

The Ukrainian Problem in the USSR

I

The American and the other free peoples of the world are alarmed by the scientific achievements and economic strides of the communist government of the USSR, and they not only fail to pay attention to the fundamental domestic weakness of the Soviet government, but, through indifference, bolster Soviet power in an indirect manner.

Among the weaknesses of the USSR are primarily its failure to erase the national differences of the non-Russian peoples through elimination of their national aspirations and creation of a monolithic Soviet society, by its political nature actually a Russian society. This failure is the result of the national resistance of the non-Russians, among whom Ukraine and the Ukrainians occupy an important position.

Within a span of 42 years, the communist regime in the USSR, regardless of methods used -- from militant Bolshevism through the quasi-liberal NEP and total terror to the liberalized course of the so-called thaw -- was unable to solve the nationality problem. It can be proved foremost on the example of Ukraine.

II

Leaving aside facts of the historical past, we nevertheless deem it necessary to reiterate some fundamental truths:

(a) Although the Ukrainian people, along with the Russian, constitute part of the group of Eastern Slavic peoples, and in spite of the fact that the Ukrainians have, over a period of centuries, been subjected to assimilation in the Russian empire, they did not succumb to the pressure and on the whole retained their national identity and aspiration for independence. Proof of this can be found in the findings of the last Soviet census, according to which 36.9 million people have unequivocally designated themselves as Ukrainians. The Ukrainian SSR as the second largest republic of the USSR by its geographical position and natural resources constitutes an important factor of the Soviet power. At the same time, the struggle of the Ukrainian people for national freedom, undermines the unity of the empire and prevents it in further aggressions.

(b) At the time when the Russian Empire was toppling in 1917, the Ukrainians took immediate advantage of this opportunity and established their own state in the shape of the Ukrainian National Republic which they defended against armed attacks by Moscow; the Ukrainian people later offered mass resistance to collectivization; the Ukrainian national communists fought for preservation of the autonomy of the Ukrainian SSR; during World

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War II Ukrainians in the Red Army surrendered to the Germans in droves; in Ukraine there was a wide growth of an underground movement of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army which endured into the mid-fifties. The revolts and strikes of Ukrainian and other political prisoners in Soviet concentration camps in the 1953 to 1956 period alarmed the communists.

The persistent attacks of Moscow against so-called bourgeois nationalism, recent trials and death sentences for subversive activities of the former Ukrainian underground members, are fresh evidence of overt resistance on the part of the Ukrainian people.

It can be stated on the basis of abundant evidence that the present young Ukrainian generation, including young Ukrainian communists, resent Russian controls over Ukraine and represent a significant anti-centralistic Ukrainian force.

III

At the present time the Soviet government is stepping up its endeavors to drive the non-Russian people into acquiescing on "voluntary" participation and development of the empire. This is being done by means of certain formal and actual concessions to the Ukrainians and other non-Russians; simultaneous hints are dropped, addressed to the Ukrainians, that they are "junior" partners in administering the empire. With this in mind, Soviet propaganda keeps reminding of the unsuccessful attempts of the Ukrainian people to gain independence with the help of outside allies; it points out the hopelessness of any Ukrainian armed resistance and unfavorable international conditions, as allegedly proved by the example of the 1956 Hungarian revolution.

Always referring to Lenin's assertion that Ukraine can be an independent nation only in union with Russia, Soviet propaganda singles out the example of unification of all Ukrainian territories, and Ukrainian membership in the UN is utilized to show that the nationality problem has been allegedly solved in the USSR in a satisfying manner.

Broadening the constitutional rights of the Ukrainian SSR to some extent, and carrying out a certain degree of decentralization, including petty concessions in other fields, such as the cultural, attempts are being made to educate and recruit Ukrainian communists for service in the central offices in Moscow and in other republics.

There is a simultaneous campaign to condemn all past alliances of the Ukrainian people with other nations except Russia, emphasizing the strength of Ukrainian-Russian friendship. All Ukrainian national manifestations overflowing the bounds of regulated Ukrainian-Russian friendship are immediately branded as "Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism." Other significant milestones of the treatment of Ukraine by the communist masters are: resettlement of young Ukrainians in remote areas where they are bound to become completely denationalized; consistent condemnation of Ukrainian emigres as enemies of the Ukrainian people, and wide propaganda activities among Ukrainian emigres

abroad, up to and including terroristic activities.

IV

A considerable amount of attention is paid to the United States in the Ukrainian sector of Soviet propaganda. The United States stand accused of a hostile attitude toward the Ukrainian people in the past and present. Special emphasis is placed on the allegation that the United States is sponsoring a dismemberment of Ukraine and its partition among Poland, Czechoslovakia and other neighboring nations; and that the United States can bring Ukraine only slavery and capitalist exploitation. At the same time Soviet propaganda violently reacts to all favorable moves of the USA toward the Ukrainian people and other nationalities, as, e.g., observance of Ukrainian Day by the Congress of the United States, the Captive Nations Week Resolution, and any impartial scientific work about Ukraine.

For the purpose of liquidating and curtailing the activities of Ukrainian emigres, the Soviet regime maintains a number of secret and open agencies abroad, including the special Committee for the Return to the Fatherland in East Berlin; these do not hesitate to resort to acts of violence if this suits the purposes of Soviet propaganda.

The purpose of all these activities is to weaken and eventually to break all sources of resistance of the Ukrainian people. The Soviet rulers, including Khrushchev, are well aware that as long as political aspirations of the non-Russian nations exist, with an unsolved status of the Soviet nationalities problem, there is always a danger from within to Moscow's further expansion and to the security of the empire.

It is therefore a purpose of the policy of coexistence which Khrushchev attempts to foist upon the West not only to morally disarm the free world, but also to infiltrate the Afro-Asian nations. Khrushchev's aim is to make the West abandon all rights of so-called interference in Soviet domestic affairs, so that by its silence, the West would petrify the status of enslavement of the non-Russian nations within the USSR.

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