

# DIALOG

## To be and not to be: Something's rotten in Dane's Russia

BACK IN JULY, ITT RAN AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "AMERICANS do not understand war!" by Danish journalist Jorgen Dragsdahl that said, in effect, the Soviet people, knowing war in a way Americans cannot know war, are a force for world peace, which the American people are not. "I thought the fallacy so obvious that ITT would be bombarded with responses. Here it is mid-September, and not word one about the Dragsdahl article. I may not be the ranking world expert on international affairs, but *someone* ought to point out what was rotten in the Denmark journalist's assumption.

To put it most crudely and pointedly, the American people, able to read and see beyond official lies, finally did have something to do with ending the Vietnam horror, and the Pentagon might well hesitate about another such venture. But the Soviet people, fed only the official lies by a government-controlled media, still think the Czechs loved and welcomed them in 1968.

Not that Dragsdahl was wrong about the Soviet people's feelings about war and peace. I made the Soviet scene for the first time last year, as a tourist—with the inevitable mixed feelings of one who once ardently rooted for the world's first great attempt to supplant the profit motive with a truly social system, but that's another story.

I cannot pretend to have significantly penetrated Soviet life and thinking in 18 days in seven cities of European Russia, Siberia and Central Asia, and I will break new ground by not writing a book about it.

Suffice to say that everything we saw, heard and sensed, every chat we had with citizens, confirmed Dragsdahl's premise of their overwhelming yearning for peace, their lack of animosity toward Americans, even their puzzlement about American fears. Hell, it is a valid proposition on its face that a people who lost 20 million in the big war (we lost 350,000) and whose homeland was devastated equivalent to this country being leveled from the Atlantic to the Mississippi, understand and hate war with an intensity not fully comprehensible to Americans. No argument here.

But if you want to get discouraged, try these very same Soviet people on any specific of the world scene.

Our guide Tanya was a genial woman, open enough with our small group to comment wryly on her much lower salary than a bus driver after years as a skilled Intourist guide. During a little unofficial chatter, she mentioned Vietnam, which brought the reflex response from one of the Americans: Czechoslovakia.

But didn't we know that the Czech's Russian friends saved them from a fascist fate and that the Czechs were grateful?

Those of us who had been in Prague broke the news to Tanya that all but a handful of Czechs have become Russian-haters since the invasion which snuffed out Dubcek's attempt to restore the moral image of Communism in the world, and that they loathe the regime installed by the Kremlin.

With commendable spirit, Tanya shot back, "Why should I believe you? That's your propaganda." A bit later, seeking detente, she added with a Russian shrug that after all everybody knew Dubcek was doing bad things, was taking the Czechs down the wrong road.

"Shouldn't the Czechs be the judge of that, not the Russians?" she was asked. Tanya seemed to take that under advise-

ment. I'm not sure it quite meshed gears with her.

There is the point. You cannot come to grips on these things with the ordinary Russian who has not been out of his country. Staggeringly, in a world of instant communicative marvels (and four decades after the Germans "did not know") the Russians really do not know. Tanya, somewhat more sophisticated than most, actually believes that the Czechs welcomed the Russians. (Will she ask a few cautious questions after our exchange?)

The average Russian has no more idea what his country is doing to throttle and distort Czechoslovakia and Poland than the average American understands what our corporations do in South America. Ah, but in this country, those who do know and care can and do sound off, and write about it. And may affect policy.

Our erratic press reflects the class bias of its publishers, but it is not a government-run press. It is finally open to the tumultuous currents in the real-world America—though often belatedly, after harm has been done, often insufficiently and inconsistently. Which, apart from advocacy of socialism, is why we sorely need the journalism of IN THESE TIMES and other left publications.

Yet, like it or not, it was in our general press that most Americans finally (after shameful throttling of the story by the military and many newspapers) did get to read of My Lai. American journalists finally did blow the whistle in the mass media on Watergate and Nixon. No such possibilities for military and government accountability exist in the USSR.

But the distinction between a closed and open society, by whatever name you care to label the two countries, is of high importance to Americans, including socialists. Our historic open society is very much a part of the possibilities for lessening and eventually ending the domination of the economy by the corporations, the military, and their legislative and administrative tools.

None of this argument is to say: Why do you run articles like Dragsdahl's? Run 'em, and run the replies to them, as you did with that dreadful piece about the

### Answers to last week's puzzle:

PCP TOAD BHAT  
BIO UNDERRATE  
ARROBAS EERIE  
ETNAS ZLEM  
ELL TRANSIT  
BONY KEATS RI  
ZID ZRETE GOP  
IS ALONE MEN  
PERSONS HAS  
APSE CASTLE  
SATIE MONTAUK  
AVERSIONS TRE  
MADE ROSA EER

Warsaw ghetto. That's one of the happy differences between ITT and the publications of locked-in sects of the American left.

It is to say that Dragsdahl's treatise was lamentably shallow because it neglected the monumental and dangerous fact that the Soviet Union is a tightly closed society in which the people learn only what their leaders want them to learn.

Dragsdahl may have decided to avoid joining the anti-Soviet hawks with criticism of the USSR which Americans get in great volume in any case. But in writing about all the American books that Russians can read (Hedrick Smith's *The Russians*, perhaps?), the least he owed the reader, if not his own journalistic peace of mind, was another little fact: The Soviet people cannot read books by their own writers if they are critical of their own establishment. Let alone books by Russians that meticulously document the thought-control incarceration of dissenters, in or out of the psychiatric wards.

Having been in four of the Eastern European countries, I am ready to offer this generalization: There is a universal corrosive cynicism in the "satellites," where they know they are dominated by the Russians. But in the big dominating country itself, though people have many negative feelings about their economy and bureaucracy, and may grumble (as do Americans) about conditions, the Russians are a proud, assertive and simplistically self-righteous people.

World history offers ample evidence of the dangers in a marriage of ignorance and self-righteousness.

Making this somber point is not to shrug off the need and possibilities of our getting along with the Russians, or to disregard the awesome responsibility of Washington to take a major initiative in that direction. Nefarious CIA activities around the world and nuclear bases on Soviet borders were not inventions of Russian paranoids. There is still an amazing American arrogance about our right to do things to others which we would find impermissible if done to us. The U-2 was one example. There is no Russian-run "Radio Free America" operating in Mexico or Canada. But we run Radio Free

Europe, beamed eastward from Germany, of all intolerable places.

A case can be made to explain the Russian military intervention in Eastern Europe, its military secrecy, accelerated arms program, even the hair-raising Brezhnev Doctrine of the selective right of aggression, as the reaction to Soviet history as a beleaguered island in a virulently hostile world. To make the obvious point that this rationale has worn thin in a changing world doesn't prove that it is not still the mainspring in the thinking of the Russian leaders.

But a case can also be made—and is being made for the first time by some Americans who are far from hawks—of genuine fear of Soviet intentions. Or at least strong uneasiness.

Intent is becoming the new magic word.

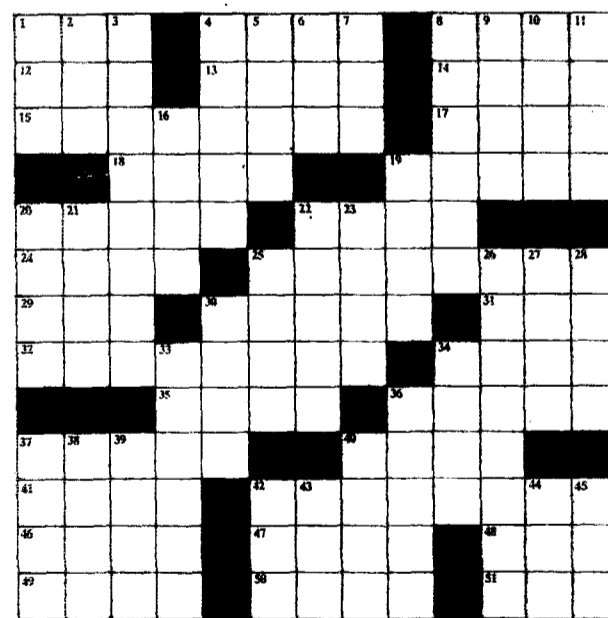
In a world that can be virtually wiped out by thermonuclear exchange, can one believe there is, literally, an American capitalist plot to destroy the Soviet Union? It defies reason. Even if one grants the insatiable drive for economic domination by our multinational corporations, and the basic insanity of the nuclear arms race itself. Nor can I believe that the Soviets intend (or ever intended) to destroy this country. Ideology? I agree with those who believe that ideology, like nostalgia, ain't what it used to be. (Have you observed the caliber of Russian and Chinese "Marxists" helming their idiocies at each other in the UN?)

The Soviet leaders may be tough and stubborn and peasant-shrewd, but they are, after all, leftover Stalin sycophants. They are basically limited, super-conservative, nationalistic, defense-minded and slightly paranoid, with about the same intellectual grasp of the world and people's movements as, say, Gen. Westmoreland and Dean Rusk. This doesn't mean they may not be dangerous. It does mean that they should respond in good ways to a lessening of their fears and suspicions. Good ways for world peace, if not necessarily for your idea or my idea of what Russian socialism ought to be. That's their own Byzantine business. We can't preach too much. We have some failed dreams to work on right here.

—Lester Rodney

## Variations of Cygni

By Jay Shepherd



### ACROSS

- 1 Chicken \_\_\_\_\_ king
- 4 Hay unit
- 8 Timbre
- 12 Sneaky one
- 13 Nautical term
- 14 Andy's partner
- 15 More posh
- 17 Religious ceremony
- 18 Court, at one time
- 19 Garden bloomer
- 20 Gather
- 22 Greek portico
- 24 Spring holiday
- 25 Famed ballet
- 29 Word with melting
- 30 Sort
- 31 \_\_\_\_\_ Abner of cartoon fame
- 32 Final act
- 34 Italian city
- 35 Italian noble family
- 36 Flood

- 37 Andes dweller, once
- 40 Red item
- 41 Chimneysweep's bane
- 42 Swimmer's challenge
- 46 Academic reading
- 47 Cashier's stamp
- 48 Melody
- 49 Corker
- 50 Science's counterpart
- 51 Wheedle

### DOWN

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_ longa, vita brevis
- 2 Order's partner
- 3 Greek heroine
- 4 Makes cookies
- 5 Dismounted
- 6 Robert E. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 Poetic contraction
- 8 Relating to the foot
- 9 Leave out
- 10 Word with half
- 11 Belgian river (var.)
- 16 Bird's habitat
- 19 Super
- 20 Swiss range
- 21 Kitten's remark
- 22 Pearls should not be thrown to them
- 23 Astronaut's beverage
- 25 Token milieu
- 26 Certain Frenchman
- 27 Actress Eartha
- 28 Playwright Wiesel
- 30 Org.
- 33 More organized
- 34 Mimicked
- 36 Posts
- 37 Ratio words
- 38 "High \_\_\_\_\_"
- 39 "\_\_\_\_\_ all ye faithful..."
- 40 Lure
- 42 Baden, for one
- 43 Event of 1812
- 44 By way of
- 45 Unit of work

## Discrimination

Continued from page 8.

Kaiser/USWA plan was put in place in the absence of such official finding against the corporation at Gramercy.

Weber applied for the crafts-retraining program during the first year of the new affirmative action plan in 1974. Based on company records admitted as evidence during court hearings, at the end of 1974 there were 293 craft employees at the Gramercy plant. Of that number, and including the first trainees accepted under the new 50-50 requirement that excluded Weber, 13 were black. In 1973, before the affirmative action program was initiated, blacks numbered five out of a total of 273. Forty percent of the residents in that part of Louisiana are black.

Before the retraining program, with seniority and prior experience the primary factors of eligibility, blacks particularly were unable to enter the skilled crafts. Most blacks were not hired before 1969 and therefore lacked seniority, and few had previous experience because of systematic exclusion from similar jobs not only in Louisiana but across the South.

Isidore Booker is a member of USWA Local 13000, and works for Kaiser at its Chalmette operation approximately 45 miles from the Gramercy plant. Booker, who is also president of the West Bank branch of the NAACP in Jefferson Parish, has worked for Kaiser since 1952. "Until the mid-'50s," Booker told *IN THESE TIMES*, "blacks could only be hired for two job categories, laborer and janitor. Whites hired as laborers were paid a higher wage than blacks doing the same work."

"When we finally were allowed to transfer into other departments, seniority was counted on a department basis, not plant-wide. To transfer out of a segregated department meant you would lose your seniority and take a cut in pay." According to Booker, facilities such as lunchrooms and restrooms remained segregated at the plant where he works until the late '60s.

### Earlier suit wins affirmative action.

Unlike at Gramercy, a suit was filed at the Chalmette plant. A black employee by the name of Harris Parson charged the Kaiser Corp. with discrimination in reference to promotion into a supervisory position. After a federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission investigation verified the charge, Parson and another black employee filed suit in federal court in 1967. The suit was subsequently broadened into a class action and in 1973 the federal district court ruled against the charge.

But in July, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, the same court that upheld the Weber charge of reverse discrimination at Gramercy, ordered the district court to rehear the Parson suit charging discrimination on the part of Kaiser at Chalmette. In ordering the rehearing the Fifth Circuit Court stated that in light of the statistical under-representation of blacks in the skilled crafts jobs at Chalmette, "the burden of proof is on Kaiser" to show that the company's employment procedures did not discriminate or reinforce preferential patterns. In the Weber suit, however, there was no black, other minority or female testimony on the question of discrimination at the Gramercy plant.

The Kaiser Corporation, defending itself against the Weber suit, did not and could not admit prior discriminatory practices against women and minorities. Such an admission could leave the company open to a new wave of Title VII suits from female and black employees, possibly jeopardize lucrative federal contracts and generate additional bad publicity.

Corporations operating under court-ordered consent decree affirmative action plans would not be affected by the Weber decision no matter what way it goes. But Kaiser and other corporations with similar voluntary programs tying up millions of dollars, are watching the situation nervously. The next move is the Supreme Court's.

## SUGAR DADDY WELCH

Continued from page 24.

as his national security advisor. In the end, Welch argues, we have an Insiders-sponsored, communist sympathizer whispering into the President's ear.

Since so much of the Birch Society has been closely tied with Welch himself, for years members worried about the Society's future after his death. But Welch now happily claims there are many capable successors. "The question is always, how fast can you go. If you go too far ahead you don't get anybody but screwballs to come in. But we've been able to get some of the top people in the business world, education, and so forth, because we've shown some judgment and focus, and we're outspoken. We're looking forward to being a very effective influence for a generation, or, maybe centuries, to come."

Another shrewd move, with an eye to the future, was the establishment of JBS summer camps for 14-22 year olds. In what amounts to a minor league farm system for producing new talent, 11 camps across the country administer a week's worth of political vaccinations, Birch-style, to over 2,000 kids.

John McManus explains, "It's a solid week of instruction and fun. Kids aren't

stupid and we want to give them the meat to chew on." Camp seminars vary from "The U.N., Get U.S. Out," to "What Is Communism?" And 80 percent of those attending eventually become members. Already there is a smattering of young staffers visible at Birch headquarters, themselves products of earlier camps.

### Deficit spending.

Another strength has been the Society's ability to remain solvent. As recently as 1971 they were \$2.5 million in debt, but a special effort by their field staff raised the money and more in under four months.

"We're always trying to do more than we can," Welch comments. "More than we had the money for and hoped we could get." He neglects, however, to mention the irony in their own deficit spending, for one of their chief gripes has been that Uncle Sam doesn't watch his purse strings closely enough.

Even those in academic circles have come to have a grudging respect for the Birch Society. Donald Price, of Harvard University's government department, says, "The Birch Society does not swing any great political muscle. But people are becoming aware that government in this country has bitten off more than it can

chew, like welfare."

He continues, "And a movement that attacks with an almost religious ardor in the form of deeply conservative politics is bound to attract a lot of support."

Also, Prof. Peter Natchez of Brandeis University's politics department, suggests the JBS is on the upswing. "One of the remarkable things about American politics is a substantial growth of right-wing opinion that is not necessarily represented in voting trends. The causes of anti-government feeling should not be underestimated."

"If the Birch Society gets any sort of intelligent leadership," Natchez continued, "they could have a mass market. Their potential is probably underestimated and is growing, not diminishing."

On a Friday night in a Boston suburb, a dozen Birch members attend a typical information and action meeting. They begin by reciting the Pledge of Allegiance before sitting down to watch a Birch film-strip on the evil roots of inflation. Later, they adjourn to the dining room table to write letters. Each member is to compose 15 letters to various elected officials, prodding them to vote a certain way on an upcoming issue.

Before the night is over this group will produce 180 letters; over 12 months they'll send off nearly 3,000, and if multiplied by 3,500 chapters nationally.... Like the tortoise, the Society grinds it out, quietly, but steadily.

Barry Stavro is a journalist who contributes to *ITT* from Boston.

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"A lot of us lean on it," says George Wald, the Harvard Nobel laureate.

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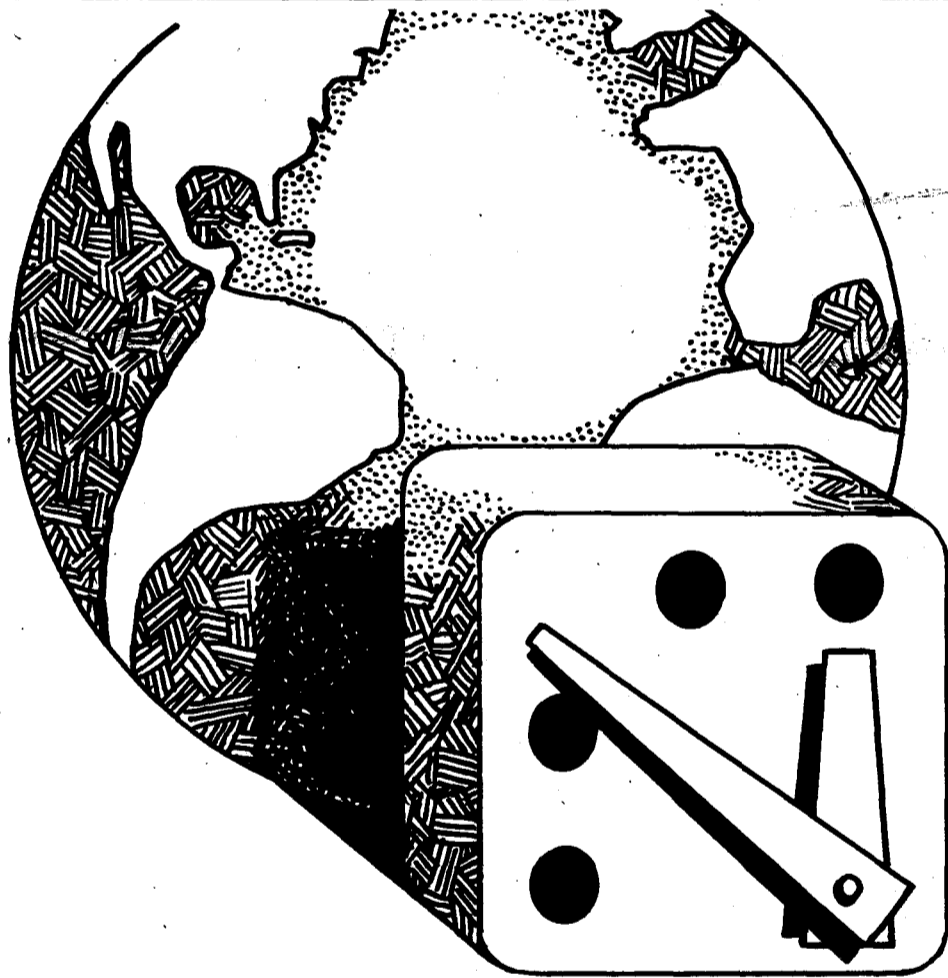
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