

RUSSIA AND EUROPE.

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Stalingrad was the turning point in the war - perhaps in European History. Peter the Great opened a window to the West, and from then on the movement was West to East. It was a European penetration of Russia by persons and ideas. Even much administration passed into German hands. Toöleben was a Russian general; the Baltic States were German. Yet of the total population of Russia only 1% was German.

1870-80 came the first reaction against Peter's line. The growth of the Slavophil party. German unity was also growing, at the same time as the Russification of the border countries. The Franco-Russian alliance. Yet German influence persisted in Russia (though Lenin was not a German agent!). Marxism is a German movement, and it was Germany who helped in building up the Red Army and the Five Year Plans. The results of all this exchange were destroyed by Hitler's military adventure against Russia.

Russian Ambivalence to Europe - a feature of Russian policy. The revolution was a continuation of westernisation, and yet at the same time was an intensification of the Russian spirit. The ambivalence remains. Stalin has often been compared to Peter the Great. But the truth is rather that he ~~was~~ prepared for the Russian penetration of Europe. So now the movement is East to West.

Population - 1800 - Slavs = $\frac{1}{4}$ of Europe.

1939 - Slavs = $\frac{1}{2}$ of Europe.

By 2000 - Slavs = $\frac{2}{3}$ of Europe.

"Though I don't believe in demographic determination" these figures are significant.

What Form will Russian Penetration Take?

Military?

Peaceful? (as was the German of Russia).

(i) There are no signs of a Russian desire to over-run Europe. No "Cossacks on the Rhine".

- (ii) The Russian interest is mainly security. They want a defensive belt of friendly states.
- (iii) The method will be empirical, e.g. Baltic States cannot exist as independent states. So they must become "autonomous" republics. Finland, au contraire, can exist as an independent state. The defensive belt is only partly coincident with the Slav world. Rumania and Finland are not Slav, but that makes no difference to Russian policy towards them.
- (iv) The need for friendly governments of first importance. Russia is still imbued with fears - understandably - e.g. Poland. Frontiers and size are of much less importance than friendliness. The Russians, for this reason, will not tolerate landowning interests. Therefore the Curzon Line is important. We should note the fact. Russia must suspect ulterior motives if support is given in this country to cliques.

Zones of Influence. The phrase is out of date and wicked, it appears. But what are we to call them? We and the Americans have ours. Russia has hers. We have no serious clash in Europe with Russia (vide Balkans). "But if we pursue the practice of keeping principles in the shop window when they are inconvenient to our friends, and under the counter when they are inconvenient to ourselves, we shall be misunderstood".

Peaceful Penetration. There are signs that this will be the Russian method. The end of the Comintern has not made the Communist Parties disappear; they are as keen as ever. But much more important than they are, are Russian prestige, ideas, etc. "Ex oriente lux" is a strong and an influential idea.

Importance, therefore, of Competition of Ideas. We must vitalise our own political faith. We must not praise Franco, or George of Greece, or we shall be misunderstood. We must be clear, and we are not. The same is true in the economic field. The question for us is:- "Can we solve the problems facing us as they are solving those facing them".

Russian Ideas. What are the ideas which Russia, consciously or unconsciously, will disseminate? (Is Russia European? Is Britain?).

The European Tradition is made up of two main streams:-

Antiquity
Christianity

Russia has both - through different channels.
But in Western Europe there are factors which never affected Russia. They are:-

The Renaissance
The Reformation

There is, therefore, though it is not homogeneous, a Western tradition.

The Gap - How Bridge It - from Two Sides? First be clear about the main points of difference. They are:-

- (i) Individualism (bad word!). This goes back, in Western Europe, to the Renaissance and the Reformation. The individual is expected to get on by being competitive and efficient. Even in Western Europe this is wearing thin; in Russia it never had any hold. Stakhanovism is not "individualist"; it is concerned with rivalries between groups. (And industrial psychologists are now exploring it).

The same holds true on both sides in the field of politics.

- (ii) The Rights of Man. The Western World holds to the rights of man contract between individuals, respecting individual rights. This idea has no root in Russia. Rather the Russian World holds to the rights of society. The two ideas are not mutually exclusive, but we have reached them from opposite corners.

- (iii) Individual Opinion. The West has held to the idea of the right of individual judgment. On this is based our idea of compromise. "The other fellow, after all, may be right". It is the basis of our democracy.

But in the Russian World they find this doctrine strange. To have people thinking all over the place is

dangerous. (We do not think so, for we do not take thought seriously, as Bert Russell says. But the Russians are extreme nihilists or extreme dogmatists, being ruthless thinkers. For them one reaches a point where disbelief is sin. Even we come near to this point in war time. For us the greatest of all difficulties is the relation between the time and the good".

- (iv) Economics. It is here that the greatest difficulty will arise. Russia does not accept the divorce between politics and economics.
- (v) Property. The Russians do not accept Western ideas of industrial and other large property. (This does not apply to the possession of toothbrushes, or books, or other intimate personal property). Land in Russia was never regarded as private property. The attitude of the serf to his lord was "We are yours, but the land is ours". Nineteenth Century Russia had joint stock, etc. on a very limited scale, and the revolution easily swept it away. (An intelligent prisoner-of-war was asked: "Do you fear Russian or Western occupation more?". He answered: "Russian occupation will be much harder and more ruthless for the few; the mass will at least have food and work. Where the British and American occupy there will be no cruelty, but we shall all starve". The answer to this problem would seem to be "let us have British politics and Russian economics".

Sum up.

Europe is in a tragic historical plight. There is no real focus of power now within Europe. She is amorphous, weak, and open to indriving influences. There is a vacuum. The answer is not, finally, tanks, but ideas. A challenge is here presented to us. "I wish I were more confident of our answer".
