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## EAST & WEST

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# All “Orwellian Pigs”?

By Alexander Dallin

KAREL VAN HET REVE is such a good man, and the sentiments he expresses in his article on “Unofficial Russia” [February] are so decent, that I hesitate to quarrel with them. But the issues he raises are too important and the thrust of his comments is, in my conviction, too misleading to let them stand unchallenged.

I have never doubted that an “Unofficial Russia” existed and exists. In fact, I am sure that it is more extensive than we know, and that it includes many of the morally purest, most principled and admirable citizens of that great land—along with some scoundrels, bigots and informers. But even then, it comprises only a tiny fraction of the Soviet population.

For better or for worse, virtually all of the Soviet Union’s intellectuals, engineers, academics, and scientists—regardless of their political orientation—are by definition a part of the Soviet system. Soviet university students, tomorrow’s élite, grow up as part of it. There can be no institutional or associational autonomy. Whether we like it or not, what van het Reve calls “semi-official Russia” is a far more sizeable and influential category—and no more homogeneous in outlook—than “Unofficial Russia.” He inveighs against the foolishness of Western “liberals” who misperceive Soviet reality (he is probably right on some, but not all, of his charges), but his own image of Soviet society is no less a caricature, which, I am persuaded, does a serious disservice to “them” and to “us” alike.

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It is, after all, only Stalinism in reverse to say that he who is not with the dissenters is against them; that “objectively” semi-official Russia is serving the interests of the Kremlin establishment; and that the Westerners who deal with it turn into some variant of “Orwellian pigs.” I confess that I find highly objectionable the effort to impute to this vast group the collective charge of deviously doing the work of Soviet *agitprop* when its members utter partial truths or voice mild reservations in dealing with foreigners at home or abroad. By the very nature of the system some of the deeply-held reservations about Soviet policy and behaviour are bound to remain bottled up within individuals or among small groups of close friends. To name names of some in this “semi-official Russia” who appear to harbour genuine and sincere misgivings about their régime would be to jeopardise them. Suffice it then to point to those who, since the ouster of Solzhenitsyn, have spoken out against his ouster and the latest Party line on Stalin, forced labour, and dissent; or to refer to the well-authenticated reports of the resistance of prominent academicians to the treatment, last year, of Andrei Sakharov by the Soviet Neanderthals. One may safely assume that for every such instance we hear of there are hundreds more we ignore.

We must go one step further. Even among those who never publicly speak out, even in the very upper reaches of Soviet officialdom, there are people who (with varying degrees of subtlety, dedication, and success) press divergent views, offer alternative estimates, slowly seek to educate their colleagues, comrades, and students, in ways which may seem devious, foolish, or unprincipled, but which in the long run may be crucial to an *aggiornamento* of the Soviet régime. To write off all these influences, to dismiss their efforts because they are often invisible, to dump these men and women on to the ash-can of history because they “compromise” or “collaborate” with the régime, is to adopt a standard which is (I hope van het Reve will forgive me) both counter-productive and morally unwarranted. Soviet citizens are indeed human, and adaptation is bound to be far more widespread than heroism.

HERE I FIND van het Reve’s analogy with the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands sadly inappropriate. The overwhelming majority of Soviet citizens have never known any other system than the one they are living under. With the possible exception of some ethnic minorities, such as in the Baltic States, there is no sense of living under foreign occupation. Even among those who dislike some features of the system—and there are no doubt many of these—there is a general

sense of pride in their country and its achievements, in its international might and influence, in its scientific and technological development, its economic and cultural accomplishments, such as they are. Shortages, shortcomings, shortfalls? Of course. Hypocrisy, doublethink, deception, and abuse? To be sure (and Soviet citizens know it better than we do). But all this gives us no grounds for accusing a Soviet scientist devoted to his research in a laboratory in Novosibirsk of acting as a "collaborator" (in fact, the Party press accuse him of "bourgeois apoliticism"), or of considering a peasant boy who makes it into a polytechnical institute a stooge of the régime, let alone a traitor trafficking with the enemy.

Such a judgment, and the ancillary one regarding Western "pigs", must in fact be most welcome to those segments of Soviet bureaucracy and police who favour a return to a sharp polarisation between friends and foes, and who fear the effects of ambiguity that result from the increased contact between Soviet citizens and the outside world.

For Soviet officialdom it has been an axiom that interaction with the world abroad must not be permitted to breed "ideological coexistence" or to promote any weakening of the political fibre. Hence Moscow sees itself committed to opposing all Western "bridge-building" that it considers politically intrusive. It is bound to reject all attempts at free communication as violative of Soviet sovereignty and controls. But there are evidently serious differences in the Soviet élite over the comparative advantage anticipated from greater economic, technological, and cultural interaction, and over the risks the Soviet authorities are likely to run in the process. The Brezhnev profess confidence that they can have the best of both worlds. While deriving maximum benefit from engaging the David Rockefellers and Armand Hammers—and the Fords and Fiats and Krupps—they count on minimising both scope and incidence of infection and defection by applying more pressure at home and thus limiting foreign intrusion to the Soviet reception of Pepsi-Cola and its cultural equivalents.

But there are those in the Soviet bureaucracy who worry about (just as some naively "over-optimistic" Westerners exaggerate) the price that this revisionist calculus of their leadership is bound to exact from the system. The range of current views is well suggested by the recent attack of the Moscow Party Secretary on both "*dogmatic negativism*" (opposing contacts) and "*opportunist illusions*" (seeking to use *détente* to promote tolerance of nonconformity). It is not unlikely that some Party, police, and perhaps army brass are alarmed by the naivety of their colleagues in choosing to ignore the irreversible

effects of cohabitation with the West on Communist virginity. Some of them may worry about the prospects of thousands of Japanese, American, and West German specialists and workers roaming Siberia in joint development enterprises. Some fear the anticipated effects of listening to foreign broadcasts, using foreign goods, meeting Western advocates of pacificism or "pot", hailing foreign achievements in science, tolerating limited emigration from their own society. It may well amount to a totality of inputs likely to destabilise and challenge the routine of Soviet officialdom, breed a sense of alternatives, and raise the ghost of spontaneity to confront the incumbents' primitive patriotism, Victorianism, and authoritarianism.

THE MAJORITY OF THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP has clearly staked its success on increased interaction—not out of desperation, nor out of sympathy for the West, but as the best strategy it can devise. Yet the muted dialogue among spokesmen for divergent Soviet views of peaceful coexistence is bound to go on. It is naïve to expect any early, dramatic, or profound changes in Soviet outlook, let alone their explicit acknowledgment from above. In fact, Western policy does not set itself the aim of changing the Soviet system. In the long run, however, the multiplication of contacts and exposure, over both bread and circuses, cannot but yield a slow, almost imperceptible cumulation of new attitudes, perspectives, and assumptions, an unwitting process of borrowing and learning (as well as irritation and frustration). Among other things, it may promote among the next generation of "official" and "semi-official" Russia a greater sense that it is to their own advantage to get along with the outside world. It is bound to make, however slowly, for more open and healthy human relations, whose ultimate political expression remains moot but can only be welcome. Once again, these are bound to be unintended but inescapable consequences of the Soviet system, by-products of its development.

I am not prepared to advocate sacrificing these prospects and perspectives—however tenuous or distant—for a heroic posture of moral integrity on behalf of "Unofficial Russia", whose own cause will be best served by an end to militant and enforced conformism in the Soviet Union and whose interests are harmed by a return to a political atmosphere where all deviation from official mouthings smacks of treason and where foreign well-wishers can legitimately do no more than wring their hands.

Unofficial Russia must indeed not be forgotten. Nor must it become the overriding target or touchstone of Western efforts directed at the USSR.

# Official Britain & Unofficial Russia

By Duncan Wilson

AS A FORMER British Ambassador in Moscow, I would like to consider particularly the disturbing conclusion of Karel van het Reve's brilliant article, and examine my conscience about the formation and execution of official policy. How far has the policy of sponsored contacts been against the interests of unofficial Russia? I am all the more interested in this question in that for over ten years my wife and I have been close friends of the Rostropovich family; but it has much more than a personal significance. To answer it, one must first analyse what *détente* has been about.

It is paradoxically easier to speak for the Soviet side than for the Western. The Soviet authorities have wanted to achieve a sort of Peace Treaty situation in Europe, formally endorsing the political boundary between East and West and thus eliminating one potential source of conflict and establishing one of the preconditions for some agreed limitation of armaments. They want also to acquire all that they can of Western commercial and technical skills, and they hope that *détente* will weaken the Western alliance. But they are also aware that it may involve dangers for their own type of régime. Their fear is that the "licensed contacts"—those who need to know at first hand about certain Western achievements—will learn about the Western way of life in general, and pass the knowledge on to those who in their view have no need for it. In other words, the Soviet authorities try to confine the taste of the fruit of the tree of life to one bite only.

The Western—less explicit—philosophy of *détente* can be deduced from the above. The formal division between East and West, already established *de facto*, may serve as a possible basis for the reduction of military burdens and an increase in trade. The pursuit of contacts with the Soviet and other East European régimes may gradually soften some of the rigidities of Soviet totalitarian society—not by deliberate Western action but simply in the nature of things. Anyhow, what alternative policy can be pursued by the West towards the East, short of a *cordon*

*sanitaire* and the hope that Soviet society will collapse?

On the British side, the policy of *détente* has not been pursued with blind hopes. The British Government has rather sulkily followed the Germans and others to the European Conference table. The freeze in Anglo-Soviet relations after the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the deeper freeze following the expulsion of Soviet officials from London in 1971 have prevented us from being anything but realistic in doing business with the Soviet régime.

Perhaps, however, though we have not been enthusiastic in search of East-West contacts, we have been to some extent blinded to more important realities by the process of concluding technical and cultural agreements. The sound of those tired official toasts, the sight of those deliberately ambiguous texts, the thought of partly bogus rapprochements, may well nauseate the devoted intellectual on either side. Yet I think that this framework of Governmental agreements has, up till now, represented all that could sensibly be done on the official level for unofficial Russia.

The reasons for this are implied in Karel van het Reve's article. The official framework provides many unofficial Russians with some chances of contact with the West. The agreements provide something also for more people than are included in Karel van het Reve's categories of unofficial Russians. I believe that those who profit from the official agreements include very many unheroic senior officials or politically "idiotic" Russians, whose apathy and scepticism is admitted by Karel van het Reve to constitute a considerable change in Russian history of the last twenty years. It also represents at least a growing inertia which any Soviet Government has to overcome. I have little doubt that, if one could reckon up the secondary effects of cultural exchanges, the West has had much the better of the bargain. Who bothers on this side now about the potentially subversive effect of Soviet exchange visitors?

THIS STILL DOES NOT MEET the main points of the Russian intellectual critics, that we could now afford to raise our price for official exchanges, at least commercial and technical, and allow them *only* in exchange for Soviet guarantees about individual rights and freedoms within the Soviet Union.

This is the crucial point of the argument, and here with great respect to the great Sakharov, I believe that the Medvedevs (only a little less heroic) are more nearly right. I think that we can and should bargain for more satisfactory framework agreements about exchanges—I expect that

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