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The Effects of Communism On Cultural and Psychological Politics In Eastern Europe

THE INCLUSION of Eastern Europe into the realm of Soviet influence and power in 1945 represented a major step in Russia's drive towards the West, an expansionist trend which has prevailed for centuries. As a result, the Soviet Union was able to push its frontiers from the Dnieper all the way to the Elbe and the Bohemian Woods, the Leitha and to the Greek Peninsula. That the Russians make every effort to safeguard and preserve their power in those parts of Europe enclosed by these boundaries is evidenced by the enormous drive with which the Soviet Union and its vassal states in Eastern and Southeastern European countries attempt to transform the cultural, social and economic life of these regions along the Soviet pattern. The changes thus wrought seem to affirm a prophecy made

a century ago by the French historian Henry Martin:¹

From one phase of history to the next the Muscovite rule has become an ever more grievous violation of the principles of our civilization, an ever more deeply eroding disturbance in Europe, a threat to European society, that approaches ever more closely. Beginning with a thorough neglect for the right of nationality, this rule will end with the destruction of the right to own property. The Muscovites are preparing a war of races which will be also a war of a social nature. This war will eventually become what the Russians have made it to begin with. They are now busily engaged in eradicating European race and social order on those parts of European soil they have so far captured.

Martin wrote these words after the Polish uprising in 1863. Influenced by the ethnographic teachings of Duchinski, little did he know then that his prophecy would be all but fulfilled within a century. The effects of Soviet rule in the field of cultural and psychological politics, and the forcible changes in the social structure of Eastern Europe brought about by them, clearly prove that Moscow is determined to exterminate and eradicate Eu-

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¹Henry Martin, *La Russie et l'Europe*, 1866

ropean thought as well as all traditional European elements of the nations living within the Iron Curtain.

If one analyzes the consequences of the political mistakes made by the then Allies at Yalta in 1945, as a result of which the peoples of Eastern and Southeastern Europe were handed over to the Soviet Union, one must point out first of all that, for the first time in history, fixed geographical boundaries were set up in the heart of Europe, dividing the continent into Eastern and Western parts. Before 1945 Eastern Central Europe had constituted a realm of fluid cultural transition without any solid boundary between East and West. Thus the history of the nations now behind the Iron Curtain could develop independently and according to the geopolitical position of the countries.

THE EUROPEAN states which since 1945 have become victims of Soviet imperialism can be divided from a purely geographical point of view into three groups: 1) Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the one-time Eastern Prussia, Poland and the Soviet zone of Germany (German Democratic Republic) belong to the northern realm and are geographically separated from the states in the south by the Riesengebirge Range and by the Carpathian Mountains; 2) Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Roumania, on the other hand, belong to the Danubian Area; 3) Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania belong to the Balkans. It should, however, be noted that the western provinces of the Federal Peoples' Republic of Yugoslavia, viewed from a historical and political point, have belonged to the Danubian Area ever since the Middle Ages.

As a result of their geopolitical position, these people, throughout the course of history, came into contact with a variety of other nations. These contacts, naturally, left their mark on the population of these European areas. In this respect it can be noted that the nations of Eastern and Southeastern Europe belong to three cultural spheres: the Latin-Germanic, the Orthodox-Byzantine and, partly, the Islamic. Of course a clear dividing line between these spheres could never be drawn since, wherever they meet, historical development has created transitional areas in which the influence of two or more cultures makes itself felt. This applies particularly to the Eastern Danubian Area and to those parts

of Poland and Hungary which after 1945 were occupied by the Soviet Union, and eventually became part and parcel of its realm.

Generally speaking, however, one might say that people in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Eastern Prussia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Croatia, and Slovenia belong to the Latin-German cultural sphere. The development of the national character of these nations in the course of time has been vitally influenced by the Catholic and later, partially also, by the Protestant Churches. The people of Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Roumania, as well as some parts of Poland annexed by the Russians after 1945, on the other hand, belong to the Orthodox-Byzantine cultural sphere. In Albania, certain parts of Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria one finds a powerful Islamic cultural impulse, which, following the liberation of these people after centuries of Osmanic rule, did not disappear together with the rulers, but rather seemed to linger on.

Finally, it should be mentioned that, from a racial point of view also, the nations beyond the Iron Curtain are vastly different from one another. In this area there are nations belonging to the Germanic, Slavic, Romanic, Finno-Ugrian and Turkish races—nations some of which do not tend to mix well with their neighbors.

The multi-national zones of Northeastern Europe and of the Central Danubian Area, in the course of their histories, were subjected to alternating western and eastern cultural influences. The nations living in these areas have mostly welcomed western influence from the very beginning, and many of them quite voluntarily adopted the Latin-Germanic culture. By contrast, they resisted as forcefully as possible the influences from the East. Although, during the 18th century, the Muscovite Czarist Empire occupied the Baltic countries and a large part of Poland, the Balts as well as the Poles fiercely resisted being "Russified" and took a firm stand against the Orthodoxy.

A similar position was taken by the Magyars during their entire history, whenever their cultural heritage was threatened by influences from the East. They staunchly resisted all attacks coming from the East and defended their Occidental-Christian culture often to the verge of self-destruction. For ex-

ample, this happened in the 13th century when the hordes of Genghis Khan were threatening Europe. They also fought the expansion of the Osmanic Empire for 150 years and finally destroyed its offensive capacity. Consequently, they always have considered themselves to be defenders of the Christian West—a statement to be taken not only in a military and political, but also in a cultural sense.

THE NATIONS of Eastern Europe have shown a variety of different responses to the Soviet attempts to "Bolshevize" them. Those in the Eastern Danubian Area and in the Balkans, belonging to the Orthodox-Byzantine cultural sphere, have offered comparatively the least resistance. The reason for this phenomenon is to be found in the fact that the Roumanians, Serbs, Macedonians, Bulgarians, Bosnians, and Albanians had spent 400 (and in some instances nearly 500) years under the foreign rule and domination of the Turks. This fact needs to be emphasized especially since it represents an important parallel to Russia's own historical and social development. It cannot be denied that the sequence of events and their effect in these countries has many components in common with what happened in Russia. The foreign Osmanic rule, for example, had a marked effect on the social structure of the Southeastern European countries. For centuries all important positions of leadership had been filled by Turks or foreign converts to Islam. The development of a bourgeoisie, as it is understood in Western and Central Europe, began in these states only after they were freed from Osmanic domination in the past century. Consequently, this development could not lead to the formation of a tradition-bound class capable of offering effective resistance to foreign ideologies. Even after their liberation from the rule of the Osmanic Empire, a comparatively thin stratum of professional politicians and intellectuals governed a practically underprivileged and even partially illiterate peasantry. Thus it is small wonder that in these countries ideas of a social-revolutionary nature always fell on fertile ground.

This state of affairs was even aggravated by the fact that in the states discussed above, up to the Communist take-over, the Orthodox Church always played the role of a state church. Thus the church always bowed to

whoever held the power in the state without offering effective resistance. In view of this fact it is not surprising that after 1945 the Orthodox Church was not a potent force for fighting the "Bolshevization" of these countries. Thus the Soviets and their *viziers* in the countries of Southeastern Europe were much more successful in indoctrinating those in all walks of life than they were in the Central Danubian Area and in the regions north of the Carpathian Mountains. The Soviets often tried the guise of being the direct extension and successors of the Russian aid in the freeing of the nations of Southeastern Europe from the Turks. Of course, they also styled themselves as representatives of social progress and of the fight against feudal rule and the haute bourgeoisie, partly even using the Russian Church, with its dominating position within the realm of Orthodoxy. With strategies of this kind the Communist Party in these Southeastern European countries gained valuable pivotal points for the promotion of structural changes in the field of culture, social order and economic life. It turned out that in the sphere of the Orthodox churches these changes could be effected much more easily than in those nations behind the Iron Curtain which belong to the Latin-Germanic cultural sphere. In addition, when the Communists seized power in the Southeastern European states, they could already command the service of well-trained "cadres," which were able, by skillful propaganda, to use the nationalistic forces among the people of this area in attaining political power.

In this area under consideration, such nationalistic trends first found more forceful expression in everyday politics with the Yugoslav Communists. This trend finally led to Marshall Tito openly opposing the Soviet Union and to Belgrade's breach with the COMINFORM in 1948. The development in Albania was similar. Since 1960, the Communist Party of this country has been among Moscow's fiercest enemies and has pursued an emphatically national cultural policy, although it has its ideological roots in orthodox, dogmatic Communism. Since 1962, nationalism has also increasingly come to the fore with the (Latin) Roumanians. Today, their line in the realm of cultural and economic policy is an independent one, often in direct opposition to that of the Soviet Union. Alongside a nationalism that has



The Hungarian Revolution of 1848

become racially conscious, especially in Roumania, dogmatic Communism still plays a decisive role in shaping cultural life. Of all the countries in the Orthodox-Byzantine sphere of culture, only Bulgaria has not adopted the "National Communism" of her neighbors.

Even more sinister, however, is the war the Communist overlords wage on religion. For a while, the Catholic Church was bearing the brunt of this violent campaign. There is no doubt that we are faced here with carefully planned and concerted action with the ultimate aim of destroying all churches and abolishing religion.

IN THE Baltic states not a single sphere of national life is spared the dominating and constraining influence of the Russian occupation authorities and their tools, the Communist parties of the respective countries. The Soviet campaign against the cultural heritage of the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians is conducted under the well-known slogan that culture must be "national in form, Socialist in content." The true meaning of this slogan, however, is that the language of the nation concerned is to become a tool for more effectively interpreting and spreading Communist ideology. The intended erosion and attrition of the cultures of these nations are made more effective by blocking all free and essential cultural exchange with the West.

A similarly brutal campaign was conducted against the feeling of national identity of the

Baltic nations; the history and tradition of the three Baltic nations were falsified and degraded, and each attempt at asserting some degree of national independence is still being prosecuted as a crime. Tragic as all this may seem, conditions of this kind are neither new nor unusual phenomena under the Communist order. They are the policy the Soviet state has been ruthlessly pursuing for almost half a century in all the countries it has conquered.

In 1965 Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were forced to celebrate the 25th anniversary of their enslavement and of the forceful destruction of their national liberty and political independence as their "Day of Liberation." This grim mockery of truth and of the idea of freedom serves as just another example of the extent of the oppression of these nations. At the same time, instances of this kind also clearly show that the "Liberalizing of Communism" hoped for in the West often merely consists of greater skill and flexibility in the use of coercive methods.

THE SITUATION in the Western Danubian Area and in the countries north of the Carpathian Mountains was also quite different from Southeastern Europe. In these countries, more than in the rest of Europe, the intelligentsia for the past century has shaped the face of the nations and has become, together with the Church, the guardian of the national heritage. In these areas lived a healthy peasantry willing to keep the

concept of national identity alive. In spite of suffering great losses and making great sacrifices, these social strata emerged from World War II unbroken in spirit. Only that comparatively small number of intellectuals who, before the War, had belonged to the left wing of the workers' parties, or who had sympathized with these groups, placed themselves at the new Communist regime's disposal. The farmers and landowners, from the very beginning, solidly rejected the new system. Thus, the Communists in rural areas were able to muster limited support only among that "village proletariat" which had always hoped to improve its lot by the expropriation of others.

The events of the year 1956 in Poland and Hungary show that not only the non-Communist intellectuals, but also a few Communist intellectuals had not been broken by the terror of the Stalinist era. This became evident when they jointly demanded freedom for their creative work in the fields of science, art and journalism and—for a certain time—were even successful in exercising it.

For more than a century, writers and artists have had a tremendous and widespread influence on the minds of the people in Poland, Hungary and, partially, also in Slovakia. The will for identification and independence of the nation finds condensed expression in the work of its artists and writers. The new rulers were quick to realize the immense importance of the intellectuals for the total atti-

tude of the nation and, consequently, tried to enlist their support. The works they hoped for, along the lines of "Socialist Realism" or the "constructive work" of the "Socialist present," were not forthcoming. Of course the pressure the régime could bring to bear on this social stratum could be infinitely more powerful than what the rulers could use against the scientists.

It is characteristic of the mentality of the writers in these countries that even the most massive threat to their very existence could not make them change sides ideologically. Despair, alcoholism, and total apathy spread among them, but many writers and artists preferred the flight into silence to becoming stooges for the régime they despised. The few who represent "Socialist Realism" are practically without any public acclaim or prestige, at least in the countries under Communist rule.

The general stagnation of the creative arts that resulted from the official cultural policy of the Communist governments has been one of the main topics even at the official meetings and conventions of writers and creative artists in these countries. This has frequently led to heated arguments with some high-placed officials in the party hierarchy, who were accused of being uninformed and incompetent in cultural matters.

This struggle of the intellectuals has been going on for years. In Hungary, the régime has had to agree to certain compromises in



The Hungarian Uprising of 1956. Head of Statue of Stalin toppled in downtown Budapest.

order to bring the intellectually creative minority, chiefly the writers, out of its passive resistance. A similar battle is being waged in the Slovak Writers' Guild. Today, the Slovak writers are the strongest and most relentless spokesmen for the Slovak national idea. They are in the *avant garde* of every reform movement in Czechoslovakia and fight the Prague centralists tooth and nail.

In Poland the smothering of free intellectual creativity early in 1964 led to an unusual and unprecedented step: Thirty-four noted scientists, writers, and journalists documented the freedom-loving spirit of the Polish elite by addressing a letter of protest to Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz. In this letter they denounced the government's threat to spiritual and intellectual freedom and demanded the safeguarding of the civil liberties guaranteed under the constitution. The most remarkable feature of this action was the fact that some die-hard Communists were among the prestigious signers of this protest.

Also the 15th Congress of Polish Writers, held in early December 1965, gave strong evidence for the fact that even twenty years of Communist rule have not been able to destroy the striving for independence of thought and creativity in the intellectuals of Poland. The sharp refusal and denouncing of the cultural policy of the Gomulka regime was ample proof that the intellectuals' resistance against the régime also splits the party itself.

Hungarians are showing the same strong resistance against Communism. Their reasons are not only in the western culture and traditions of the nation, but also in their origin. As already mentioned, the Magyars belong to the Finno-Ugrian race, and are living surrounded by Slavs in the Danubian Valley. During the last centuries Slavic expansion has threatened them in their national existence. After World War I they lost not only great parts of their historical territory but also millions of the Magyar population to the benefit of the 1918-created Slavic countries—Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. For the Hungarians, therefore, Communism means not only a strange ideology or culture but also an instrument of Slavic imperialism threatening the existence of the nation: Much more than the other Eastern Europeans, the Hungarians chafe under Russian rule. The psychological motives of the 1956 revolt are found of course in this attitude.

As far as the Czechs are concerned, the Communist system introduced by the Russians has resulted in some conflict of mind and soul. For a long time the Czechs had been the Central European people with strongest Russian sympathies. They had been the true standard-bearers of Pan Slavism. Consequently, in 1945 they welcomed Russian hegemony in Eastern Europe and, in many respects, even prepared the way for its domination. Even toward the end of the past century, as well as between the two World Wars, Czech politics and policy had never been completely without certain protective leanings toward Russia. In this connection one only has to remember how Pan Slavism, conceived by the Slovak poet Jan Kolar and originally characterized by romanticism under the Czechs Palacký and Rieger, quickly turned into political Pan Slavism. Kramar, their successor, had been pronouncedly pro-Russian, and only changed his attitude after 1917. When the Bolsheviks seized power in Russia, his basically conservative mind could no longer harbor any great love for a country that gave rise to totalitarianism.

In this century many Czech statesmen and politicians promoted a Franco-Russian alliance, hoping for certain advantages for their own country, perhaps even dreaming of playing the leading role in the Danubian Area. Already in 1920, during the Russian-Polish War, the Prague government turned a deaf ear to the pleas for help uttered by its Western Slavic neighbor nation, then under the mortal threat of the onslaught of the Red Army. During the 1930's Prague became ever more closely allied with the Soviet Union, a development justly observed by the neighboring nations with certain fears for the future of Central Europe. After the outbreak of the German-Soviet War, in 1941, the head of the Czechoslovak exile government, Eduard Beneš, who up to then had been exiled in London, moved into Moscow's orbit in the hope that, after victory over Hitler's Germany, the "Big Slavic Brother" would give him, Beneš, a leading role in Central Europe. Soon he and his people paid an exorbitant price for this mistake.

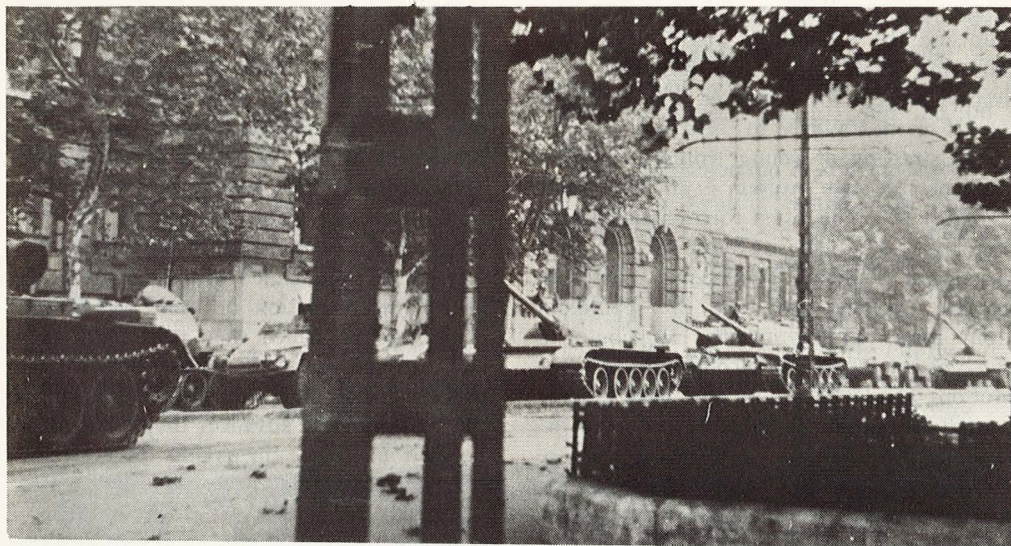
The Czechs experienced in their own country how the Communist system they had imported from the Soviet Union wrecked their economy and quickly lowered their comparatively high standard of living. Soon they also had to realize that they were threatened

by an alien culture which was in crass contrast to their traditional western orientation. The disappointment and dissatisfaction with this turn of events has been increasingly evident in Czechoslovakia. The Czechs today openly admit that Panslavism was based on erroneous and romantic notions and has ultimately led to the destruction of the nation and its traditions.

FROM THIS brief historical survey we can see that the Communization of Eastern Europe had completely different results and caused different effects, depending on the nation concerned. One thing the Moscow-directed Communists in all these countries had in common was their determination to destroy the traditional cultures of the na-

head of state, Bierut, in a book intended for the mass-indoctrination of the *Agitprop* cadres of the Polish Communist Party provided the guiding lines for the new cultural policy: "The friendship and cooperation with the Soviet Union are and shall remain the cornerstone for the building of our new national culture."

Thus, as part of the Sovietizing of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, every conceivable effort was made at first to change the outward image of these nations. Soviet stars appeared everywhere. Traditional coats-of-arms and state emblems were replaced by new ones; medals, orders, decorations, and, in many instances even the dress of people, were made similar to the Soviet patterns. On state holidays and festivals the



Russian tanks on the prowl in Budapest, 1956.

tions of Eastern and Southeastern Europe, to undermine completely and revolutionize their social order. On the site of the moral and social wreckage, the new system built on Marxist-Leninist foundations was to be erected, and under it a new type of man was to be educated. Consequently the Communists at first waged war on traditions and "bourgeois morality." The roots of these two, however, ran deep into the religious life of the people in these countries. In addition to the social revolution, the Communists also announced an encompassing cultural revolution, never missing a chance to point to the Soviet Union as the master plan and beacon of all that is enlightened and progressive. The late Polish party leader and

Soviet flag was flown beside the colors of the country itself. After the respective national anthem, the Soviet Union's anthem was played. Soviet holidays were observed as if they were the ones of the country in question. On festive occasions one could see banners and streamers with slogans in all streets and public squares, as in the Soviet Union. Usually, there also were giant-sized colored pictures of Soviet political leaders, side by side with the similarly oversized likenesses of the local Communist party heads. Since 1956, after the Hungarian uprising, the adoption of Soviet habits has changed in many aspects. Since that time, the Communist cult has increasingly used forms that

emphasize the national element more strongly.

The everyday life of the people changed with the advent of Communism, mainly in the sphere of the family. The new economic order of the Communist regimes today forces women in most Eastern European countries to earn a living, since the income of most men is not sufficient for maintaining their families on an adequate level of consumption. The women who participate in the productive process often perform extremely hard work and fill jobs which in pre-Communist days only men held.

Mothers have little time for the raising and education of their children. Consequently, most children are placed in state-operated kindergartens and day nurseries where, at a tender age, they come into contact with the state and the Communist party. This way, state and party shape and influence to a decisive degree the character, thoughts and morals of the children in their care.

The drafting of young workers for government and state projects is another threat to family life. This often forces them to earn their living at a place far removed from their permanent residence. Their being billeted in barracks, military style and the separation from their families greatly contribute to much of the increase in alcoholism and prostitution. The latter two by now have become formidable problems in most countries behind the Iron Curtain. Also in cases where families have not been physically separated, staggered work schedules often disrupt normal family life. All this leads to the erosion of married life and to an ever-increasing divorce rate.

Thus, social changes have far-reaching effects on the life of the population at large and on their attitudes towards the state. Today, the general proletarianizing of everyday life in Eastern Europe is reflected in the uniform gray mass which one encounters in most "peoples' democracies." To the visitor from the West this mass seems to be completely amorphous. Its conventional structuring into class-strata has been succeeded by division into professional groups. The origin of all kinds of groups and organizations in the communist countries today must be looked for in some kind of government initiative or in the expression of the will of the state. Many phenomena one now encounters behind the Iron Curtain can be understood as

unconscious negative reactions to the ideological influence of the Communist party—as a protest, so to speak, against an environment totally shaped and stereotyped by ideology. Outward signs of this protest include an increase in thefts and embezzlements (mostly of state property), ideological indifference, a basic attitude of distrust against one's surroundings in most individuals, nihilism, heightened recklessness in competitive occupational situations, immense corruption, abuses of the power of office, a rising rate of alcoholism (which to many offers an escape from oppressing reality), and, lastly, growing juvenile delinquency.

On the other hand, the gigantic industrialization in the less developed Southeastern European areas provided the basic situation for the experiencing of the "belief in progress." In this "creed" individual man often identifies himself with the overruling aims and intentions of the state because he hopes that from their realization will come an improvement of the conditions of his own individual life and his present dreary existence. In the Balkans, whose population has been accustomed to oppression throughout its history, we find today men who are justly proud of the reconstruction of their war-ravaged countries, for which they paid with sweat and extreme sacrifices. These men are also proud of their new industrialization and of the technological advances they have made. In their insistence on having these achievements recognized and praised one can often detect traces of a certain inferiority complex these people seem to have with respect to the highly advanced countries of the West. This attitude sometimes results in resentments that find their expression in manifestations of absurdly exaggerated patriotism.

"Re-education" along Marxist lines of the intellectuals they found in the Eastern European countries after the War seemed to hold little promise for the Communists. Consequently, the Kremlin's agents did their level best to raise and educate a new "people's intelligentsia" as quickly as possible. The Communists concentrated chiefly on gaining control over the minds and hearts of the young people. The First Secretary of the Communist Party and President of Czechoslovakia, Antonin Novotny, at a conference of Czechoslovak educators in 1955, stated in this context that the Communist party had the task and great responsibility not only to

mold the economic system but also to reshape the individual. Young people must be made to grow up devoted fighters for the new social order and culture.

THUS TRAINING and educating youth, and, further, raising a crop of specialists for science, the economy and administration has become the central problem for the states under a "people's democracy." Soviet organizational patterns were adopted largely in order to deal with the problems of youth and education. The schools were to give young people the necessary vocational or professional training as well as grounding them in Marxist-Leninist thought. This is why the educational system in the Eastern European states was repeatedly reformed and synchronized with that in the Soviet Union. Everywhere youth organizations under the strictest control of the party and state were set up. These organizations were intended to solve the question of cadre recruitment for the future and to insure a supply of adequately trained young party leaders. The Eastern European youth organizations were devised as mass organizations patterned after the Soviet KOMSOMOL. That way, the young people are under direct control of the Communist party, regardless of what their status under the statutes or charter of the organization is. In these organizations the young people not only are being educated in

"Socialist" principles but they also receive intensive military basic training. The idea of all this is—as Novotny said—never to allow the youth in the "peoples' democracies" to be corrupted by the abominations of ideology and moral decadence with which the Capitalist world attempts to poison them."

The most important changes, and at the same time the most far-reaching assimilation of the Soviet model, occurred in higher education (college and university level) and in the structure of scientific research work. The number of colleges was substantially increased and the individual institutes became highly specialized. To quote only a few examples: in 1960 there were over 20 colleges in Bulgaria. The total enrollment was about 30,000. Before 1939 Bulgaria had practically only one university, the one in Sofia. Within the same amount of time the number of colleges in Roumania increased from 33 to 112, with enrollment rising from 26,500 to 81,200.

The reorganization of the educational system and of scientific research according to the Soviet matrix was to provide a means of transferring with scientific exactitude Soviet principles and the Soviet way of life to the everyday existence of people in the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. It is true that, especially recently, much criticism has been voiced against these "reforms." At the Hungarian National Assembly, in No-



**Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski opens the celebration this year
of the Christian Millennium in Poland.**

vember, 1965, this problem was at the center of discussions. The authorities responsible for the reforms had to admit that introducing the Soviet educational system in Hungary has been a mistake and a failure and that it has led to a decline in the general educational level of students of every grade.

The Soviets have gone as far as trying to tie the national languages of the Eastern Europeans closer to Russian, simply by initiating a language "reform." In the course of this "reform" the attempt has been made to introduce a multitude of typical Soviet-Russian terms and expressions even into the non-Slavic tongues of Eastern Europe.

Certainly the energy with which the Communists push the training and indoctrination of youth is impressive. But it so happens that the young people in the Communist-ruled countries are no longer interested in ideological questions. They join Communist youth organizations more out of opportunism than because of ideological conviction. They simply want to assure themselves, by becoming members, of the chance to continue their studies and of other material advantages. An atheistic education has created in many of the young men and women of Eastern Europe a spiritual vacuum which Communist ideology apparently has not been able to fill. Mainly, the youth in these countries are lacking in ideals and in the will to make sacrifices for their sake. They are not ready and willing to place their lives at the disposal of the party and even, if necessary, to suffer hardships for it. All considered, the attraction which Communist youth organizations may once have held for the young people in the countries of South-eastern and Eastern Europe is declining. Parallel, or rather reciprocally, with this decline, there has been a marked rise in juvenile delinquency and a decline in work morale, both of which have posed serious problems for the régimes in Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary.

THE AVERSION to Communism and its rigors which seems to be shared by young people in all these countries is often expressed by the exaggerated imitation of "Western" styles, customs and fashions, even extending to fads in clothing and the latest dances. Today, student demands far exceed all that could legitimately be wished for. Students demand a higher

standard of living, not only for themselves, but for the nation as a whole, and they clamor for an end to economic exploitation by the Soviet Union and for loosening the ties of dependence that chain them to Moscow. This development reached its peak with the popular Hungarian uprising in 1956, which was carried out and supported mainly by young people. Although the Communist states since have relaxed conditions in many walks of life they have been unable to win youth ideologically over to the cause of the party. This is true especially in Poland, East Germany (the German Democratic Republic), Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the western regions of Yugoslavia. To a lesser degree it also applies to Roumania, Bulgaria and Albania, but even in the latter countries the young Communist-educated intellectuals tend more toward technocratic than toward ideological attitudes. Of course, their efforts remain within the limitations of the Communist economic system, at least to the extent that hardly anyone advocates the restitution of a private-ownership (capitalist) economy. Young people, however, do ask for spiritual and intellectual freedom, for freedom of creativity, as well as for far-reaching economic reforms within the confines of the system.

The Communist leadership seems to be quite helpless *vis à vis* this development, all the more since the forced technological and vocational education, the shunting of the family as an educational factor, the destruction of religion, and, lastly, the ever-changing and often contradictory ideological doctrines (which are given such an important place in the educational curricula) are constantly widening the spiritual vacuum in the minds of young people. Neither regular school life nor the activities of Communist youth organizations can fill this void.

The youth's struggle for independence in the Eastern European countries is sharply at odds with the demands of the state's power structure. Already the resistance against an authority one no longer is willing to recognize is expanding into the realm of politics. To the men in power this is a source of growing concern. Nothing characterizes this situation as well as a statement the current Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Kallai made in 1964 in a lecture at the Party Academy:

Youth is our main problem. The lack of ideological interest young people show in the cares and worries of our state and our party is appalling. If things continue in this vein, who is to maintain and further develop the advances we have made in the course of Socialist progress?

How profoundly justified Kallai's concern is, is proved by a report recently published in the Prague periodical *The Student*. Reporters for this paper had questioned students in the halls and classrooms of the universities, inquiring as to their personal relation to Lenin and his teachings. Most of the students polled roundly declined to reply. Those who did reply, however, provided striking proof of how few of today's young people in Eastern Europe—in spite of painstaking and intensive indoctrination—are enthralled with Leninism.

One co-ed replied: "Our generation is hardly in a position to answer this question. If one hears a lot—most of it good—about Lenin, there probably is some truth in it, but of course no one can really be sure." A student in his thirteenth semester made the following reply: "I do not like to talk about people I don't know." A fourth-semester student quipped: "This is a problem I cannot discuss on the spur of the moment." A philosophy student in her first semester: "Lenin was a very smart man. It is a pity things did not turn out as he imagined." An obviously artistically motivated student in his twelfth semester praised Lenin for not meddling in matters of fine arts "because he thought he did not know anything about them." An economics student in his third semester even dared to make the "heretical" statement that he particularly liked Lenin because, in contrast to other great leaders of the party, Lenin had had a sense of humor "without which the study and reading of Marxist philosophy is virtually impossible." A student of electrical engineering and self-styled expert on Lenin's teachings: "... However, I fear that he has often been misunderstood by his adherents. If he knew what is being done to some of his thoughts and ideas today he surely would protest strongly." It would be hard to muster more telling comments about the new system and its spiritual father.

IN THIS context it should also be mentioned here that the Communists have

attempted further to Sovietize intellectual life in the countries under their domination by tampering with—and eventually altering—the entire concept of history. Immediately after the Communist take-over, the history of these countries had to be "re-written." In so doing, two principles were carefully observed. First, in dealing with all historical events, social conditions were emphasized according to the dialectical methods of Marxism-Leninism. History became a constant class struggle. Second, Russia's role in the historical development of the nations of Eastern and Southeastern Europe was stressed and the Russians were hailed, from time immemorial, as the liberators of these nations from foreign oppression and from internal and social injustices. This may be partially true with the Bulgarians and Roumanians; in the case of the Baltic countries, Poland and Hungary, it is a flagrant falsification. Of course this sort of historiography encountered trouble when it explained Russia's role in the repeated occupation of Poland or in the suppression of the 1849 Hungarian revolution.

Lastly it must be mentioned that the Communists, immediately after their rise to power, had begun to wage a relentless war on religion. Since religious beliefs as well as the churches, as centers of religious life, throughout history had been a decisive cultural factor in Eastern Europe, strong pressure was brought to bear against them as soon as the Communists had seized power.

This applies especially to the Catholic Church. Catholicism is the most encompassing non-Communist ideological force—mainly in Hungary, Slovakia and Poland—which, even under present conditions of hardship, numbers millions of practicing adherents. Ever since the Middle Ages the Catholic Church in these countries has been safeguarding and maintaining the national values. In the self-image of the people, even today, in spite of persecution and suppression, the Church is identified with the nation. Cardinal Mindszenty, the Primate of the Catholic Church of Hungary, has for many years symbolized national resistance for the entire Hungarian nation. In Poland, Cardinal Wyszynski has a greater influence on the people's spiritual life than does the Communist party. Although the Catholic Church has been enslaved in many respects and is, as in Hungary, quite conscious of its actual helplessness, Catholics see their task in trying

to make the best of their existence in the state, even though this state has a Communist constitution. At the same time they will never be silenced in their plea for democratic freedoms, for the safeguarding of the existence of their Church and for the right to worship freely. Partially has the resistance of the Catholic Church been broken.

The somewhat weaker Protestant churches, however, with the exception of that in the Soviet Zone of Germany, were brought to heel under complete party control soon after the Communist take-over. Today, the church leadership, confirmed in office by the authorities, is more intent in pleasing the holders of power in the state than in following the spirit of Christ.

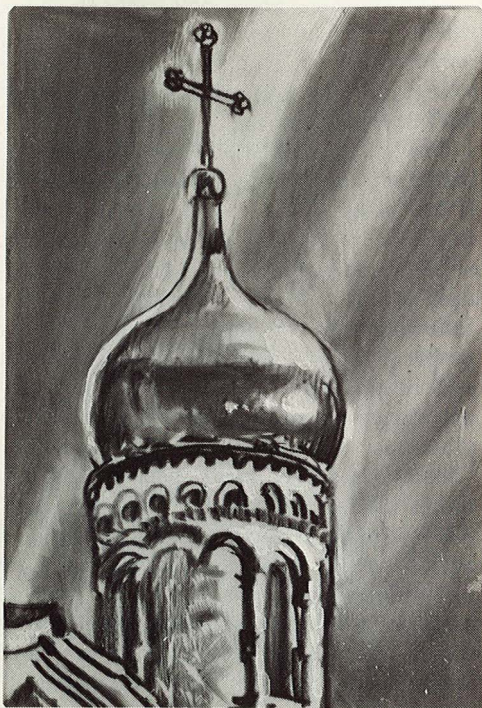
As far as the Orthodox is concerned, the Patriarchate in Moscow immediately after the end of the war made efforts to gain increased influence on the Orthodox churches in the countries of Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Only in Bulgaria, however, have these efforts actually resulted in the far-reaching organizational change of an Orthodox church outside the Soviet Union. In Article 3 of the Church Law of 1949 it is, among other things, explicitly stated that the Orthodox Church is "inseparably linked with the history of the Bulgarian people and, as a People's Church (National Church) is in its form, substance and spirit a people's democratic church." Today, Orthodox Christians in Bulgaria are completely Moscow-oriented and thus Russia, in that country, was able to strengthen its influence also through the policy of the Orthodox Church. In Roumania and Yugoslavia, however, the Orthodox churches are more noticeably national and independent. From this position, even as servants of state power, they have been able to derive some advantages.

The Muslim part of the population of Bulgaria, Albania and Yugoslavia initially was subjected to much Communist persecution. Recently, however, the men in power have become somewhat more tolerant of their Muslim citizens' right to worship.

IN SUMMARY, it can be stated that the Communization of Eastern Europe has produced vastly different reactions amid the people living there. Consequently, it has influenced the development of cultural life in these countries to varying degrees.

At the same time it must be stressed that the Communists in all the Eastern European countries under their domination have failed in their utopian aim of totally re-creating Man in the Marxist-Leninist image. This "New Man" is the aim of the Bolshevik Revolution. It is expected of this "New Man" that he should cooperate actively and effectively in the building of the new society. His life is to have no meaning outside the context of the philosophical premises of Communism. One exists solely for the sake of the other.

The fundamental relativism of Communist ethics is barely able to hide behind this cor-



relation, since all its criteria refer only to society made absolute, *viz.* the state. Thus its leading image neither reaches the depths of the soul nor the heights of metaphysics, without which it hardly will be able to gain that degree of attraction which characterizes the founders and proclaimers of new world religions or the major structures of philosophical thought. This leading image leaves essential human powers and faculties out of the picture and is thus severely limited in its effectiveness.

The irrepressible discussion of Communist ethics, of the educational ideal, of the protagonists in literature, etc., all over Eastern Europe accentuates the flimsiness of the Bol-

shevist image—its real structural defect. The narrowness of the Communist human ideal, the stringent limitation of thought demanded by the ideology, as well as the distortion of emotional life by the party, have led to certain counterproductive effects, especially among intellectuals. The stratum with a higher educational level is the source of certain impulses which, especially in recent times, have led to the relaxation of certain rules, as well as to attempts to reach beyond the boundaries of what is permitted or tolerated by the state. The revolt of writers in most of the Eastern European states, their

return to the original values of individual sentiment and emotion as well as the primitive drive of the individual with all its positive and negative effects on the goals of the state, and many other related phenomena point in this direction. This, at the same time, reveals the decisive defeat the system has suffered—a defeat which is no longer directly related to economic success or crises, to foreign policy, or to the strategy of domestic politics. The cause of this defeat, rather, must be looked for in the human psyche which, in the long run, will not tolerate shackles.

Lebanon's Cedars Scent Not the Plain

Lebanon's cedars scent not the plain,
And the Negeb's hills no longer green;
But the generosity that furnished a cave
Would do as much again.

Men travel faster to their deaths:
Less chance to sense their souls,
And the minions that would have slew
What Isaiah has foreseen
Only different Herods know.

The tribes awaited a golden orb
And a temple to house the world,
But when Love in parables taught,
They set Barabbas free.

The world that nailed Thee to a tree
Would do as much again
And, in the nailing,
Proclaim all the general good.

Kurt Christopher Bauer

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