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Subject ; Speech by Yevsey Liberman in Rome

Source: ~~██████████~~ *class summary/54*

Date: Dec. 21, 1966

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Prof. Yevsey Liberman of ^harkiv University came to Rome Dec. 6, 1966 as part of his tour of Spain and Italy, where he held a number of conferences. In Torino he visited the Fiat plant.

Rome conference

The conference was sponsored by the Martedi letterari (Literary Tuesdays) club -- the same group that held an evening for Yevtushenko. The Eliseo theatre, where it took place, was almost full. Liberman's topic was "Economic Reforms in the USSR".

At the outset, Liberman stated that there is no truth to Western reports about Soviet economy swing towards capitalism. He defended the "old methods" by saying that they were required by the times. After the Second World War, he said, centralization was necessary in order to rebuild the country damaged by the war. Today -- more freedom in planning is required, with a view to profits and the demands of the market.

The idea of the "market", he said, is not something borrowed from capitalism, because it lies at the heart of the Socialist system. Therefore -- Soviet economy is developing along the lines of its laws, and leads to Communism.

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But the USSR wants to co-operate with the capitalist countries now, among them with Italy, which may be proud of such first class enterprise as the Fiat works.

He ended with a Latin proverb, asking his listeners not to be insulted by it: "Caeterum censeo Carthaginem delendam esse." Cathage in this case means the capitalist system.

In his talk Lieberman frequently quoted latest Soviet production statistics and made comparisons with the Western countries, particularly the ~~Soviet Union~~^{United States}. In the last 15 years, he said, USSR has been producing steel at twice the rate of the USA, "and it is not I who says so, but an American businessman, who has visited the Soviet Union."

Reaction to the speech

Those who heard Lieberman were somewhat disappointed with his talk. They expected something a bit more spectacular. No one took any part in the discussion, with the exception of an official of the Italian Republican Party named La Malfa.(?) He said he would not ask any question only ~~only~~ comment on the convergence of the two systems: capitalist and communist. Said La Malfa, today the communist system, which until now centralized all control at the state level ~~today~~ finds it necessary to hand over part of the economy to private initiative, while the capitalist system finds that more government control is advantageous. "What's important ~~in~~^{for} both systems now is what Prof. Lieberman called the 'optimal point' -- the right proportion between the public and the private elements in economy."

Lieberman did not seem to like this statement and kept insisting that the socialist system is superior.

Personal Contact

After the speech Source went to the stage to meet Liberman, who was in company of the Soviet Embassy officials and local communists. Source spoke Ukrainian, and Liberman said he was very pleased to meet a Ukrainian in Italy. He said that he too speaks Ukrainian (although at the beginning of his speech Liberman said his "native tongue is Russian"), and demonstrated that he really does speak Ukrainian well.

Source suggested a private meeting at a later date, but Liberman said his schedule is very tight, and he does not yet know where he will stay on his return trip to Rome. He was to have left for Bari early the next morning. Source said he would call the Soviet Embassy to find out when ~~xxxxxx~~ Liberman would return to Rome and where he would stay.

Source called the Italy-USSR Friendship Society and learned that Liberman planned to have another "secret meeting" with the Rome Communists, but Source was unable to attend it due to ill health.

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Subject: D & P , an informal gathering with Ukr. students on 21 Dec 1966

Source: L *at home in NYC*

Date: 21 Dec 1966

An informal gathering with two visiting Ukrainian poets, Ilya DRACH and Dmytro PAVLACHKO was held at the house of Mr. & Mrs. Malanchuk. Present at the gathering were Ukr. students from the local colleges. Most of the discussion at the house centered around the culture of the Ukraine and that of the United States. Following are some of the points made by either of the two poets.

1) I. DRACH made the statement that the theatre and the cinema of the Ukraine are in a very bad state. This is mainly due to the fact that the directors are of a very poor caliber and do not attract any individuals of value to their studios. He also mentioned that the U.S. theatre and cinema is nothing to brag about. On the other hand, he praised the Japanese cinema as the finest in the world. The poet also commented that it is a sorry fact that a city of the size of New York can only boast of only one Opera.

2) When asked to comment on the difference between his older literary colleagues and the new generation DRACH simply explained that conditions for writing for his older colleagues were not as favorable as to his generation. He stated that his generation of writers is doing everything in its power to prevent previous conditions from reoccurring.

3) Answering a question regarding existentialism DRACH admitted to being familiar with the philosophy of Sartre and his works. He also stated that he was acquainted with the thoughts of Camus and was much attracted to this man although he was not able to read the works of this writer. He also disclosed that Freud is not studied in the Ukraine but anyone interested in the ideas of this man can do research on his own for his works can be found in any library.

4) The poet PAVLACHKO expressed a great interest in the Ukr. youth of America especially with regards to them preserving their identity.

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At this point the general discussion split into two groups. The majority of the students gathered around DUKA. Here the conversation centered mainly on a literary and philosophical level.

The Source remained with PAVLYCHKO and conducted a very varied conversation with him. The following are some points mentioned by the poet.

1) PAVLYCHKO admitted that conditions of the Ukr. countryfolk is much worse than that of his counterparts in countries such as Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia. Much of this is due to the system of collectivization. It is his opinion that collectivization will be done away with or at least liberalized in the future. The state will have to realize the need for private enterprise since it is becoming evident that there are things which it can not profitably produce. The whole system of collectivization has a very bad effect on the individuals working in it as it produces in them a feeling that they are producing goods not for themselves but for other Republics and satellites.

2) Answering a question regarding the possibility of embassies of the USSR, PAVLYCHKO admitted that there has been much talk of this among government officials at home and that there is a strong possibility that a consulate of the USSR may be opened very soon somewhere in Canada - most probably in Toronto. The subject pointed out that this would be a very important step for Ukraine and everything should be done to accomplish this. However, he mentioned that future steps in this direction have to be taken with great care so as not to lose that which has already been done.

3) When asked about the existence of a Ukr. clique in the Kremlin the Subject admitted that he has heard of such a group but was unable to provide specific names. Commenting on PODGORNYI the Subject had much praise. According to him it was PODGORNYI that brought about the celebration in the Ukraine in honor of Shevchenko some years ago. PODGORNYI is the one responsible for the fact that much surplus funds flow into the Ukraine. These are used to repave roads, build new schools or libraries, preserve churches by turning

them into museums, etc. With regards to SHELSKY the subject disclosed that he has been given a free hand with dealing in the Ukraine. Most of his undertakings receive Brezhnev's rubber stamp no questions asked. In answering a question regarding centralized budgeting the subject stated that at present this system is probably better for the Ukraine. At times it permits the Republic to have to its disposition more funds than it normally would have. The subject remarked that this is a way "outfoxing the old brother".

At app 11:30 the gathering broke up. Before thanking the hosts for the evening DRACH recited two poems and PAVLYCHKO was heard to say "we'll meet again in the Ukraine". After departing from the house the two Subjects split up: DRACH going with a young girl* and PAVLYCHKO coming downtown with the source upon hearing of a restaurant serving Ukr. food. Along the way and at the restaurant the Subject kept inquiring about the Ukr. youth, especially with regards to its studies. He expressed the great need for the Ukr. youth to attain high positions not only in government but also industry and in that way attain something for the Ukr. cause. In his opinion the rift in the Ukr. emigre group is senseless since it does nothing to attain our common goal which is free Ukraine. He expressed great displeasure that the Ukr. Church hierarchy is taking sides in this rift and stated that the true authority in the Church today is Cardinal SLIPYJ.

At about 2:00 A.M. the source walked the Subject to the Astor Pl. IRT subway station. Upon parting the Subject expressed the desire to see the source again. The subject mentioned that he would be present at a Ukr. presentation in the F.I.F. auditorium on Sat. Dec. 1/.

* Martha CEHELKY