free voice of former citizens of the USSR who are trying to help their fellow countrymen at home achieve liberation.

Radio Liberation, with its main programming offices and studios in Munich and transmitters in Western Europe and the Far East, broadcasts around the clock to the peoples of the USSR programs prepared by nine national desks—Russian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Azerbaijani, Byelorussian, Georgian,

North Caucasian, Tatar-Bashkir and Turkestani. Each desk endeavors to speak from the point of view of its own people in support of the common cause.

Radio Liberation is the freest voice speaking directly to the 200,000,000 peoples of the USSR today. It is not bound to defend the policies of any government or sect: its sole concern is to be as responsive as possible to the common interest of those people who want to see liberation achieved. In this spirit, Radio Liberation has from its earliest days adopted *democratic education* as the key to its programming. It must not only assist its listeners in all strata of the population to understand the compelling need for a change: it must go beyond this and help them to build for themselves clear and rather concrete visions of a democratic future and a common understanding of how they can work toward it.

Speaking to the Listener

IN OTHER words, Radio Liberation must help its listeners to develop an understanding of their own *political strength* and how it can be used effectively. In this, RL always tries to avoid giving any impression of telling its listeners what they should think, want or do. Rather, it tries to help them develop their own thinking by illuminating for them the experiences of other peoples in other countries and relating this experience to conditions at home. And from its beginning days, RL has adopted for itself firm restrictions against encouraging acts of premature overt or violent resistance which could only result in fruitless sacrifice. "It will make no promises which it can not itself fulfill, and will never indicate that freedom and democracy can be achieved except through the will and endeavors of the peoples of the USSR themselves."

The programmers at Radio Liberation do not only speak themselves, but they try to broaden the bond between their fellow countrymen and people outside by broadcasting "live" messages from individuals and organizations throughout the free world whose names and voices will be of some significance to the listeners inside. In short, it tries to be for its listeners their broadest and truest window to the world.

The precise effectiveness of such broadcasts must remain an

imponderable, and should remain so. Nothing is more detrimental to a deep and genuine service to people seeking their own, better way than to abuse their trust with sensationalism that may produce flash reactions among them, but in the long run may leave them feeling victimized. Radio Liberation is not in the business of making promises, but only in that of offering food for thought which the listener may accept or reject. The response to the programs seems to justify the course. It comes in the form of mounting Soviet propaganda attacks—which, significantly do not criticize the substance of the programs but



confine themselves to savage abuse of the emigres and the American Committee. A more positive response comes from new emigres, foreign prisoners released from Soviet camps and travelers, who indicate that Radio Liberation is widely and attentively heard in many parts of the USSR. Perhaps the most telling response consists of carefully couched letters of gratitude and approval which Soviet citizens send out—under the guise of private correspondence to friends and relatives abroad—to shifting addresses, given over to Radio Liberation.

What the combined forces of freedom-seeking Soviet citizens, free world foreign policy and the emigration and the American Committee have thus far been able to accomplish toward liberation is hopeful indeed. It infuriates the Communists, who wish to proceed on their course unchecked; it disappoints some anti-Communist firebrands, who see liberation coming only through

violence. But the struggle for liberation through patient, persevering interaction of the free and the would-be free rides a rising tide. May it culminate in the wave of the future.



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