

before a map, drawing large audiences from the holiday crowds for talks on current events.

This interest is charged with respect for the achievements of other peoples and the sense of human brotherhood that is the soul of socialism. It was so strong that it took a long time for the Soviet people in the war to get over it and realize how far from any reciprocal feeling his bestialized German enemy had been driven. But not even the Germans have destroyed it in the Soviet people; nor has our crass superiority complex affected it; for it is rooted in the new human attitudes of socialism. It is the quality that makes the Soviet people readier for their role, among the United Nations, than any other people.

## VI

SOME of our reader intellectuals may be so influenced by the standards and the pleasant sense of intellectual privilege they enjoy through sharing our minority culture that they may retort "better a minority culture that produces masters than a majority culture that merely rises to respectable mediocrity." No culture, however, escapes mediocrity; even the best has its average. But Soviet culture has produced its masters and in that respect can stand comparison with any contemporary culture.

These readers may also object that a culture that supports social objectives so closely is not free. In that they reason from the nature of our own profit system, which exploits differences, lives on conflicts and is itself so offensive that dissent becomes natural and is considered the mark of the free mind. But a free mind can give assent too, and Soviet culture is the evidence. It is an assent to the major Soviet objectives. There has been no lack of dissent with misapplications, a dissent vigorously expressed in satire and polemics.

Soviet culture has not been free from harmful tendencies. Some trends have proved too sweeping and have deformed some of the talents, driven along in the stream—casualties occurring in other cultures as well. Some of the trends, particularly the leftist ones, have proved sterile. Yet these trends, themselves, are an evidence of the vigor and variety of Soviet culture.

Basically the broad distinctions of Soviet culture remain the four qualities I have mentioned, its democratic character, its unity with the peoples' aims, its freedom from profit compulsions, and its strong sense of the internationale of culture.

# Changing Red Army

By **Sergei Kournakoff**

THE whole Soviet people and the Red Army are celebrating the twenty-eighth anniversary of the founding of the Soviet state in a radiant apotheosis of national, international and plain human victory. The Red Army carried eighty to ninety percent of the burden in the struggle against European fascism and a sizable percentage of the fight against fascism's Asiatic counterpart. The memories of the forty years between 1878 and 1918, one of the least glorious epochs in Russian military history, have been thoroughly obliterated and avenged. The eastern and western foes who defeated Russia in 1904-05 and then in 1914-18 lie militarily defeated beyond redemption by any means short of a new "Munich" of "atomic" proportions.

Soviet power has not enjoyed such a thoroughgoing triumph in its twenty-eight-year history. In the fire of an unprecedented war it has demonstrated the unity of the people behind it, the social and economic depth of its organization, the inextinguishable fire of its spirit, and, finally, the military qualities of its armed forces and entire apparatus of defense.

An army is the true reflection of the state it serves. This is especially true in the case of modern armies, which not only draw into their ranks a high percentage of the population, but which because of their technical and economic requirements are totally bound up with the whole body of the country they defend. Thus, the portrait of the Red Army as it emerges from its victory in World War II is at the same time a picture of the Soviet Union as a whole.

Ever since 1918 when it was formed by Lenin's decree, the Red Army has been the subject of foreign speculation, foreign suspicions and foreign slanders.

A paroxysm of speculation has usually followed on the heels of both exceptional Soviet successes and Soviet crises. The Red Army has been said to be going "internationalist" and "nationalist." It was prophesied that it would "stop at its borders" and "spill over them in a revolutionary march across Europe." It was said that it was "hardening into an oppressive military machine" under the influence of victory. At the same time it was intimated that its "discipline was breaking down" under the impact of the "Capuan de-

lights" of the "Western world" whose threshold it had crossed. In short, whichever way you look at it—"the old gray mare wasn't what she used to be."

Surprisingly enough, this proverbial dictum is perfectly true in the case of the Red Army, but not at all for the reasons cited above. The social outlook of the Soviet Union is based on dialectical materialism. Such an outlook recognizes that change is inseparable from life. Consequently, together with the whole Soviet way of life, the Red Army changes. As a matter of fact, it has never stopped changing.

To begin with, today the Red Army is an infinitely better and stronger army than it ever was before. Born in the Civil War of a quarter of a century ago, a war in which it triumphed over numerous enemies which surrounded it, it could have been expected to "freeze" in its military concepts, just as the French army, for instance, "froze" in its concepts of 1918 vintage. Instead, in the midst of the most difficult retreat, the Red Army leadership found the courage to shake off outlived theories and "states-of-mind." With this went far-reaching changes in tactics, armament, organization, etc.

The trim and dashing uniform of the modern Red Army is a far cry from the drab garb it was wearing only five years ago. Traditional Russian military attributes have been restored, together with traditional ranks. Certain disciplinary formalities have been tightened up. The military orders of today are named not only after revolutionary figures and symbols, but after military heroes of old and after such concepts as "Glory" and "Victory," not specifically related to revolutionary struggle.

Does this mean that the Red Army is "returning to nationalism"? Not at all. It is simply taking the best from the past and adapting it to modern times, but on a higher level. The difference in level is in the fact that while before the revolution these distinctions belonged largely to the ruling class and national pride took the form of oppression of scores of nationalities by a "ruling nation," now the most brilliant uniforms and decorations are worn by men and women who came from the people as a whole and national pride—Soviet pride—is the heritage of all the nationalities of the country. To put it simply—stars,

braid, honor and pride, while remaining a national heritage, are not a personal heritage any more. They must be earned by the individual.

The slogan of the "Patriotic War," which has disturbed so many "observers," is not a return to the "good old Russian times," but is a perfectly logical battle-cry for a people who now own their entire land and are therefore prone to be even more confirmed patriots than when they owned a minor share in it.

Some so-called observers have interpreted the return of gold and silver epaulettes, decorations and outward signs of military rank and pomp to a tendency toward a relapse into capitalism. Nothing could be more mechanical than this "explanation." Insignia and decorations are not *res per se* (things in themselves). They are outward signs of distinction. They may be worn by men who have distinguished themselves by being born in an "old" and noble family, and they may be worn by men who have done something with their own hands and brain to earn them. The difference is enormous, and basic.

History shows us that victorious armies sometimes become facile instruments of reaction. This happens because their leaders—let us call them "the generals" for the sake of simplicity—are linked either by birth or by social connections with groups which are inclined toward reaction. These generals do not have to be big bankers or industrialists themselves, but they may aspire to be rich, or may have married into finance, or, finally, they might simply be "power-worshippers"—a rather common species, especially in the middle class.

Now, a Soviet general cannot have any of these connections or aspirations—not because he is a sort of "Marxian saint," but because in the Soviet Union there are no groups which wield power through money. The Soviet general is a man of the people who has received everything he has from the Soviet system. Naturally, he will not only support this system at home, but will be inclined to be antagonistic to those groups within the orbit of his activities abroad which have in the past derived, and are striving to derive again, power and wealth from the exploitation of the common man.

To this must be added that the concept of soldierly honor as handed down by generations of the best Russian military heroes compels one ever to fight for the underdog, to be the protector of the weak against the strong. Thus the donning of traditional martial symbols



Meeting the demobilized veterans at the Rzhev station, Moscow.

wise and worldly people do not seem to understand them.

Take for instance a rather well-intentioned man like Prof. Francis E. McMahon of the *New York Post*. On October 27, he wrote in his column "Plain Speaking": "These people (the Russians) are our brothers in the flesh and in spirit. . . . Only a fool would rejoice at their isolation from us. . . ." Good, plain speaking, isn't it? But notice the row of dots I put in the quotation. This row of dots conceals the following phrase: "Dostoyevsky demonstrates that." It is amazing that at this late date it is still possible to find a straight-faced reference to this old and discredited saw which for years has been a sort of standard joke. The "Dostoyevsky complex" explaining the "Russian soul"! But here we have it served to us cold, *au naturel*.

Mr. McMahon says: ". . . There is infinitely more to Russia than Communism. Though Dostoyevsky wrote decades ago people do not change so quickly. It is the same Russia fundamentally today as it was then, the same

inescapably pushes the Soviet officer further along the road of progressive social thinking. To him they are symbols of power to protect the weak against the strong.

The behavior of the Red Army once across its own borders has been marked by precisely this sort of thinking. Wherever the Soviet soldier's foot trod, he has not stood in the way of agrarian reform or the right of the people to express themselves when that right was denied them before.

As to the Red Army soldier, non-com and junior officer, he, as in every army, is the direct representative of the overwhelming majority which has received the greatest benefits from the revolution. To him the collective farm system has given modern machinery instead of the old medieval plow, to him socialized industry has given security instead of exploitation, hospitals, clubs, theaters, culture instead of hovels and police stations. Why should he want to go back to the "good old days"?

These things are simple, almost elementary; and still, so many supposedly



people. These people are likable even in their grave faults." Here you have the well-intentioned Bear dropping a rock on the Hermit's head to kill a fly which bothers the Hermit. . . . "These people are likable" but . . . "they are fundamentally the same" as in the days of Dostoyevsky.

The trouble with this is, of course, that the comparatively few Americans who have read Dostoyevsky have only a very faint idea of the social, economic and political background against which his heroes lived and acted. This writer happens to have been a "landed gentleman" in the district of which Dostoyevsky wrote in the *Brothers Karamazoff*. I knew the descendants of the original Karamazoff family (their real name did not begin with a "K" but with a "D"). The place where the Karamazoff's disported themselves—Selo Mokroye—is the little town which is only ten miles from my former estate and I know it much better than Greenwich Village where I now live.

To me—an admirer of Dostoyevsky—a statement such as Professor McMahon makes is, to put it mildly, amusing. Dmitri, Ivan and Alyosha all lived and acted in an atmosphere of utter frustration caused by social conditions. They were representatives of a decaying class—the leftover of feudalism. I knew scores of such men in the two decades preceding the first world war. Their recklessness, their skepticism, their mysticism were products not of the "Russian soul" but of Russian conditions in the vastness which the reactionary statesman Pobedonostsev described thus: "Russia is an icy desert in which wanders the Evil Man."

A good machine, good books in the library, a good show coming to the collective farm, the assurance that one's

children will be educated and will have all the opportunities they can desire—are not conducive to skepticism, mysticism and recklessness.

The Soviet soldier abroad, in an overwhelming majority, knows very well that his future is assured, *that he will not have to hunt a job, but that a job will hunt him*. He knows that every war-cripple will be taken care of, that ten percent of all new housing is being allotted for the exclusive use of veterans, that his family has had their taxes and indebtedness, if any, remitted, if he has been incapacitated on the battlefield. These things do not breed doubts, pent-up and incoherent strivings, outbursts of boisterousness followed by relapses into *melancholia*, and mystic "soul-fog."

The soldier of the Red Army knows from experience that there is no social group in his country which has profited from the war. He also knows that before the war his life was becoming better every day, every month, every year. He knows that after the war it will resume its triumphant forward march. He wants change: this is absolutely true. But he wants change along the line which has proved so beneficial to him and his family. He certainly does not want to reverse history.

He is a soldier in an army which is ruled by the strictest discipline in the world. But this discipline is being applied to soldier, officer and general alike. For this reason it is not burdensome. Every kind of restraint is hard to bear only when you feel that it is being applied unequally. The same can be said of privation and hardship. A socially equal distribution of both hardship and enjoyment, of obligation and right, is the foundation of true democracy. It would be better for world

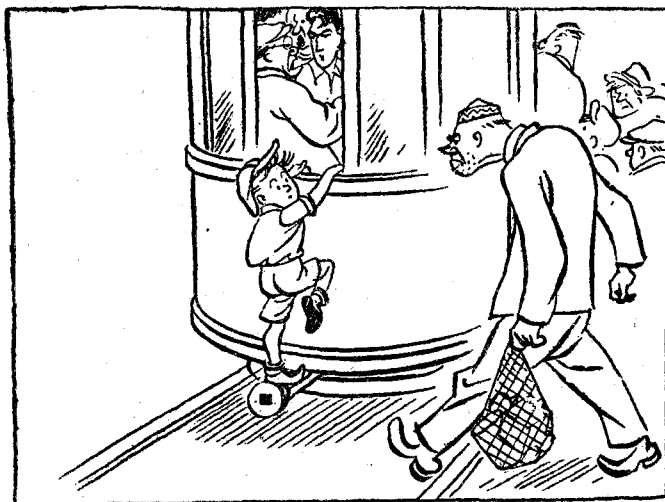
peace if American public opinion sought an explanation of the nature of the Soviet Union and its reflection, the Red Army, less in Dostoyevsky and in the past than in Alexei Tolstoy, Sholokhov, Simonov and the present.

The Red Army has proved its worth by victoriously disposing of better than three-quarters of the greatest military might history has known. This victory was based on solid achievements, on knowledge, skill, heroism born of faith in the Soviet way of life, and finally, on hatred of fascism, as the personification of the oppression of the weak by the strong. Instability, skepticism and mysticism have no room here.

The slanderous stories of a handful of correspondents hobnobbing with the ex-elite of Poland and the Balkans, the vagaries of superficial readers of Dostoyevsky and the rantings of those who, despite the record of the Soviet Union in the war, still cling to the hope that it will "go bust"—cannot form a solid basis for cooperation between the two greatest powers in the world. Not even tons of Uranium-238 can swing the Soviet Union from its chosen path. Cooperation lies not in trying to put the USSR in reverse, but in the realization that the days of Dostoyevsky are gone and in a realistic approach to the entirely feasible cooperation between two societies, striving toward a betterment of the lot of the common man, albeit by different methods and roads.

The first thing to understand is that the Red Army is not "just another army": because it is the army of a state the like of which has never existed before.

Captain Kournakoff's latest book is "What Russia Did for Victory," published by New Century.



"I'll teach you to ride on the back of a streetcar!"—Crocodile's comment on the Soviet traffic situation.

# The One Party System

By David Zaslavsky

Moscow.

A RATHER strange discussion has arisen in the press abroad: the bone of contention is whether or not the Soviet state is really democratic. It seems there are people who have their doubts. There are even those who deny it.

Still others are ready to recognize the Soviet Union as a kind of second-rate democracy.

In my opinion the best answer was given in the war just fought and won.

Without a doubt, this was a war of the united forces of democracy against the joint forces of fascism, and democracy was the victor. German fascism found its most dangerous enemy in the Red Army, which scored such a tremendous victory over the fascists. Now that the war is over, the country which is most consistently fighting for the eradication of all the remnants of fascism should be considered the most democratic. Not all the democratic states by far have done everything possible in this respect.

Take American democracy, as an example, which even up to now tolerates fascist propaganda carried on by a definite section of its press. In America and Britain there are persons living in peace and comfort who throughout the war with fascism openly advocated a compromise peace with Hitler, and did their utmost to save fascist Germany and undermine the unity of world democracy.

With these black spots of all shapes and sizes on west-European and American democracy, it would be better for those who like to take such a critical view of the Soviet Union to follow the sound advice the bear gave to the monkey in the famous old fable: "Why, dear lady, look so hard for the faults of others? Would it not be far better to look at yourself?" Or we might quote the words of Robert Burns and ask for the "giftie" to see ourselves as others see us.

We are not the least surprised that certain persons place their own form of democracy above the Soviet form.

Here in Russia we have a saying that every snipe sings the praises of its own swamp. But we cannot let pass the pretensions of these people, who would like to force their concept of democracy on

the world at large as the one and only concept.

WHAT are their objections to Soviet democracy? First of all, that there is only one political party in the Soviet Union. They insist that where there is only one party there is no democracy. Well, this is utter rot. Were we to agree that the number of parties determines the degree of democracy in any given country, then we would have to recognize the old Austro-Hungarian monarchy as the model of a democratic state. In the Austrian Parliament of those days there were almost as many parties represented as there were deputies. But this parliament was the laughing-stock of the nations, and history has buried it in the graveyard as despotism.

In the United States Congress there are virtually two parties. In the British Parliament there are three. Does it not follow from the above arguments that the British constitutional monarchy stands head and shoulders above the American Republic as a democracy? But then, in England the Liberal Party was practically wiped out in the recent election. It retained scarcely any of the seats it had in the last parliament. But that does not mean that the degree of democracy in England has also been reduced.

Each party tries to win a majority of votes and, if possible, all the votes and thus down the opposition. Does this mean that every democracy strives towards its own negation?

Others say democracy demands that an oppositional minority be represented in parliament, and without this there can be no democracy. We certainly agree. If there is any opposition in any one country it should be represented. But supposing there is no opposition? What then? Must one be set up in the name of democracy?

An opposition is an integral part of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, for the simple reason that opposing interests are part of the very life of these countries. It cannot but exist in a country which has within it classes with conflicting social interests. Where you have large landed estates, there is bound to be a constant struggle between landlords and peasants—hence the opposition. Where capitalists and workers exist side by side, there is bound to be a struggle

between capital and labor: in other words—opposition.

Under Soviet democracy there is no opposition, because we have no landlords and no capitalists. Nor can there be any, for the socialist system destroyed the very basis upon which it could arise.

All power, both in the Soviet parliament and in Soviet economy, belongs to the people—to those who labor. Is this not then the highest form of democracy?

I might by way of a joke ask the critics of Soviet democracy—what have they done with the opposition of the monarchists, of those who championed Negro slavery? These critics would be quick to reply, and in all justice, that these opposition groups are not represented in Congress because they no longer exist in life. The American monarchists disappeared from the scene almost 200 years ago, the open champions of Negro slavery some eighty years ago—though in their time they were very strong oppositions indeed.

BUT what these critics do not wish to understand is that in Russia the landowners and capitalists disappeared from the scene just as these other groups from their own country; and with them the champions of capitalism here have made their exit for good.

A second—that is, oppositional—party in the Soviet Union could only exist as a party seeking to restore capitalism, the big landed estates and gambling on the stock market. All this has passed into oblivion along with feudalism, the nobility and the autocracy of the Russian Czars.

Soviet democracy has put an end to it all. The Soviet Union is the highest form of democracy. Not only has it fulfilled the age-long dreams of the people, but it dealt the most powerful, most destructive blow against all forms of reaction, against all the advocates of fascism.

The second world war showed this, through the universally recognized feats of the Soviet people—more clearly, more decisively and conclusively than any slander can hope to refute. The Soviet people can only look with disdain upon those persons who seek to criticize, from the swamp-lands which are their habitat, the height attained by Soviet democracy.