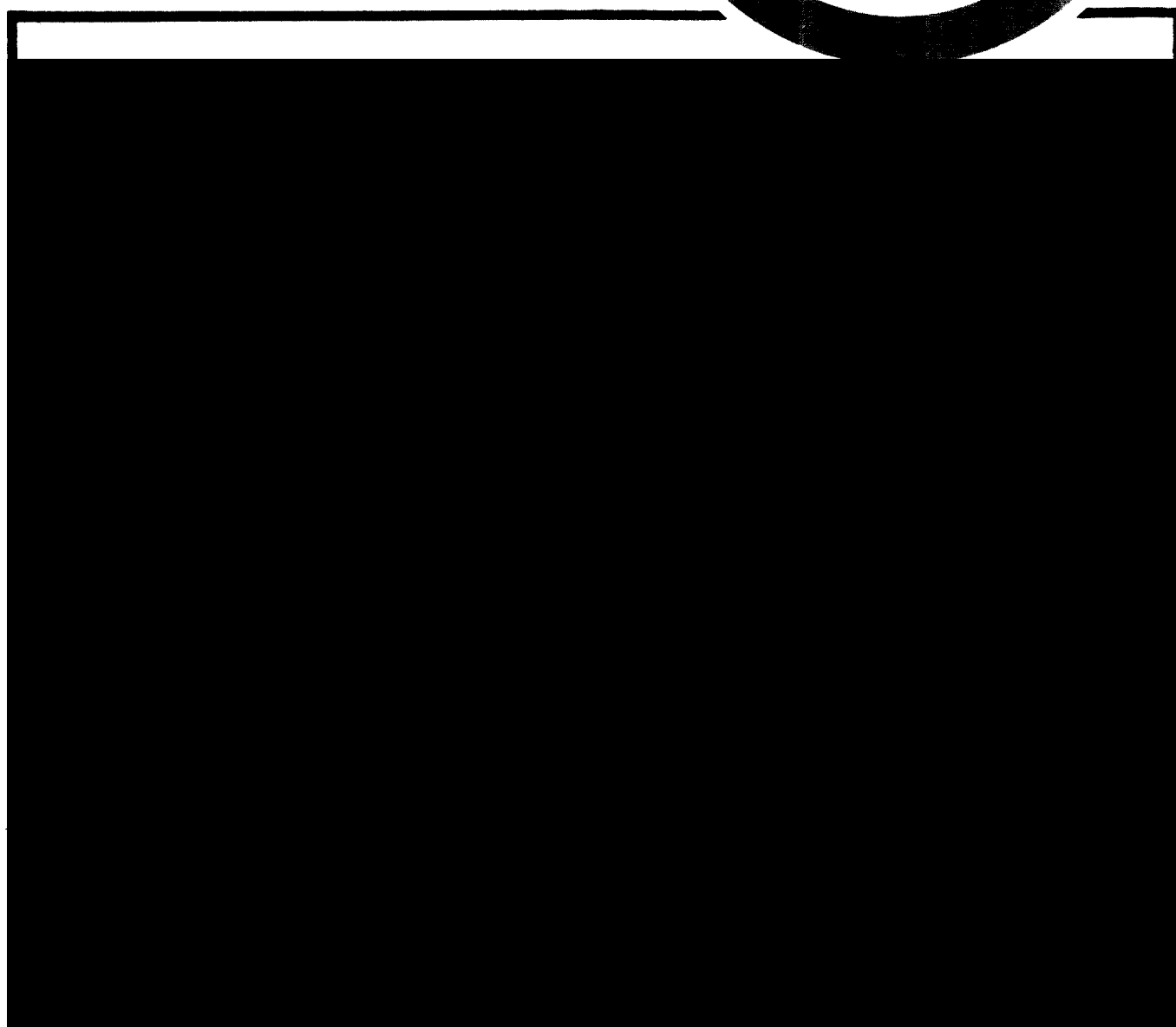
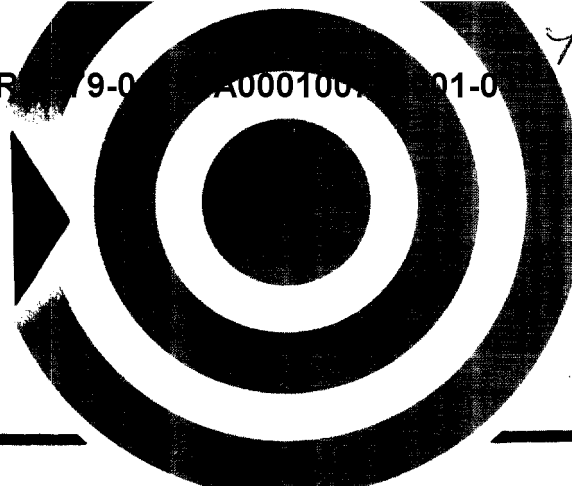


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FEATURES



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Unofficial Russia

The Dissenters & the West

FOR MANY LONG YEARS I almost considered myself to be the only Western scholar who was interested in and believed in the existence of an unofficial Russia. I read official Soviet books, I met official Russians, I listened to lectures given by official Russian scholars, writers, politicians, historians—and all the time I kept believing that behind this official Russia there must exist an unofficial Russia. I even kept believing for many years that the official intonation of the Russian sentence, which I heard on Moscow Radio and on meetings with official Russians, could not be the *real* sentence intonation of the Russian language, a language which, I firmly believed, must exist somewhere. There must be water in this desert, I believed: *In the desert a fountain is springing . . .*

Never for a moment did I believe that the Soviet system had created a new kind of creature, *der Sowjetmensch*, Soviet man, as he was sometimes called by Western scholars, a Soviet man who liked being bullied and silenced, who adored standing in line, marching in demonstrations, taking part in elections with only one candidate, and who did not mind withering away in concentration camps. Nor did I believe that it followed from the existence of the régime that people with any brains at all should believe that one of the most important discoveries in the history of mankind is the discovery that quantity changes into quality, that consciousness is determined by social conditions, and that an important characteristic of matter is its materiality.

There must be people in Russia, I kept believing, who react to the régime and to the statements of the régime exactly in the way I react to them. Whatever Klaus Mehnert and Alexander Werth and all those other experts write, I thought, surely normal human beings must live in that country.

What I especially disliked in the West was the habit of our Sovietologists of taking the declara-

tions of the régime seriously, their belief that one could understand the Soviet Union by trying to understand what the régime was saying. Some analysts go even further and maintain that you can understand the Soviet Union only if you look at it from a Marxist point of view. If that were true, only a National-Socialist would be qualified to study Hitler's Germany, and one would have to be consumptive to be able to make a genuine study of tuberculosis. It is interesting to note that this habit lasts only as long as such a régime remains in power. Nowadays many scholars study the Germany of Hitler, but few of them think that a prior qualification is the mastery of the doctrine of National-Socialism. Nevertheless, when Hitler was in power serious scholars studied Nazi ideology just as assiduously as they studied Soviet ideology—until recently. Before Pasternak, Daniel, Sinyavsky, Solzhenitsyn, Amalrik, Brodsky, Chukovskaya, and Nadezhda Mandelstam were known in the West, students of Russian literature actually *read* the verbatim reports of the Congresses of the Union of Soviet Writers. They seriously believed that by studying them one could learn what was going on in the Russian literary world. In Western books about modern Russian culture, Mandelstam received as many lines as Sholokhov got pages. Why? Because scholars like Struve and Lettenbauer thought that since nothing was said by official Russia about Mandelstam and millions of pages were filled with words by and about Sholokhov, Sholokhov must surely be an important writer.

Those were the times when the belief in the existence of *der Sowjetmensch* was extremely strong, and accordingly, the belief in the existence of an unofficial Russia was extremely small. When Andrey Sinyavsky's essay on socialist realism was first published a well-known Sovietologist (the late Alexander Werth) was absolutely

convinced that this essay could not possibly be the work of a Soviet citizen.

WHAT DO I MEAN by "unofficial Russia"? Let me first explain what I do *not* mean. I do not mean those utterances by Soviet citizens that are different from the official Soviet statements but are nevertheless inspired by the régime. The people who produce these statements constitute perhaps the semi-official Russia. It is this vocal group that Western journalists, writers, scholars, diplomats and tourists meet most often. The more rigid a régime is (and the more idiotic its official statements are) the more deeply impressed a foreigner is when he meets a citizen who does not behave according to the official standards—a man who can possibly be bribed, who is interested in old issues of *Playboy*, who knows how to tell amusing anecdotes about Brezhnev. It is a familiar bunch: the Soviet journalist who mingles with Western journalists in Moscow or Washington, the Soviet composer one is apt to encounter at an Embassy dinner. He wears dark glasses, speaks French, and calls the Austrian Ambassador by his first name—the Yevtushenko-type of Russian traveller abroad.

These unofficial representatives of the régime go about their job in a discernible style. They expediently drop a number of official theses. They will not, in personal contact with a foreigner, start a serious talk about the great wisdom of the Leninist party, although this wisdom is officially considered to be an essential factor in the history of the USSR and indeed in world history. Not only will they shrewdly scrap a whole chunk of official dogma, they will also silently accept a number of critical views about the régime. And then they will disclose one or two sentiments that are favourable to the régime and unfavourable to its opponents. Such a semi-official Russian will say, for instance, that Alexander Solzhenitsyn is, of course, a great writer, and that the government should have permitted the publication of *Cancer Ward*, but he, alas, suffers from a number of vices such as megalomania and even anti-Semitism. It was, of course, morally wrong to invade Czechoslovakia, but weren't the military forces of Western Germany (Franz-Josef Strauss!) on the verge of invading Czechoslovakia? Andrey Sakharov, of course, has every right to express his opinion, but, *entre nous*, isn't what he says terribly naïve? It is wrong, of course, for the régime to persecute *samizdat*, but—let's face it—most of it is just

graphomania and of precious little literary importance. The way the Jews are treated is regrettable, but Western protests against that treatment will only make "the situation worse" (Western translation: "will be counter-productive") and besides, the Jews are the only people in the Soviet Union who can and do emigrate. The dissidents should shun all contact with Western press, radio, and television, or Senator Henry Jackson because those contacts "compromise" them irredeemably in the eyes of the Soviet public. Western scholars and journalists should not take seriously an hysterical old man like General Grigorenko, or "shady characters" like Andrey Amalrik ("probably a KGB agent").

I do not wish to be misunderstood. I do not consider the persons who make these remarks to be ardent, convinced followers of the régime. Most of them dislike it. I do not think that Yevgeni Yevtushenko or Konstantin Simonov, or even Alexei Surkov, are altogether enthusiastic about censorship in their own country. In their way these men detest the régime. They defend the régime the way Nikolai Grech defended the régime of Nicholas I against the indictment of the Marquis de Custine: not because they like it, but for quite other reasons.

EVERYBODY AGREES that much has changed in the Soviet Union since Stalin died. On the other hand, many things have *not* changed. Present-day Russia—in its newspapers, ideology, and institutions—differs amazingly little from the Russia of 1935 or 1955. Is there any industrially developed country in the world that has changed so little in the last forty years? The festivities, slogans, congresses, leading articles, prize-winning novels, public heroes, official speeches resemble those of 1935 or 1955 like peas in a pod. I would be inclined to say, exaggerating only a little, that the Soviet Union of today is the same as the Soviet Union of twenty, thirty, forty years ago—minus the terror and the hysteria. And there is one other difference.

While the official Russia of today resembles nothing so much as the official Russia of the 1930s and '50s, the unofficial Russia has changed considerably. Whereas in the 1950s (or '40s or '30s) everybody seems to have been a true believer in Stalin, in Marxism-Leninism, in Socialism, nowadays believers in the official doctrine are exceedingly hard to find. There may well be a sociological law to the effect that a

dictatorship which is revolutionary, terroristic, and anthropophagic stands a better chance of finding enthusiasts than a dictatorship which is merely a conservative police state. A régime that kills millions in order to attain some state of millennial bliss, a *tausendjähriges Reich*, gains more sympathy, at home and abroad, than a régime that persecutes only persons that really oppose it, and only then to preserve a *status quo*. More Western intellectuals were (or are) enthusiastic about Hitler or Stalin or Mao than about Brezhnev or, say, the Greek colonels. It suggests an interesting question (and I do not know the answer): How long can a revolutionary, terroristic régime go on existing after it loses its revolutionary fervour and its terroristic hysteria? Perhaps for hundreds of years.

BUT MY POINT is the difference between the unofficial Russia of 1935-55 and the unofficial Russia of today. In the '30s, '40s, '50s there were very many true believers. Even the *apparatus* of the régime itself included not a few enthusiasts and loyal defenders. Nowadays not only the *apparatus*, but also the country itself has undergone a profound crisis of belief, a deep loss of faith. A portion of these non-believers belong now to the opposition, or the resistance, or the "dissenters" as we call them in the West.

One thing must remain clear. Every single member of the Soviet intelligentsia is in the pay of the régime, and, accordingly, is employed by the *apparatus* through which the régime maintains itself. Some *intelligent* are quasi-members of the *apparatus*: diplomats, party organisers, party orators, journalists, and the like. Others—like teachers, economists, translators, scholars—serve the régime to a more limited extent. Among all those people the number of those who admire and support the régime is relatively small—smaller, I would dare to suggest, than the number of people in the USA who admire and support Richard Nixon.

But we should not forget that an American who hates Nixon is a species of political animal quite different from a Russian who hates Brezhnev. What an American hating Nixon really feels—compared to what many Soviet citizens feel towards their leaders—is a certain dislike, perhaps an obsessive irritation. One simply cannot compare the two phenomena. Can one even compare the feelings of many Soviet citizens with what many of my Dutch countrymen felt

towards the Nazis in 1940-45? How many people were killed by the Germans in Holland in those years? 300,000? 500,000? An Estonian, a Latvian, a Lithuanian, a Russian laughs at these figures.

Is hatred the right word? No, hatred is too active a word; it has combative connotations of revenge and punishment. But there is something that remains after all the vindictive feelings of rage have died down. It is a feeling, as I sense it, much blacker and deeper than hatred.

DURING THE LAST five or ten years Western "Sovietology" has developed a certain interest in this unofficial Russia. More Mandelstam is read and discussed, and less Sholokhov. People are beginning to realise that if you want to know what is going on in the Soviet Union the underground journal *Politiicheski dnevnik*, printed in the West in 1972, gives more information than *Kommunist* or *Bloknot agitatora*.

Of course, the authors of dissident literature do not *represent* unofficial Russia. Many people in Russia, as elsewhere, remain utterly indifferent towards all political issues. The official statements and announcements of the régime do not appear to touch them; other messages simply do not reach them. Very few are spontaneously interested in *le bien publique*. One should not forget that most people (there, as elsewhere) are only concerned about public affairs because radio, television, and newspapers continuously tell them that they are, or should be, concerned.

If we take the words "unofficial Russia" to mean those Soviet citizens who do take some interest in public affairs, then this unofficial Russia can, like Gaul, be divided into three parts:

1. The opposition, the dissenters, the few thousand people who actually oppose the régime.
2. Their sympathisers, their constituents, their reserves: the thousands who read *samizdat* and sympathise with the opposition, the reservoir from which the opposition replenishes its ranks;
3. Those people who are not in favour of the régime, but are not in favour of the opposition either.

This last group is an interesting group—and I have met many of its representatives. In a democracy this group is relatively small. If you are against the Government, you usually have some sympathy for the Opposition. The fact itself that you are "against the Government" makes you in a sense a member of this Opposition. In a dicta-

torship this is quite different. The best way to explain this difference is perhaps to compare the situation in Russia with that in Holland during the Occupation.

I SPENT FIVE YEARS in Amsterdam under the German occupation, and I spent one year in Moscow under Brezhnev. I was impressed by certain similarities, even if there were, of course, great differences. As a Dutchman, you were not supposed to be in favour of the Nazi régime. As a Soviet citizen, you are officially supposed to be in favour of the régime. But what struck me especially was the attitude of the people towards the régime and towards the resistance movement; and here I found some illuminating parallels.

During the Occupation the Germans did some horrific things in my country. Very few Dutchmen approved of those things, not more than possibly some 8% of the population. The rest of the population of Holland was "anti-German" or, as it was then called, "good." These "good" people were in a rather difficult position. They could either try and fight the Nazis one way or another, thereby risking their lives, or confess that they were frightened of so doing. Now the strange and interesting thing is that very few people will admit to being afraid when moral issues are at stake. It is easy to concede that one would be afraid to make the trip to the moon, or to go to the dentist, or to cross the Atlantic in an open boat, or to take an evening walk in Central Park. But it was very difficult to confess that one was afraid to render assistance to the Dutch Jews who were all—adults and children, healthy and sick, male and female—being killed at the rate of a thousand a week.

There is, however, an escape hatch. The way out consisted in saying (and thinking) that by resisting the Germans one was not *really* helping those Jews, that one was only making things worse, that one was only provoking German reprisals. Weren't many of those so-called resistance people more or less mad or irresponsible? Didn't everybody know somebody who was using the Resistance only as an excuse not to sleep at home? These are what I call the *Murarka-Brien* arguments, a dialectical ploy named after the present correspondent of *The Observer* in

¹ For Alan Brien it seemed important to warn, in the *Sunday Times*, against "the false friends" (in the West) of Solzhenitsyn and Sakharov. One would have thought it more urgent to warn against "the true enemies" of these two Russian resistance fighters.

Moscow and the traveller for the *Sunday Times* in Russia. They summarised and advocated the Russian variant of these arguments very aptly in recent articles in *The Statesman* and *The Times*. If what the Resistance does is "counter-productive", then it is no longer disgraceful to keep aloof from and even shun what the resistance is doing. The "Murarka-Brien¹ arguments" are not even difficult to defend. Most of what any Resistance movement does has only symbolic or, if you will, metaphysical meaning. For every Dutch Jew saved, I suspect that some ten Dutch resistance people were executed; from the hard-nosed practical view of statistics, their fight made no sense at all.

On the one hand, the Resistance people are admired because they express what everybody feels. On the other hand, they are resented because they do what everybody should do but is afraid to do. The more a dissident remains within the bounds of general loyalty, the more he is admired. Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward* seems to be so much more satisfying as a novel written for *Novy Mir* and then not accepted, than as a book published abroad and accompanied by harsh pronouncements by its author about the lamentable state of Soviet cultural affairs. When Andrey Sakharov's first Memorandum was published without his knowledge or consent, it was easy for the average Soviet economist or scientist or historian or journalist to praise him. Sakharov said what they all were thinking, what they almost put into their own memoranda, or tried to speak about, or were asked not to speak about. But as soon as Sakharov began to *fight*, as soon as he began to oppose the régime actively, these same intellectuals had to choose between joining him or finding reasons why they should not join him. And that meant finding reasons why Sakharov was wrong in doing what he did and saying what he said.

HOW DOES this unofficial Russia look at the West? In general one can say: with considerable sympathy. Four items of Western life are very popular in the Soviet Union: that a citizen of a Western capitalist country can freely travel abroad; that such a citizen can, if he has the money, buy anything he wants anywhere and almost at any time (whereas in the Soviet Union there is hardly any place where one can buy something, and hardly anything one wants can be bought). Then there is the fact that in many

countries in the capitalist West you can say and write what you want, and you can choose your own government by helping to vote one or the other political party in or out.

But it is precisely here that the difficulties begin. There is a difference in the appreciation of these things between the unofficial Russian and the liberal Westerner. (I speak here of the liberal Westerner because the unofficial Russian feels that if he ever receives any "help from the West", that help must come from the liberals, from the "effete snobs", and not from the Nixons and Agnews whose sleep is as little disturbed by the plight of the Soviet intellectual as the sleep of Brezhnev and Kosygin is by the plight of the American Negro or the Chilean communist.)

Now this liberal Western intellectual is apt to remark that people who have little money can travel very little; that poor people can buy less than rich people; that the West produces too much; that our production is aimed at profit, whereas it should be employed (as it is in the Soviet Union) for the benefit of mankind; that to say and write what you want is of little help if it does not change society the way you want it to be changed; and what use is choosing your own government when the government the people choose consists of crooks and tax-evaders?

To this the Russian would answer: "Your troubles I'd like to have. . . . Of course the poor can buy less than the rich, and I am poor. Still, I would like to be able to buy for my little money the same amount and the same quality of goods *your* poor can buy for *their* money. I would even settle for half. . . ." What use, the Soviet citizen would answer, is production for the benefit of mankind—if mankind does not benefit from it? If such goods as are produced never reach the average consumer? The Soviet citizen also knows what only a few Western intellectuals appear to remember: that when there is some freedom of the press certain misdemeanours cannot be perpetrated (or not for long) that can be when there is no such freedom. They also know that a democratically chosen government, to be sure, contains a fair percentage of nitwits and scoundrels, but that percentage is much higher in a dictatorship!

OR TAKE ANOTHER SUBJECT on which there is a communication gap between unofficial Russia and the liberal West: Western dictatorships.

Towards the present régime in Greece the average Western intellectual feels aversion and disgust. The Russian intellectual, reading and hearing about this disgust, is apt to ask himself: what are those people so steamed up about? To the Russian intellectual the régime in Greece (the last one or the new one) appears to be a régime of almost unbelievable liberality, comparable to the régime of Tsar Nicholas II. A Greek ex-cabinet minister attacked the Colonels in a legally printed Athens newspaper—in the Soviet Union even a minister *in office* is not supposed to ventilate *any* opinion of his own, let alone criticise anyone except when and if the régime instructs him to do so. And even then he cannot use one single word that the régime has not approved for usage. Thousands of Greeks are working in the Netherlands—how many thousands of Soviet citizens would love to work in the Netherlands! One can buy the *Herald Tribune* in Athens, and the Penguin copies of George Orwell—who can buy either in Moscow? When I want to needle an audience of my students I always answer the question about "the future of Russia" with the expression of my hope that in 10 or 20 or 30 years Russia will be as liberal a country—as Spain is now. This hope is, I am convinced, shared by perhaps millions of Soviet citizens, but in the West only a handful of people know what I am talking about.

Let me offer a few other examples. There are a number of official Soviet statements about Soviet society that are not believed either by the Soviet intelligentsia or by Western intellectuals. That the Soviet Union is the freest country in the world, that there is no censorship, that the Soviet people revere their leaders, that a Communist society will be established by 1980, that the peoples of the Soviet Union love each other with brotherly love, that there is no anti-Semitism in Russia, that Communism is Soviet power plus electrification, that history has rarely known a body of men of greater wisdom and goodwill than the leadership of the CPSU, etc. etc. On these points Western and Soviet intellectuals see eye to eye.

But there are other and more divisive theses. Many people in the West believe that the standard of living and the standard of learning in present-day Russia would be fundamentally lower than they are if Lenin had not seized power in October 1917. Many people in the West believe that Soviet foreign policy is to a considerable extent influenced by Soviet fear of German "revanchism", or

that Russians are more interested in serious literature than Frenchmen or Germans, or that the son of a Russian cleaning-woman has more chance of a university education than the son of an English char. I would not be surprised if most readers of the above believed at least one of these statements to be true. This also causes a disorienting communication gap between West and East.

AND THEN THERE IS that hoary old tangle, "Left" and "Right." They may not always be ideologically clear to the average Westerner, but still we more or less know what we are talking about when we speak about, say, "leftist groups" in Austria or France. In Russia these words are used in rather a different way. A person who is against censorship, who wants more freedom of expression, more right to voice dissent, is in the Soviet Union called "a leftist." Those who favour dictatorial controls are called "the Right." The late Vsevolod Kochetov was considered a Right-wing communist, Roy Medvedev is a leftist. Dubček is taken to be a man of the Left, Mao a man of the extreme Right. It is, therefore, very difficult to explain to a Soviet intellectual that revolutionary students carrying portraits of Chairman Mao are in our part of the world considered to belong to the Left.

One final instance. In the West, Marxism is considered a body of thought of much interest and importance, not only because of its influence on history, but also for its own intellectual sake. Many people in the West hold that Marxism has made substantial contributions to philosophy, economics, history, sociology, and psychology. It would not, I think, be difficult to make an impressive list of well-known Marxists in the US, France, Japan, Poland, England, Germany and Yugoslavia. But could such a list be made of *Russian* Marxists? The truth of the matter, and it is strange to tell, is that in the Soviet Union very few people are even remotely interested in Marxism. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Hemingway remarks of one of the characters that "he was a Christian, something very rare in a Catholic country. . . ." If one of these days General Grigorenko were to die in his psychiatric ward, one could say about him that he was a communist—something very rare in the Soviet Union. Recently in my own country, Holland, one enlightened institution of progressive higher learning placed an announcement in the Dutch press asking for a lecturer in the field of "Building

Economics." The announcement added that non-believers in Marxism need not apply. While in the Western intellectual world the star of Marxism has been (since, say, 1960) constantly rising, in the Soviet Union it has been conspicuously on the decline.

A few months ago a friend of mine visited a Russian intellectual family in Moscow. One member of this family was a 99-year-old grandfather. He was a retired professor, and had known Lenin. While the old man made himself presentable, his children and grandchildren confided to my friend: "In a few moments you will see grandfather. He is a nice man and he likes to talk. There is one thing you should know. He still happens to be a Marxist. Please do not contradict him too much. . . ." In 1900 or 1910, in 1930 or 1950, such a conversation would have been improbable in Moscow.

IT IS HARDLY a great exaggeration to say that more university professors in Paris and Tokyo are convinced Marxists than in all of Russia.

Two years ago a specialist in Soviet philosophy told me the following story. He arrived in the Soviet Union just after a new volume of the *Filosofskaya Entsiklopediya* had been published. His Russian colleagues asked him his opinion on the volume. He made a few critical remarks about the entry on KARL MARX. (Parenthetically I must explain that Soviet scholars have a special difficulty here, since Lenin wrote an article on Marx for a Russian bourgeois encyclopaedia; and with every new Soviet encyclopaedia the same painful problem arises: not to reprint the old Lenin article would mean conceding that the composition of a better article on Marx than Lenin had written is humanly possible. So this old article is reprinted *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*.) My friend made some comments about it and then, to his astonishment, it appeared that none of his colleagues had ever ventured to look at that article—they were simply not interested in the subject of Marx. Now if a philosophical dictionary were to appear in Sydney or even Staten Island, I am sure there would be many readers who would immediately look up the entry on KARL MARX. As a matter of fact I was recently asked to contribute something on MARXISM for a new Dutch encyclopaedia. The editors told me that they planned the entry on MARX and MARXISM to be the bulkiest article of the whole encyclopaedia.

On such matters, clearly, the minds of East

and West (unofficially speaking) do not meet. A participant in the recent Salzburg conference on "cultural exchange" expressed regret that his Western students often returned from a stay in the Soviet Union with a rather strong dislike of the Soviet system. To our "unofficial Russians" this prim note of regret is completely incomprehensible.

THIS BRINGS ME to the effects which the new *détente* and the ambitious programme of cultural exchange have on unofficial Russia. Of course, many (if not all) unofficial Russians are in favour of contact, relaxation, etc., if only because it gives them a remote possibility of reading real books, of travelling abroad, or talking to foreigners. On the other hand, there can be no doubt that unofficial Russia has in recent years felt a certain apprehension, a certain fear. It fears that the Soviet régime will use the Western impulse towards *détente* to influence Western public opinion in favour of the régime—all the more so, because the Russian intellectual has the impression that his naive Western colleagues are rather easily fooled by official propaganda. A Soviet citizen who believes what he is told by the régime is called in Russian an *Inturist*; and there is a memorable description of this type of Westerner in Solzhenitsyn's *First Circle*, where a Mrs R (Eleanor Roosevelt) visits a Moscow prison and is greatly impressed by the humanity of the Soviet prison system.

When Winston Churchill announced to the British public that England was going to conclude an alliance with the Soviet Union in order to fight together against the Nazis, he remarked that if to resist Hitler he had to make a pact with the devil, he would do so. . . . Now, to make a pact with the devil is not difficult. It has been done before. But the difficulty begins when one has an alliance with the devil and still resolves to acknowledge openly that he is indeed the devil—and not the Archangel Gabriel. When George Orwell wrote his *Animal Farm* during precisely such an alliance, he had great difficulties in finding a publisher for it, because British publishers were extremely reluctant to bring out a book about the Soviet Union that totally lacked any "Gabriality"

THE INFLUENCE OF A DICTATORSHIP often exceeds the limits of its actual power. The Russian government never had any power of

copyright over books published in Russia. Yet there was the historic Elizabethan case, with Giles Fletcher's book, *Of the Russe Common Wealth* (1591), being confiscated by Her Majesty's government. When the first Dutch underground newspapers were brought to England during the Second World War, Holland's government-in-exile in London was so timorous that they gave orders to their radio stations, broadcasting from London, not to mention the existence of these newspapers. When in the 1930s a group of German socialists held a conference in Holland, the mayor of the little town where the conference was held had the participants arrested and extradited to Germany where they were subsequently killed. And the German authorities had not even *asked* for their arrest! When Andrei Amalrik wanted to send his paper on the Norsemen and Kievan Russia to a well-known Scandinavian scholar (it was Professor Stender-Petersen) he brought it to the Danish Embassy in Moscow. The Danish Embassy thereupon gave it to the KGB.

A good example of the apprehension I mentioned earlier is the reaction of unofficial Russia to the signing by the Soviet Union of the new Geneva convention. When it became known that the USSR was going to sign this international copyright convention, the reactions in the West were, for the most part, quite favourable. The negative reactions came, at first, not from the West, but from Russia—and, in my own view, those unofficial Russians were right. By signing the Geneva convention a country takes upon itself the obligation to protect *foreign* authors (if their country has signed the convention) in the same way it protects its *own* authors. This means that the Soviet government can make use of the excellent copyright laws that exist in the West, and can use the fact that judges in the West are independent and that law in the West is taken seriously, to exercise Soviet censorship over all publications by Soviet citizens in the West. Not only can the régime try to stop the printing in the West of *samizdat* authors (copyright is, by its very nature, a right to *prohibit*), it can also halt the publication in the West of any work that has been printed in the Soviet Union but displeases the authorities on second thought. Do Western authors get anything substantial in return? They are going to be protected not by Western copyright laws, but by Soviet regulations—and these happen to be something not quite comparable. Judges in the Soviet Union make their decisions on instructions from the régime.

It will be very easy for the régime to make it impossible for Western authors to withhold the publication of their work in the USSR—and as soon as you can not prohibit you are, for all practical purposes, quite helpless. As to payment of royalties the régime can take any decisions it wants to take—it could even issue a law or a *ukaze* saying that for translations no royalties at all need to be paid. The signing by the Soviet Union of this convention tends to rob the *samizdat* authors of the protection that until now the Berne convention gave them in the West; and the officially-published Soviet authors are going to encounter a second Soviet censorship after their work has been published in Russia.

THE REACTIONS OF UNOFFICIAL RUSSIA to the cultural-political attitudes of the West towards

the Soviet régime range all the way from mild amusement to bitter despair. The best—if perhaps cruellest—way to illustrate them is by slightly adapting the last paragraph of Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The unofficial pigs look through the window at the negotiations between their leaders (the official pigs) and their enemies (the farmers). Their leaders, the official pigs, look and behave so much like farmers that the poor creatures on the outside look from pig to man, from man to pig, and from pig to man again; and it is impossible for them to say which is which.

In our own days a similar difficulty has arisen. The poor creatures (that is to say, the unofficial Russians) look through the window at their enemy, the Soviet régime, and at their friend, the West. And sometimes the West behaves in such a way that it becomes difficult for unofficial Russia to say which is which.

NOTES & TOPICS

Moscow & the New Left

From Mao & Marcuse to Marx

By Klaus Mehnert



THE IDEAL SITUATION of a single world-wide coordinated ideology (it would, of course, be Soviet Communism) has so far proved unattainable. In the eyes of the Russian leaders all other ideologies, among which they include the various religions and creeds, are basically enemies, even when this is not admitted or when tactical reasons require friendly relations with some of them (the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, or certain Christian groups, for instance).

But there are differences. Many of the foreign "ideologies" are taken seriously, others rather less so. The Soviets have no fear of the synthetic "bourgeois-liberal" or conservative-type ideologies produced by the West (People's Capitalism, *die formierte Gesellschaft*, *Gaullisme*, and so forth). They have a healthy respect for the West's military strength and they look with envy upon its standard of living and its far greater measure of personal opportunity; ideologically, however,

they see no danger here. Nor are there any fascist ideologies which carry any weight.

The non-Soviet ideologies of the Left are something quite different, no matter whether they are personified by communists like Tito, Mao, and Dubcek, or Western writers like Jean-Paul Sartre or Herbert Marcuse. These the Kremlin has taken to be genuine rivals diverting the Left-wing stream into their own channels to the detriment of the Moscow-orientated Communist parties.

Until Stalin was challenged by Tito, Moscow lived under the illusion that, apart from a few tiny sects and one or two traitors, Communism and Soviet Communism were identical, that the Soviet Union was the "workers' fatherland." Then, however, came the post-War disillusionments. Dr Kurt Schumacher, the German Social-Democratic leader, managed to mobilise the German workers against Moscow; Tito, a communist, asserted himself in face of Stalin; Mao, another communist, asserted himself in face of the Khrushchevs and Brezhnevs of this world. Finally arrived the New Left, Marcuse and his "werewolves."

What an ironic situation! At last, *at last*, a revolutionary mood had emerged in the capitalist countries. Academic youth, the pride and pillar of the Western world, was raging in its universities; bearing red flags they were marching on the White House or even—how encouraging!—on that den of lions known as the Pentagon; they were tearing up and burning their draft-cards; they were going to prison or into exile rather than into barracks. Lenin's dream of the worldwide flowering of communism seemed to be coming true.

But what a disillusionment! None of this was happening at the bidding or to the glory of Moscow nor to the profit of the Communist parties in these Western countries; they were either ignored or used as targets for violent criticism of "totalitarian Soviet communism." More often than not, quotations from Marx or Lenin were used against Stalin and his successors, referring in the same breath to Bakunin, Marx's anarchist enemy and opponent, or—worse still—Rosa Luxemburg and her critical

comments on Lenin's authoritarian methods. Necessarily, therefore, an ambivalent attitude was adopted. On the one hand, Moscow welcomed the revolt of Leftist youth in the West as a symptom of the approaching end of the capitalist system. On the other hand, horror was expressed not only at the anarchistic, but also the anti-Soviet, trend of this revolt and at its refusal to cooperate with or subordinate itself to the Communist party. Moscow was forced to stand by and look on while the youthful rebels

drew totally different conclusions from their analyses of Western society, similar though the analyses were to those of Soviet communism. The emergence of the New Left, therefore, contributed a further degree of fragmentation to an already fragmented communist world.

OF COURSE IT COULD BE SAID that the New Left—with Dr Marcuse's assistance—had at least reached the ante-chamber of Marxism and would one day find the road to true Soviet Marxism. Many Soviet ideologists comforted themselves with this hope when wrestling with this tortuous Left-wing Western intelligentsia. In fact why should not the path to Marx lead via Mao and Marcuse (in other words, via the second and third Ms to the first and only true M)?

Such a development is not outside the bounds of possibility. In fact the New Left—Mao and Marcuse, for instance—base themselves on Marx and Lenin. But the history of the great schisms in the past does not point in this direction. Four-and-a-half centuries have passed since

Wittenberg and the Reformation, and the Protestants have not returned to the Vatican nor have the various sects to which they have given birth looked homeward to Rome. For Brezhnev, however, Mao is more dangerous than Luther ever was to the Pope. Throughout the world of today the Trotskyists are more implacable foes of the Kremlin and more numerous now than the tiny handful of disciples who venerated the "Old Man" until his murder in Mexico.

Among the New Left, crowded with innumerable groups all professing socialist ideals, there will undoubtedly be some who will one day tire of the internal left-wing conflicts and will desert to their own country's Communist party and the haven of Soviet communism, the sole source of bliss. Many of them will become faithful *apparatchiks*; others, accustomed to intellectual freedom, will cause the Party some headaches by their indiscipline. This will not alter the over-all trend—the decline in Kremlin authority. Few Soviet writers now express confidence that in course of time the New Left will become a reliable ally of Moscow; usually they only give vent to a pious hope.

The long hair and tasselled jackets of the New Left, its grotesque, farcical, disorderly, unkempt, Bohemian, hippy-like attitude, in short its drop-out atmosphere, are as abhorrent to Moscow as they are to Washington. The reaction clearly shows that present-day Soviet Communism and its leaders are basically stolid and resistant to change. In their view, therefore, the New Left has not only been moving in the wrong direction but has done so in a highly vulgar fashion which the Soviet leaders—who set no little store by res-

A SMALL GALLERY OF MARXISTS:



pectability—find repellent. (I may add from my own experience that a large proportion, if not the majority, of the Soviet population feel the same.)

MOSCOW'S SITUATION may be summarised as follows: the "Left" (in inverted commas, Moscow-style), i.e. the adherents of the Maos and Marcuses of this world, are good if they turn into the Left (without inverted commas), i.e., adherents of Moscow. "Left-wingers", however, who remain "Left-wingers" and even turn potential Left-wingers into "Left-wingers" are bad—worse indeed than if they were Right-wingers. How nice it would be if, as in the good old days before Mao and Marcuse, there were only loyal goodness on the Left and evil badness on the Right!

In general terms the reaction of Soviet journalism to the New Left can be divided into three phases. Until early 1968 it was ignored; then came a sense of extreme disgust leading to downright hostility to this new unruly element; finally, it was taken really seriously, though the picture was painted in varying colours. It has not been an easy time for the Soviet journalists. They have welcomed the youthful vitality of this criticism of Western society coming from an unexpected quarter; at the same time, however, they are worried about the direction it is taking and the form it has assumed. Moreover, they know that on high, among the Party leaders, this New Left is primarily regarded as a tiresome rival, and also as an infection potentially dangerous to their own population, to be accepted as sympathetic recruits only with considerable reservations.

Nevertheless it seems to me that, in dealing with the New Left, Soviet journalists have shown more interest and diligence and have said more sensible things than they have in the case of Chairman Mao. There are a number of reasons for this. In the first place, quite apart from the language difficulty, China remains a closed world to Russian journalists. Then there is the special risk that any utterance about Peking could draw a devastating reply from the mighty Chinese propaganda machine, and so make the author responsible for subjecting his own country to a journalistic slap-in-the face in the argument now in progress.

More important than all, however, as I know from numerous conversations, Maoism exerts no form of intellectual attraction upon the Moscow ideologists. In fact it is basically repugnant to them—even among a hundred, or a thousand, one would hardly find an exception to this rule. The Soviet ideologists to whom I talked invariably showed pain and surprise at the fact that I even took the trouble to read and study it.

THEIR ATTITUDE to the New Left is quite different. Admittedly it too is a heresy, a potentially dangerous heresy in fact; but it stems from a world they know. It is understandable; it even exerts a certain fascination. I suspect that many a Soviet ideologist finds entirely comprehensible, perhaps even agrees with, many of the ideas emerging from the New Left, e.g. the special role of the

intelligentsia in the present-day era, or the repressive role of the technocratic state. In contrast to Maoism with its extraordinary sayings in the *Little Red Book*, the New Left uses a familiar range of expressions; it has adopted many well-known phrases from the Russians' own ideological tradition. And when it invents new ones, they can be absorbed without difficulty—like foreign scientific terms. So one finds Soviet journalism, without explanation, using words like "cheppening" (happening), "chippi" (hippie), "frustraziya" (frustration), "isteblichment" (establishment), "relevantnost" (relevance), "titsch-in" (teach-in), and even "seksapilny"—yes, you've guessed right—the adjective of "sex appeal."

Yet the reaction was slow and ponderous. Soviet ideologists make very heavy weather of unexpected intellectual developments. This attitude on the part of the Eastern world is the precise opposite of the hectic involvement with which the West reacted. When something happens in the ideological field in the East (Khrushchev removes Stalin's halo—the Cultural Revolution breaks out in China—the Czech writers run amok—Solzhenitsyn publishes a new novel in the West), whole armies of Western intellectuals hurl themselves into the fray. Having no need to re-insure themselves with either Right or Left, they let loose their analyses and prognoses upon the market. Innumerable little streams of thought gush forth, the majority of which gradually find their way into the same river-bed. A general consensus is formed, but there are always some who do not agree; and this leads to further intellectual revision of the various positions. Much is pure speculation since accurate information from the East is lacking. Months or years later, however, it turns out that the view on which the majority of experts ultimately agreed, was not so very far from the truth.

This "hit-and-miss" method, this lively, contradictory, and entirely uninhibited discussion, is something unknown in Communist countries. No Soviet manager would dare to open a brown button factory unless it was provided for in "The Plan." Similarly no Soviet ideologist will pronounce upon a question known to be thorny until the Party has laid down the line or opened the matter for discussion—within limits. This takes time, however.

Soviet scholasticism finds it very difficult to integrate unforeseen developments into its system. For any journalist to try to do this ahead of time, and on his own initiative, would be presumptuous and dangerous. Nevertheless, sometimes more is forthcoming than one would have expected, not in the shape of fresh ideas but at least in so far as information is concerned. This is certainly so in the case of the "New Left."