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BRAIN WARFARE— RUSSIA'S SECRET WEAPON

It Explains the 'Confessions' of Captured Americans

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In the past few years we have become accustomed to hearing much about the battle for men's minds—the war of ideologies—and indeed our Government has been driven by the international tension we call the "cold war" to take positive steps to recognize psychological warfare and to play an active role in it. I wonder, however, whether we clearly perceive the full magnitude of the problem, whether we realize how sinister the battle for men's minds has become in Soviet hands. We might call it, in its new form, "brain warfare."

The target of this warfare is the minds of men both on a collective and on an individual basis. Its aim is to condition the mind so that it no longer reacts on a free-will or rational basis but responds to impulses implanted from outside. If we are to counter this kind of warfare we must understand the techniques the Soviet is adopting to control men's minds.

There is an old adage that "everyone is crazy but me and thee and sometimes I suspect thee." There is more truth than we realize in this saying. The human mind is the most delicate of all instruments. It is so finely adjusted, so susceptible to the impact of outside influences that it is proving a malleable tool in the hands of sinister men. The Soviets are now using brain-perversion techniques as one of their main weapons in prosecuting the cold war. Some of these techniques are so subtle and so abhorrent to our way of life that we have recoiled from facing up to them.

We take for granted a society where human beings are free to think as they please. We read and see and hear such a variety of things that the mind adopts no single pattern. Our society produces all kinds of people thinking and believing all manner of thoughts. Fortunately, in our drive for standardization in other fields we have not consciously tried to standardize the mind. In the Soviet world, however, this is being done.

In the freedom that we enjoy—and freedom of thought is probably the most precious freedom that we do enjoy—it is hard for us to realize that in the great area behind the Iron Curtain a vast experiment is under way to change men's minds, working on them continuously from youth to old age.

In an experiment has never before been undertaken on



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—Harris & Ewing

so vast and so well-organized a scale. In Hitler's Germany and in Fascist Italy some effort was made to make men into a single pattern. In Germany it was called *gleichschaltung*—the leveling process. This effort covered only a few years and may have had little permanent effect on the German mind, though it did have its effect on history in conditioning the Germans in vast numbers to follow Hitler's mad experiments. Japan had its thought control which, while highly efficient in combating sedition and welding the Japanese people into apparent unity behind an intense nationalism, seems also to have had little permanent effect.

The Soviet experiment is very different. It takes two forms: **First**, the attempt at mass indoctrination of hundreds of millions of people so that they respond docilely to the orders of their master. This permits the creation of a monolithic solidarity in the Soviet state which outwardly gives it the appearance of great unity.

Second, the perversion of the minds of selected individuals who are subjected to such treatment that they are deprived of the ability to state their own thoughts. Parrotlike the individuals so conditioned can merely repeat thoughts which have been implanted in their minds by suggestion from outside. In effect, the brain under these circumstances becomes a phonograph playing a disc put on its spindle by an outside genius over which it has no control.

The Chinese, who are seldom at a loss for a word, have given us the term which has come generally to be applied to this treatment of individual minds: "brain washing." Actually, the Chinese subjected to Communist "thought reform" techniques experienced two treatments: a "brain washing" which "cleansed the mind of the old and evil thoughts spawned by imperialists of the West," and a "brain changing" which implanted the "new and glorious thoughts of the Communist Revolution." In our conception of the perversion of individual minds the term "brain washing" seems aptly to describe this phase of brain warfare.

This campaign for the control of men's minds, with its two particular manifestations, has such far-reaching implications

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that it is high time for us to realize what it means and the problems it presents in thwarting our own program for spreading the gospel of freedom.

To create conditions which permit the mass indoctrination of millions of people, certain prerequisites are necessary. In particular it is necessary to close off with an impenetrable barrier the area within which the operation is to take place. This is what Winston Churchill described so graphically in 1946 as the Iron Curtain. It is the physical and spiritual barrier by which the Soviet Union has isolated itself and its satellites from the outside world.

Today this screen, whether of iron or bamboo, stretches some 21,000 miles around the Soviet-dominated Eurasian land mass and effectively cuts off normal intercourse between East and West. The land frontiers in Europe are normally divided into three zones: A forward zone which is the actual border area about a mile deep; an intermediate zone of about 10 miles; and a rear area which may be as much as 150 miles deep. This rear area is cleared of politically unreliable elements of the population and those who come into it must have special passes issued by the Frontier Troop Administration. The intermediate belt of 10 miles is being completely depopulated. The forward area is a no man's land cleared of underbrush and other cover and equipped with physical obstacles such as barbed wire and mines. Many sectors are plowed and kept raked to reveal telltale footprints. These physical barriers are supplemented by patrols of frontier troops equipped with the latest weapons and technical aids including aircraft and radio, and such time-honored auxiliaries as specially trained dogs. Interestingly enough, these border troops are subordinated not to the armed forces but to the internal police. The intensity of border controls naturally varies with the nature of the frontier, the character of the population, and the terrain.

Along the sea frontiers in the Baltic and the Far East, fishing crews are selected from among the most reliable elements of the population, and as a double insurance against defection, members of the various boat crews are rotated so that no one group serves together for any length of time. As a result of some defections to Sweden from the Baltic areas, the fishing fleets in most instances are not allowed out farther than about 60 miles. They are often accompanied by a guard vessel, and are also closely watched by aircraft.

The modern way to get ideas across national frontiers is through radio broadcasting. Even here the Communists are trying to draw the curtain. Powerful jamming equipment has been installed at strategic points in order to produce electronic interference and eliminate the reception of foreign radio messages. These measures, so far, are only partially successful. To reinforce them, the sale of radios capable of picking up foreign broadcasts is being curbed. In their place, public loud-speakers controlled from Moscow are being installed in the public squares of towns and villages in the Soviet Union. In this way mass indoctrination can take the place of individual choice in radio reception.

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All of these facts are well known to us—it is only when we put them together and see their cumulative effect that we can appreciate their full meaning. We have, none of us, ever been subjected to conditions where year by year we have been told one thing, read one thing and allowed to think one thing. It is otherwise in the Soviet Union. There thought is prescribed. No alternative is offered.

In our own daily lives, by contrast, we are given choices. We can make up our minds as between possible alternatives. It is hard for us to conceive how our own minds would operate if, say, for the last 20 years, we had been given only one choice and heard only one message. I can only

assure you of my firm belief that few of us would have withstood such treatment and kept an open mind.

During the past few years, in particular, the people of the Soviet Union and of the satellites have been given one theme song about the Western democracies and especially the United States, namely, that we are the enemy of the Soviet people, that we are plotting their downfall and attempting their encirclement. We are portrayed as the protagonists of atomic and bacteriological warfare, and our Government is said to be dominated by the magnates of Wall Street—the oppressors of the workingman. It is the most vicious campaign of hatred that any country has ever attempted against another. It is a campaign intended to condition the minds of the Russian people so that their leaders could embark on any type of aggressive action against the free world. Unfortunately, it is a campaign that is making steady progress under conditions where no dissenting voice is allowed to interrupt the hate tirade, even though the crescendo may be toned down during “peace offensives.”

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THE second phase of the brain-conditioning program of the Soviet is directed against the individual, case by case. Here they take selected human beings whom they wish to destroy and turn them into humble confessors of crimes they never committed, or make them the mouthpiece for Soviet propaganda. Here new techniques wash the brain clean of the thoughts and mental processes of the past and, possibly through the use of some “lie serum,” create new brain processes and new thoughts which the victim, parrotlike, repeats.

The development of these new techniques has been under way in the Soviet Union for a long time. We first had some inkling of what they were doing during the notorious purge trials of the late 1930s. Then we saw hardened Old Bolsheviks, veterans of many revolutions, who became like docile children in the hands of the Soviet prosecutor, Vishinsky. With alacrity and seeming enthusiasm they confessed to all manner of extraordinary crimes against the Soviet state and hastened to invite the death sentence. How far these confessions were truth and how far they were fiction remains today a mystery; but certainly the men who made these confessions had gone through a mental metamorphosis when they appeared before the state prosecutor.

Maybe the techniques of those days were crude, but they served well the bosses of the Kremlin and demonstrated beyond any doubt that anyone whom the Kremlin rulers decided to destroy and had put through the necessary period of indoctrination would state just about what these Kremlin rulers wanted him to say. And a tougher, more case-hardened group of men probably never appeared before the bar of “justice.”

After the war, Soviet science and ingenuity made rapid strides in the study of mental reactions and in the nefarious art of breaking down the human mind. Possibly the case that most startled the West was that involving the confession of Cardinal Mindszenty, in Hungary. Here a man of proven courage and outstanding intellect was brought to a point of publicly confessing actions which those who knew this outstanding character could not possibly have attributed to him. More recently, in Czechoslovakia, we have had the trial of Slansky, Clementis and their associates who had fallen into disfavor with Moscow. Here, again, we had hardened products of the Communist system. The only trouble with Slansky & Co. was that Moscow wanted someone else to have their jobs so they up and confessed to those crimes and misdemeanors against the Communist state which would assure their removal from the scene.

There is one interesting feature about this type of trial: it is the length of time between arrest and confession. It is rarely less than six months. This is not because “Communist

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justice" cannot move with rapidity when it wants to. In fact, few things can be more rapid. But, in cases where detailed confessions in open court are desired, there must be a considerable period—probably a minimum of around three months—to properly indoctrinate the intended victims. Mere written confessions could be much more quickly extracted by torture.

What does this indoctrination consist of?

We, in the West, are somewhat handicapped in getting all the details. There are few survivors, and we have no human guinea pigs, ourselves, on which to try out these extraordinary techniques. The Soviets have their political prisoners, their slave-camp inmates and finally, and most tragic of all, our own countrymen whom they hold as prisoners.

We now have, however, some evidence on which to base a judgment. A few have escaped from the ordeal of brain washing to tell their story. One of the first was Michael Shipkov, a young Bulgarian officer educated at Robert College in Istanbul. He served for a time with the American Mission in Bulgaria following the end of the war. In 1949, he was arrested by the Bulgarian Communists, subjected to the brain-washing technique, miraculously managed to escape, reported on his experiences to the American authorities and then, in attempting to escape from Bulgaria, was tragically caught and liquidated.

The techniques employed in the case of Shipkov were somewhat crude but give the pattern of the later, more-refined methods. One element stands out in all the known cases. It is endless interrogation by teams of brutal interrogators while the victim is being deprived of sleep. In the earlier days, as in the Shipkov case, some minor tortures were employed. Shipkov was forced to stand in an awkward position without being allowed to move during the interrogation. Only a short time was required to "break" him, as all that was required of him by the Communists was a signed confession. As he looked back upon his experience, here is what Shipkov wrote:

"Out of the jumbled memories, some impressions stand out vivid. One: they are not overinterested in what you tell them. It would appear that the ultimate purpose of this treatment is to break you down completely, and deprive you of any will power or private thought or self-esteem, which they achieve remarkably quickly. And they seem to pursue a classic confession, well rounded off in the phraseology, explaining why you were induced by environment and education to enter the service of the enemies of Communism, how you placed your capacities in their service, what ultimate goal did you pursue—the overthrow of the people's government through foreign intervention. And they appear to place importance on the parallel appearance of repentance and self-condemnation that come up with the breaking down of their prisoner."

During and after the late war the Soviets made extensive efforts to reindoctrinate German and Japanese prisoners of war. Many of these have not even yet been repatriated. Those that have been released have been sent back to their homeland as missionaries for the Communist faith. Recently, there has been a new development in Soviet procedures which takes on, for us, an even more alarming significance. The Communists are now applying the brain-washing techniques to American prisoners in Korea and it is not beyond the range of possibility that considerable numbers of our own boys there might be so indoctrinated as to be induced, temporarily at least, to renounce country and family.

The Communists have recently been showing a film portraying young American aviators who publicly make spurious "confessions" of participation in the use of germ warfare against North Korea. We have a copy of this film and I saw a showing the other day. Here American boys—their identity is beyond doubt—stand up before the members of an

international investigatory group of Communists from Western Europe and the satellites and make open confessions, fake from beginning to end, giving the details of the alleged dropping of bombs with bacteriological ingredients on North Korean targets. They describe their indoctrination in bacteriological warfare, give all the details of their missions, their flight schedules, where they claim to have dropped the germ bombs, and other details. As far as one can judge from the film, these pseudo confessions are voluntary. There is little prompting from the Communist interrogators.

More recently, the Chinese Communist radio broadcast what they claimed were the recorded voices of a colonel and major of the United States Marine Corps, captured last July, giving, in the greatest detail, fictitious information regarding preparations for bacteriological warfare in Korea. Since then these alleged confessions have been introduced by the Communists into the proceedings at the United Nations.

These statements bear the usual hallmarks of Soviet-imposed fabrications—for example, the humiliation and repentance of the individual at having engaged in such activities. Again, as in the case of the Soviet trials, there is a period of some six months between the date of capture and the alleged confession: adequate time to allow for the elaborate planning by the Communists of what the confession should contain, the drafting of the "scenario" as it were, and the—roughly—two or three months needed for the indoctrination of the patient.

THE only factor that prevents the Communists from employing these procedures on a mass scale is the problem of man power for the task and the shortage of trained interrogators. Presumably there are schools in which interrogators are trained in the techniques of brain washing. However, to deal with a hundred victims at a time would require the services of four or five times as many trained interrogators over a protracted period. Each man has a team assigned to him and each case is individually prepared.

I have talked with one man who has gone through the brain washing process, an eminent American missionary in China. He had the unique experience of going through the treatment and then of being released and given his freedom. This is very unusual under Soviet practice.

This man described how he had been subjected for 75 days to the monotony of interrogation, mostly during the night hours, by relays of brutal questioners, deprived of sleep and subjected to the effect of bright lighting during the period of his questioning. As far as he knew, no drugs were used, but of course they might have been used without his knowing it. In this case, no direct physical torture was applied.

After many days of this interrogation his mind was broken down, and he went into court and gave what he now recognizes to be completely false testimony against one of his fellow missionaries, asserting with confidence that this other missionary had a concealed radio with which he was communicating with "the enemy." He gave this testimony with vigor and with what, at the time, was apparent complete confidence in its truth.

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The information on which I have based these remarks is none of it secret; it is all available to any student who wishes to study this form of warfare which is now being practiced against us. It seemed to me useful to gather some of the facts together so that we can be alerted to the danger and are not misled or troubled by these fictitious confessions—whether from Communists victimized by other Communists or by our own people who fall into Communist hands.

(Excerpts from an address by Allen W. Dulles at the national alumni meeting of Princeton University on April 10, 1953, at Hot Springs, Va.)