



# STALINISM RATIONALIZED

*By* ALAN SET

A WESTERNER crossing the Iron Curtain this summer to revisit one of the satellite countries or Russia would not believe his ears when listening to the palaver of common people in their workshops, canteens or in the crowded parks on Sundays. The trademark of the Communist-ruled populations used to be their avoidance of saying anything they thought or felt. Today this former reticence gives place to an almost exuberant scolding of the very same Red sahibs and prima donnas whose names would not even have been mentioned before for fear of bringing about some unpredictable unpleasantness.

The boss of the shop committee, a Party member of course, is being

publicly abused for having given a job to his son-in-law; the chief of the workers' council is accused of living by himself in a three-room apartment; the head of the Commission for National Insurance, which is a government agency, is called ugly names for discrimination in allocating vacation quotas; and so on.

The same goes on in the press which warmly invites its readers to be even more outspoken in denouncing every case of "opportunistic shortsightedness" of the leaders and every example of "the particularly dangerous habit of some local Party units to select cadres on the basis of personal relationship rather than their political and technical qualifications."

Even in Stalin's time criticism was used in Russia and in the satellite countries as an instrument to spur productivity. It was, however, limited to censuring unimportant people, unless *Pravda* or *Izvestia* gave the green light by stigmatizing a manifestly doomed Communist bigwig. Today in a Prague café one can occasionally hear reproaches directed against the almighty Party's Central Committee without this bringing about any discernible catastrophe.

The right to criticize is one of the main elements of freedom. Does all this mean that the so very infectious virus of freedom has begun to contaminate even the Red Empire? Let's beware of joining the Communist agents and fellow travelers in jumping to irrelevant conclusions.

THE SECURITY of Soviet Russia and her satellites lies today in the most qualified hands of Colonel-General Ivan Serov. He is certainly doing his best to avoid making the slightest mistake, for he remembers well that with the exception of one Ignatiev, dismissed for being an imbecile, all his predecessors in this very responsible position — Beria, Abakumov, Merkulov, Yezhov and Yagoda — were one by one denounced as traitors and shot.

Also he well knows that the internal security of the Soviet states depends solely upon the total subjugation of the masses to the will of a half dozen or so top Communist

high-priests. Therefore if Serov does not frown upon a fellow in a café in Prague who makes fun of a Czechoslovak Red dignitary, this proves that he does not consider him harmful to the Soviet states' security. In fact, he probably uses him as a means of astutely clipping the Czechoslovak's wings, thus keeping him from becoming too important.

Serov from the MGB shares with his friend Kruglov from the MVD the power over the most colossal and efficient machinery of coercion and espionage ever devised in history. Created immediately after the revolution by Dzerzhinsky, it was brought to its final perfection by Beria, who expanded it to about 1,500,000 men serving in the regular Security Army or as various secret service men at home and abroad. The purge after Beria's execution diminished neither the organization's strength nor its effectiveness. Serov simply applied the proven method used by Beria to massacre Yezhov's followers — one which Yezhov had designed to massacre the friends of Yagoda.

The only difference is that, while in Stalin's time Beria was responsible to one man whose whole confidence he possessed, Serov at present is responsible to a small group of men who put their whole confidence in no one. Also Serov has to comply with the revised views of this Communist Supreme Chapter which, while applying the old Stalinism, tries at the same time to purify it

from the absurdities with which the dictator vitiated his own system during the last somber years of his life.

The essence of Stalinism was the use of unrestricted opportunism applied in fostering the Communist world revolution by building up Soviet Russia into the most perfect aggressive weapon possible. Had Stalin believed that freedom helps to turn people into conquerors, he would have become the greatest Russian liberal. However, he thought that the supreme aims of his unholy order would best be served by gripping his subjects in an iron fist and thus eliminating the weakness inherent in the heterogeneity of individual ideas and views.

His mistake was that by the time he had finally shaped his USSR into a quasi-perfect monolithic state he was too old to realize his own achievement and madly went on with his purges and his aggressive foreign policy, aimed at keeping his own people in a state of continuous tension. Political opportunism — the essence of Stalinism — got shelved, and for this criminal deviation from his own theory, Stalin had to be punished. Nobody behind the Iron Curtain doubts that he was put to death by his own Stalinists who immediately thereafter took it upon themselves to adjust Soviet policy according to the prescription of pure Stalinism.

What is now being heard in the satellite countries and in Russia it-

self is not therefore proof that the old system is crumbling, but rather, a clear indication that the old system is being carried on with new emphasis on its most important feature — unrestricted opportunism.

Serov's coercion machine is today more than adequate to assure the security of the Soviet states. The innumerable prisons and hard-labor camps in Russia and the satellite countries are still full to capacity. From the Elbe to the Pacific, everyone knows that any revolutionary venture will be crushed almost the moment it is conceived. A reasonable amount of public criticism can therefore be considered by Khrushchev and Co. as more helpful than damaging. It helps to correct the endless abuses stemming from the overgrowth of bureaucracy — and it allows them to check the bureaucrats themselves, who were beginning to throw too much weight into the scale.

**T**ODAY'S USSR — in spite of its perennial economic and agricultural dilemmas — is no longer an experiment which can fail as the result of one false step. The war against Hitler's Germany, followed by the liquidation of Stalin and Beria, proved that the system works. Hundreds of millions of human beings, seeing no other choice, have accepted being treated like cattle. There is no use, therefore, wasting energy driving to despair those who have ceased to be dangerous. Stalin-

ism is merely being rationalized in accordance with changing circumstances.

This rationalized Stalinism also governs Russia's present foreign policy. While flirting with Moscow, the West keeps on asking what is the true reason for the sudden change in Russian diplomacy. We are so persistent in our wondering that we have overlooked completely a very convincing and authoritative answer to this puzzling question.

During a press conference in San Francisco, Mr. Molotov was asked by an American journalist to explain the great change in Soviet foreign policy. He answered candidly that there was no change at all. "If Mr. Reston were to study carefully the course of events," Molotov said textually, "he will see that the foreign policy measures recently undertaken by the Soviet Union represent a consistent development of the foreign policy of the consolidation of peace which has been previously pursued by the Soviet Union."

As a true disciple of Marx, Lenin and Stalin, by "consolidation of peace" Mr. Molotov could only mean, of course, the consolidation of the *Red peace* consistently pursued by the Soviet Union with the sole aim of one day forcing it upon the whole world.

**T**HE USSR is not yet ready to enforce this Red peace. She has at hand the A- and H-bomb, a perfectly trained army of some 3,700,-

000 men and an air force of at least 10,000 combat planes. Her new strato-jets are leaving the assembly-lines in increasing numbers and a tremendous effort is being made to perfect the intercontinental guided missile. All this would perhaps be sufficient to risk a major war. But Stalinism does not permit Russia to take that sort of risk.

Therefore — with her military expenditures increased this year by 12 percent and all the measures taken to solve in one year her most acute agricultural difficulties — Russia, instead of talking of war, concentrates on inducing the West to dismantle its military establishment. Disarmament became the main topic of all diplomatic tittle-tattle, and, even if it won't convince anyone to turn impotent willingly, most certainly it will make it extremely difficult for the Western governments to obtain additional military assets to match the Soviet progress.

The word reaches us from behind the Iron Curtain that as long as the aging Stalin lived there was hope that his blunders would help restore order in the world. Today fear is growing among the enslaved populations that the Western blunders — astutely exploited by the present Soviet masters — will leave them no other way but loyal, though desperate, collaboration with the tyrants who may win.

Peace — the dreaded Red peace — begins to glow menacingly over the Eastern horizon.



# Classrooms Aweigh!



THE STORY OF NEW YORK'S FLOATING SCHOOLHOUSE

By CHARLES OXTON

MOTORISTS speeding up New York's East River Drive pass the Liberty ship, S.S. *John W. Brown*, where the endless bustle of activity aboard — the lowering of booms, the riding of scaffolds along the ship's sides, the checking and re-checking of deck machinery — apparently comes to nothing.

For eight years now the *John W. Brown* has remained tied up at the foot of East 25th Street, despite the fact that steam is always kept at pressure and not just one but *five* marine captains are assigned to duty aboard the 10,000-ton craft.

Technically, it belongs to the U.S. Maritime Commission, "on loan" to the New York City Board of Education. Actually, it is an annex of the Maritime Department of the Metropolitan Vocational High School in lower Manhattan and represents the fulfillment of the dream of Dr. Frank J. Keller, the school's principal.



It was Keller who conceived the idea of providing training for youngsters who showed an aptitude for the sea but who, in the normal course of events, would have little or no opportunity to exploit their abilities.

The project has the enthusiastic endorsement of many maritime and naval lead-

ers all over the United States. They envision the school as the forerunner of many more such schools on both coasts and the Gulf of Mexico, where idle merchant ships of our mothball fleet can be put to use, not only to reduce the overcrowding in our schools and classrooms, but to provide a reserve of trained manpower which can be tapped in the event of another war.

The eight-year record of the *John W. Brown* more than justifies such a hope.

Upwards of 2,000 boys, aged 14 to 18, have been given a thorough grounding in the three basic depart-