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ETHNIC AND SOCIAL FACTORS IN NATIONAL STRENGTH: THE U.S.S.R.

Dr. John A. Armstrong

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Reviewed by: Colonel P. B. Klein, USAF

Date: 6 January 1960

INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

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Reporter: Ralph W. Bennett

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COL. FLYNN: Gentlemen: Up to now we have had a few brief skirmishes with the culture and sociology of the Soviet Union, but this morning we will carefully examine the social structure of the Soviet Union.

Such questions as these perhaps pass through your minds: Who benefits from this type of system? Are there oppressed groups? What about national differences, especially pertaining to traditional behavior? Can we detect signs of weakness or disaffection in the Soviet Union?

To answer these questions, we are privileged to have with us this morning as our speaker Dr. John A. Armstrong, a man who has traveled extensively in the Soviet Union and written considerably on the sociology, the ethnology, and the culture of the 209 millions of people whom these questions involve.

Dr. Armstrong, it's a pleasure to welcome you back to the College and introduce you to this year's class.

DR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you very much, Colonel Flynn.

General Mundy and Gentlemen: It's a real pleasure to be back this year. I must say it's always a source of considerable interest and sometimes chagrin to review one's last year's speech and determine how much has stood up in the course of the year's new material released concerning

the Soviet Union. So today I am going to cover the subject which Colonel Flynn mentioned in his introduction and at the same time try to give you perhaps a bit more statistical information on the Soviet ethnic and social composition.

Now, at first glance, the topic "Ethnic and Social Factors in the National Strength of the USSR" seems a bit complicated for one 45-minute lecture; and I will admit that the topic is slightly overwhelming. Nevertheless, it is a logically integrated topic because of the close relationship between the social structure, particularly the role of the peasantry, in the Soviet Union and the position of the national groups.

Basically the urban groups in Russia traditionally have been Russians by nationality, with a fairly large admixture of certain very small minority groups, namely, Jews, Armenians, and Georgians. Consequently the cities of the Russian empire, which were the early strongholds of the party, were mainly inhabited by Russians and by representatives of these small minority groups. That is to say, the urban proletariat, and those converts from the bourgeoisie who were the real leaders of the Bolsheviks in their early days, were essentially Russians, because many of the Georgians, Armenians, and Jews who did live in the cities had been fairly crucified in culture.

Now, in the course of 40 years of Soviet rule in the Soviet Union, both of the old elements which were the elite of the Bolshevik Party have disappeared or been submerged to an inferior status. That is to say, the converts from the bourgeoisie and the proletariat itself, the laboring

class, has been replaced as the dominant element in the Soviet Union by a new group, known as the intelligentsia very frequently, consisting basically of educated white-collar workers. This group, however, is also drawn from city people, and its predominant urban background is reflected also in the nationality composition.

For example, of the scientific workers, approximately 200,000 in the Soviet Union, 65 percent are Russians; and of the remainder, 11 percent are Jews, approximately 5 percent Georgians and Armenians, as against only 9 percent Ukrainians.

Now, another point. There is a very close relationship of religion to both class and nationality in the Soviet Union. This comes about partly through the fact that there is a greater persistence of religious feeling in the rural areas. Consequently the rural population, which is more non-Russian than the urban population, is the population in which one finds the greatest persistence of religious sentiment.

Secondly, the church of the Russians in the old days traditionally was the Orthodox Church; and the Orthodox Church, therefore, was the church of the dominant element. On the other hand, most of the minority groups in the Soviet Union were, at least in part, affiliated with dissident churches--to some extent Protestant and Catholic, but also dissident Orthodox sects. Therefore one has a cleavage along religious lines which tends to parallel the cleavage along social and ethnic lines.

Now, I am going to proceed to a more detailed estimate of the social structure of the Soviet Union. But before doing that, and in order

to give you an idea how this topic is going to link in with my later consideration of the two major ethnic groups in the Soviet Union, I'd like to present a bird's eye picture of the ethnic composition of the Soviet Union very graphically.

(Chart 1) You have here a Soviet map. This map is, of course, a bit doctored. In order to avoid showing the minority nationalities which inhabit the sparsely settled areas as being dominant, great areas of the Soviet Union that are colored this light gray are left as largely uninhabited on the map. Therefore, the inhabited regions, where the Russians predominate, tend to stand out, the Russians being represented by this light beige color.

Now, that does not basically, however, distort the overall picture of the Soviet nationality composition. You will notice that there are over a hundred nationalities. Some of them, like the Yotsans?, in extreme northeastern Siberia, are not very important. Others, like the Kazakhs, indicated by the yellow color here, seem to be very important because of the extensive territory they occupy, but actually are a diminishing and relatively unimportant group.

But I hope you will notice the bright blue and red here, representing the Georgians and the Armenians; the darker colors, representing the Usbeks, the Kirghiz, and the Tadzhiks in central Asia; and the lighter neutral shades, representing the smaller Slavic peoples, because we will be coming back to those later.

Now, before proceeding to our discussion of the major Moslem

and Slavic groups, let us consider the basic social structure of the Soviet Union. The total Soviet population was 209 million as of January, 1959, when the first census held within 20 years in the Soviet Union took place. This compared with a United States population of, I think, 177 or 178 million at that time.

The birth rate in the Soviet Union, according to official statistics at that time, was 25 per thousand, as compared to approximately 24 1/2 per thousand in the United States. Note how very close these figures are--in other words, a difference of only 2 percent in birth rate, a difference of only 30 million in population, between the two countries.

Now, the net reproductive rate in the Soviet Union was rather greater than in the United States. There were 17 1/2 per thousand increase per year in the Soviet Union, as compared to only 15.3 in the United States. In other words, they are gaining two more people per thousand per year than the United States, according to their figures, which I am inclined to accept as accurate.

This arises from the fact that the death rate is lower in the Soviet Union than in the United States by about 1 1/2 persons. In other words, the death rate in the Soviet Union is only 7 1/2 persons per thousand per year, as compared to approximately 9 in the United States. This is astounding when we think of the difference in social conditions and what we had hoped was the difference of medical progress in the two countries. But it arises from factors other than the living conditions of the people, and therefore is a credible statement.

The principal reason for the very low Soviet death rate is the favorable population distribution. There aren't many elderly people in the Soviet Union. Elderly people are short in supply there because of the hardships of collectivization, war, and other crises through which the Soviet Union has passed, which have led to the weaker physically elements of the population dying.

Now, that means that while the United States has to support a large group of relatively elderly people, the Soviet Union is supporting by and large only the productive age group and children; and therefore naturally its death rate will be lower.

It is doubful that this very low death rate can be maintained in the Soviet Union; and equally doubtful that the relatively high birth rate, though scarcely higher than that of the United States, can be maintained as well. Let us examine very briefly factors which make the projection of these present statistics doubtful.

One reason for predicting a decline in just a few years in the Soviet birth rate is that right now the group of women entering child-bearing age is the group born during the hardships of World War II. And therefore a relatively small group of women are becoming of child-bearing age. As more and more of these enter the group which produces children, and older women, of course, pass from that group, one may therefore expect a decline in births in the Soviet Union.

The second reason is the urbanization, which generally, for reasons I shall indicate briefly later, tends to reduce birth rates.

Now, another very important aspect of the Soviet population problem is closely related to the one I have just mentioned, namely, the vast war losses. When the census figures appeared in May of last year, although they had been prepared by earlier Soviet estimates for the magnitude of Soviet population loss in World War II, foreign experts nevertheless found it almost impossible to believe that so many people could have died in one country in the course of one war. Twenty-five million Soviet citizens, as nearly as we can estimate, died in World War II; and that includes only citizens over the age of 10 at that time; in other words, those who were either adults or at least approaching adolescence. We don't know how many infant deaths there were. But altogether the population deficit, considering those who died, those who died as infants, and those who were not born at all because of the war conditions, was about 40 million, out of what should have been approximately 200 million people at the end of the war. In other words, they lost 20 percent of the population they might have had in 1945 as the result of hostilities.

Now, this is indicated very graphically by the figures indicating the number of young people entering productive ages, namely, reaching the age of 18, in the immediate future. These figures were compiled by a German scholar, Yorkenbach ?, writing in the Journal Osdiober ?, from figures concerning present school enrollments and past school enrollments in the Soviet Union. They represent a very fine job, which I take no credit for personally, but which is very instructive. I'll mention only a few of them, to save time.

In 1956, 5,800,000 persons reached the age of 18 in the Soviet Union. In 1959, the present year, the group born in 1941, which was the first war year, still total 5,000,000. That's not a very considerable drop, you see, because the children who were to be born in 1941 had obviously been conceived before hostilities broke out.

In 1942, however, the group which becomes 18 years old next year dropped to 4,400,000. In 1961 the group born in 1943 will total only 3,300,000, in 1962 only 2,600,000, in 1963, 2,500,000; and not until 1968 will the Soviet increment of new 18-year-olds in its work force and in, of course, its military force for men, equal the rate which it had in 1956 from the prewar generation of births.

Now, there's a second factor that is very important — the overwhelming predominance of women in the older groups. While the ratio of women to men in the Soviet population as a whole is 55 to 45, the ratio of women over 32 to men over 32 years of age is two to one. There are two women for every man in the Soviet Union in that age group over 32. That seems almost incredible also, but that is the official Soviet statement.

Passing now from these general remarks, which I will point out the significance of at a later stage of the lecture, concerning the population of the Soviet Union, let me say something about the specific social groups in the population.

First, the peasantry. Before the revolution, 80 percent, approximately 130 million, of the population of the Russian Empire lived in rural areas. Now only 52 percent of the Soviet population lives in similar

areas. This includes not only actual farmers, but all the country doctors, the country schoolteachers and so on that one customarily finds living in villages.

Now, this enormous reduction of the peasant population in the Soviet Union's rural population--because we can't get precise figures on the peasants as such--nevertheless means that the Soviet Union is still one of the most heavily rural of all modern societies. Its farm population is undoubtedly at least two and a half to three times as large as that of the United States proportionately. And this, of course, represents a very great weight of manpower, since the total agricultural production is smaller than that of the United States. Or I should say "women power," because at least two-thirds of the people working on the farms are women.

These people, men or women--let us say especially the women--lack skill in handling machinery. This is a very important factor in the slow progress of Soviet agriculture. I noticed on my own trip to the Soviet Union that one would walk into a milking shed, for example, and find a dozen milking machines, all but one or two hanging on the wall because they were not in working order and the milkmaids working away as before.

A second factor which cuts back Soviet agricultural production is lack of incentive. Due to the workday system, the trudorgain?, which means basically--I won't take time to try to elaborate its workings--that the peasant does not know what he is going to get either in cash

or in kind until the end of the harvest year, when everything which the collective farm has produced is reckoned, with portions set aside for seed, reserves, and so forth, and divided up among the several hundred families which comprise the farm.

Not knowing what he's going to get, not being able to tie his activity, his energy, devoted to the collective farm to any specific remuneration, the collective farm peasant tends to take it easy when working on the collective farm, and to devote as much as possible of his own effort to his private garden, a half-acre plot, which he is allowed to cultivate according to his own desires and ability, and where he in fact gets most of his own food other than cereals and where he gets a great deal of his produce for cash revenue.

Now, Khrushchev's efforts to undermine this garden plot have been touching a very sensitive nerve in the Soviet Union. For example, two years ago Khrushchev proposed that the peasants voluntarily sell their cows, which they kept on the half acre, their private cow, where they got their own milk, to the collective farm to relieve the individual housewife of the burden of milking, he said. A suggestion coming from the top in the Soviet Union is taken as a command. There are other systems in which this prevails too, but it is particularly important in the Soviet Union. The local party and state authorities therefore tended to take this voluntary transfer of cows as an order to be carried out. And last spring the Central Committee of the Communist Party had to issue an order emphasizing that when they said "voluntary" they really

meant "voluntary" and therefore the peasants keep their cows. And undoubtedly their dissatisfaction has been increased.

The low attachment of the peasantry to the regime is indicated by the fact that a very small proportion are in the Communist Party. Whereas of the adult population in the Soviet Union, approximately 6 percent are in the party for the country as a whole, only 2 percent of the peasants in the Ukraine, at least--and I'll be citing the Ukraine frequently because it happens that we have a complete breakdown of figures for that area--only 2 percent of the peasants are in the party. And that includes not merely peasants but administrators working on the farm, who probably comprise a majority of the 2 percent. Therefore the peasantry would seem to be the most disaffected of the Soviet social elements.

Now, a second group--the laborers, the workers, the manual workers, are a very large group today. There are 46 million non-agricultural workers in the Soviet Union, of whom 15 million are in manufacturing alone. The party allegiance of this group is much higher than that of the peasants, indicated by the fact that, again in the Ukraine, 5 percent are in the party organization--about the average for the population as a whole, you see.

It is true, nevertheless, that the majority of these workers are of peasant origin. In the 1930's, cities in the Soviet Union grew very rapidly, and 60 percent of the growth of the cities in that time came from the influx of peasants fleeing from the farms because of the terrible

conditions of famine in the rural areas at that time.

Others were compelled to go to the cities by the draft of apprentices for work in the factories, which were regularly carried out before, during, and after the Second World War.

Many who went to the cities remained in a sense attached to the countryside by the fact that they kept on raising a great deal of their personal food in small gardens outside the limits of the cities or in the grounds of the factory. Therefore the industrial worker in the Soviet Union is still half a peasant by mentality and background.

Nevertheless, he has marked advantages. One is the chance for a better education. And no feature of Soviet life attracts greater attention and approval among the citizens of the country than the opportunity which exists for a person of low status to acquire a good education. This is by and large a genuine opportunity and one which plays a very important role in attracting sympathy for the system.

Until recently in most cities there was compulsory ten-year schooling. Last year the system was started of requiring all, except a few very gifted students, to go to work at the age of 14 and continue their highschool education part time. Thus the chances for the average working boy in the city of going right through to highschool and college education are diminished. But they are not eliminated, and it is as yet too early to predict what effect this change in the educational system will have on attitude toward the regime.

Finally, working in favor of the regime among the urban proletariat

is a residual feeling--hard to gage, but I have no doubt in my own mind of the fact, ~~that~~ after talking with many workers in the Soviet Union that it does exist--that the working class is still in some sense the beneficiary and the vanguard of the Communist movement. This is not a very realistic feeling, because the workers don't get very many privileges. But it is a feeling which I think has psychological importance.

Also important is the fact that the workers are rewarded very strictly on the principle "To each according to his work." In other words, they have a piecework system, which has caused a great deal of resentment at times because of speed-up techniques. But at the present time, with a greater flow of consumer goods, it means a tangible reward for the worker for every bit of added output which he can achieve in his factory operation.

The greatest disintegrating factor for the worker is undoubtedly poor housing--poor housing in the cities, housing limited to nine square yards per person, that is to say, a room nine by nine feet for one person, which means that if you have a family of four, you get one big room. That, of course, is a very important factor in keeping the birth rate in the cities low and is why, as I suggested earlier, increased urbanization will tend to further diminish the Soviet birth rate. You just don't children when you have to put them all in one room, or when you get a nine-by-nine room for each additional child.

Now we come to another group of Soviet people--the employees, known, as I indicated, also as the intelligentsia and equivalent to our

white-collar class. This group is the chief beneficiary of the Soviet regime, as reflected by the party membership, which is 30 percent of the group in the Ukraine, and by its higher pay. But it is very sharply differentiated internally. Such groups as teachers, excluding college professors, which are better off, and physicians, of whom 80 percent are women, are very poorly paid and very poorly represented in the party. These two groups, teachers and physicians, will be about 20 percent party members only.

Similarly the intellectuals per se--professors in humanities, philosophers, writers, poets, actors--are discontented because of the rigidity of controls over intellectual activities. But they constitute a small group. And both they and the underprivileged intelligentsia--doctors and teachers--are very much less important in the system than the production specialists.

For many years, engineering training has been the basic road to a career in the Soviet Union. It opens all doors. The same is true of training as a natural scientist. There are 720,000 engineers in the Soviet Union; and, judging by the Ukrainian figures, about 50 percent are enrolled in the Communist Party.

In the prewar years a large proportion of the production specialists in the Soviet Union, especially in agriculture, were half educated. That is to say, they were given a highschool technical training and then sent out to do the job which in this country would be given to college-educated men. This group is still rather large in agriculture, although

its party membership is very high. But today there are so many engineers that the Soviet Union has no difficulty in finding persons of this training for its industrial posts. In fact, ~~the top~~ about half of all the technical specialists in Soviet industry are now graduate engineers. Consequently the new schooling program, which I mentioned earlier, has been developed to require and promote respect for physical labor, the fear being that too many people are turning to highly educated professions, like engineering.

The mere fact, however, that there is such a clamor to get into engineering training and that so many of the leading posts in the Soviet Union are chosen from people with engineering background indicate that this group is a satisfied one; and I believe that its pay and privileges bind it very closely to the regime. One finds, for example, in talking to these engineers a very strong defense of the privileged-pay position which they have. At the same time, however, one finds that they do not insist on an exclusive or snobbish social position to go with their material advantage situation.

Nevertheless, they, like the professional military officers, who are also a very highly privileged group in terms of pay and other material advantages, are not in political control. Political control is reserved to what are called the directing cadres of the state and party--a group of about half a million, of whom approximately 200,000 are in the party apparatus.

Many of these, as I have indicated before, have technical training.

They are therefore in a sense assimilated to the other highly educated technical expert groups in Soviet society. They stand above them in the sense of participating to a greater or lesser extent in the manipulation of power. But their identity of privilege and the access of technically trained people who wish to go into party operations, to careers in the party apparatus, tend to promote, I believe, a feeling of solidarity between the two groups. I will return briefly in a few moments to this point.

Now I want to turn back, however, to the ethnic problem at the present time and take up in slightly more detail two of the groups which I mentioned earlier, namely, the Ukrainians and the Moslem groups. The magnitude of the ethnic problem, of course, precludes an effort to survey all of the groups in the Soviet Union.

(Same map)

The Ukrainians occupy a key position because of the size and location of the Ukraine. As you see, they occupy the area here (indicating on map). It's not very big in a geographical sense, but it's at a strategic location on the traditional invasion route into the Soviet Union from the south, as in the Crimean War, from the west rather, and in the German wars. It is a fertile and relatively well-watered and warm portion of the European plain.

There are 42 million Ukrainians, or, rather, inhabitants of the Ukraine. Approximately 75 to 80 percent of those inhabitants are of Ukrainian ethnic affiliation, and there are large numbers of Ukrainians in other parts of the Soviet Union. The Ukraine produces one-fifth of

the agricultural products, 37 percent of the steel, and 33 percent of the coal of the Soviet Union. It is therefore an extremely important area and is inhabited, consequently, by an extremely important ethnic group.

The Ukrainians are very close to the Russians linguistically and religiously, as they are an East Slavic people by language and largely, though not entirely, Orthodox by religion. Moreover, they have been, especially in recent years, taken into a sort of partnership with the Russians in running the Soviet Empire. This is particularly true in the Army, where a great number of the higher officers are Ukrainians. And it is true in Asia, for instance, in Kazakhstan, where Ukrainians are numerous among the settlers and the officials who are governing the Moslem groups.

Moreover, very significant for the increasing attachment of the Ukraine to the regime is the fact of the enormous increase in the ratio of party members in the Ukraine during the past three years. I reported last year that the ratio was only 1 to 50. I was basing myself in making that statement on the 1956 party congress. But, according to figures more recently given out, the ratio of party membership to general population in the Ukraine is now 1 to 33, as compared to approximately 1 to 25 in the Russian Republic.

Moreover, there is the case of Alexis Yidichenko, who has risen to be No. 2 man. I have no doubt about it, in spite of the bouquets presented to Koslov, Mikoyan, and so forth, that Yidichenko is really the No. 2 man on the Rushov, and he is a Ukrainian, ethnically as well as

by
/ early background. It is sometimes said that Khrushchev himself is Ukrainian. But it is interesting to note that a couple of years ago he took occasion explicitly to deny that he knew Ukrainian perfectly as a native language. He said he had trouble sometimes in understanding. Khrushchev, in other words, is a Russian and does not want to become too closely associated with the Ukrainians, even though he finds it desirable to bring them into partnership with the Russians.

Now, opposed to this association between Ukrainians and Russians is the sharp difference in tradition between the two countries, especially in agricultural organization. The Ukraine never had to a large extent the mere or village community in which land was periodically redistributed, thus curbing the initiative of the local farmer and his attachment to a particular piece of ground. Farmers in the Ukraine were more prosperous and therefore suffered more greatly from collectivization. The proportion of kulaks, the dispossessed richer farmers, in the Ukraine was far higher than in the Soviet Union as a whole.

I believe, from my conversations in the Ukraine, although it is a very delicate subject to approach, that there is a general knowledge there of the difference of traditions between Russia and the Ukraine, and of the fact that the Ukraine is a relatively richer country, a pleasanter one in which to live, and therefore one which might be better off, although the people to whom one talks will not approach the question directly, if it were not associated with Russia. The language, in spite of its relative closeness to Russian, is a rallying point, and so is the state form

of the Ukraine, in opposition to the centralization of power in Moscow.

This is a latent factor, however, and one which appeals primarily to the peasantry and the intellectuals. And they have bigger grievances against the regime as a whole, as I have already indicated, than purely national ones. But if there were some lessening of control, some possibility of disruption of the Soviet system, national feeling in the Ukraine might become a galvanizing factor which would play a part in separation of the country from the general Soviet realm.

A key role in such a case might be played by the West Ukrainians, who until 1939 were not in the Soviet Union, and have a different religion, the Greek Catholic ~~xxxx~~ religion, associated with Roman Catholicism, and also partly dissident Orthodox churches, which tend to make them even more resentful of Moscow's control. In that Western Ukrainian area there was continued resistance among the intellectuals, and even underground partisan warfare, against the Communist regime, at least down to 1949.

Now, turning to an equally brief survey of the Moslem tradition in the Soviet Union, let me note that in contrast to the Ukrainians the Moslems are greatly scattered-- in the North Caucusus, in the upper Volga Valley, along the fringes of the deserts of Central Asia, and far down in the heart of the Central Asian part of the Soviet Union. They are also much less numerous than the Ukrainians--only about 22 million as compared to 42 million-- and they are divided among 6 union republics and 5 autonomous republics of the Russian Federated Republic. Thus they tend to have no common bond

and center except the memory of their Islamic tradition and, for the overwhelming majority, the speaking of one form or another of the Turkish language.

The Soviet regime has deliberately fostered artificial cleavages among the Moslem population. For example, in the Central Asian oases--Tashkent, Samarkand, and so forth--they have set up different republics, which are, to be sure, based on linguistic grounds, but tend to cut across the traditional social affiliations of the urban population there.

For instance, the basic difference in the Tashkent-Samarkand oasis was between the sarfs?, as they were called, the urban population, which was bilingually Tadzhik and Usbek; and the rural population, which was entirely Usbek. But in order to cut across these natural differences and separate the two more advanced urban groups, separate Usbek and Tadzhik republics were set up, although their boundaries by no means correspond to the real linguistic division in the area.

Religion survives in the Moslem areas largely as a defender of traditional customs, which are not necessarily associated with Islam, but have become historically linked with it. For example, the treatment of women, polygamy, child marriages, seclusion of women, and the work of women among the peasantry--they carry on the predominant share of the agricultural work--the wearing of the veil--all these things are opposed by the Soviet system and yet cherished, at least by the male population, in the Moslem areas.

Then there is the clan spirit in the Moslem areas--the wearing of distinctive tribal dress, with its Islamic features, such as the turban; carrying of the dagger in the Caucasus; cooperation and favoritism among members of the same clan; and the deep attachment to the epic literature of the tribal group. All these factors have been stifled to a greater or lesser extent by the Soviet regime, and it has particularly tended to denounce survival of the epic tradition as evidence of bourgeois nationalism among the Moslem groups. The Soviet regime has also deliberately hindered certain specific religious activities, such as feasts and fasting and circumcision.

It is hard to see, however, that the scattered Moslem population can offer effective resistance to the Soviet regime. Today the large cities, like Tashkent, are melting pots; and it is true that in those areas segregation is broken down and there is residential and educational mingling of the European and Asian groups.

The Asian Moslem remains less utilizable from the point of view of work and military purposes than the European citizen of the Soviet Union, but he is hardly in a position to offer positive resistance to the regime.

What the intelligentsia among the Asians think is very difficult to say. They are undoubtedly acquiring western culture. Some, however, suspect that they are doing this, just as the Indians in the old Indian Empire did acquire English culture, in order to turn their more advanced knowledge later against the colonial powers. That remains speculation.

The Moslems have many strong traditional reasons for opposing Russian rule. It is doubtful, however, that these can be galvanized short of a fairly general breakup of the Soviet control system.

Let me pose now a few very general conclusions about the nature of the ethnic and social problem in the Soviet Union.

The size and growth rate of the Soviet population, as nearly as one can tell, are roughly of the same order as the size and population of the United States. Therefore the idea that one sometimes has, of a great mass of Russians outweighing Americans is certainly a far-fetched one. I think in the foreseeable future we can expect the countries to be in practical terms of manpower and potentiality about the same, although the Soviet population, in contrast to ours, will move in cyclic curves up and down, as the effect of past mortality upon the increment of manpower makes its appearance from year to year.

Secondly, the great class weakness in the Soviet Union is the peasantry. But the peasantry is largely inarticulate and unable to express its opposition except by diminished production.

Thirdly, there is a firm core of perhaps two million engineers, managers, bureaucrats, party officers, and army officers who are firmly attached to the regime, because it has made them what they are and they wish to retain their position as a privileged order in the Soviet Union. Hence one can hardly expect them to depart from adherence to the Communist ideology. They are also firmly attached to the incentive system, which pays or promotes each according to his contri-

bution to the regime.

Fourth, the national differences are sharpest among groups like the Moslems, which are greatly separated from the Russians traditionally. But they are not geographically compact, nor culturally at a level making them capable of real opposition to the Soviet system.

The major potential for national cleavage with the Russians is in the Ukraine, but it could only be activated in time of crisis. The recent measures taken by Khrushchev's administration have tended to bring the Ukrainians into partnership with the Russians in running the Soviet system. This naturally will attach the more vigorous elements among them more firmly to the regime.

Consequently, under normal circumstances, when a firm administration is maintained in the Soviet Union, when military power is intact, and when the communications monopoly of the regime is maintained, one can, I think, estimate that the Soviet population will be reliable in terms of the regime, and will become increasingly efficient in production, though it will probably never quite reach the American level, because of the geographical disadvantages of the population and the drag of this large rural, unproductive population.

If the monopoly of the regime over control, power, and communications were broken, however, there are enough disruptive, disintegrative factors in the Soviet system to lead, quite possibly, to a very rapid breakdown of the system as a whole.

QUESTION: Dr. Armstrong, you mentioned the relative advantages

that accrue to the Russian people living in the cities over those on the farms in spite of the fact that there is a substantial shortage of housing in the cities. How is the Soviet Party handling this problem? Are they seeking to speed up housing in the cities? Or are they planning to retard this trek of people from the farms into the cities?

DR. ARMSTRONG: They are encouraging people to move from the farms, because, as I indicated, there is really a surplus of labor there in terms of effective use. And they are doing an enormous amount of construction. Even in the period between 1956 and 1958, when I visited the Soviet Union, I noticed the great increase of housing. But even when adds a million units, let us say, it is only a drop in the bucket; and housing conditions will remain bad for, I would say, at least a decade, regardless of the effort put forth to increase the housing available.

QUESTION: You mentioned this subject of the repair of the milking machines on the farm. My question relates to the general mechanical ability of these people. Is it that they do not have the engineers here to do this repair? And is it a national trait? Are the tractors and other machinery--trucks and so forth--that they might have available--are those also going into disrepair?

DR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. To some extent that is true of big machinery like tractors, although it particularly applies to small machinery, like milking machines, which are just beyond the capacity of the milkmaids. They do have trained mechanics, but they are in short supply on the farms.

There is great difficulty in getting the trained person to stay on the farm. He wants to go to the city, because of the advantages I indicated. To some extent the regime encourages it, because they are interested in increasing manufacturing. The average farm worker is simply, unlike the American farm worker, incapable of handling complex mechanical devices.

QUESTION: Khrushchev is supposed to have supervised the extermination of several million Ukrainians. Would you give us the background of this and what effect it has on attempts to get Ukrainians into the regime?

DR. ARMSTRONG: Well, there is some doubt about Khrushchev's personal role in this large-scale suppression in the Ukraine. The suppression occurred in two waves. First, there was the wave of collectivization, where the kulaks, to the number of several million, were deported, especially from the Ukraine, as I indicated. Now, Khrushchev at that time was working in Moscow and not in the Ukraine.

Then, secondly, in 1937 there was a purge of the Ukrainian party apparatus, and many of those figures have now been posthumously rehabilitated. Some argue that Khrushchev himself was instrumental in carrying out this purge. According to the records, though, Khrushchev was at Moscow until the beginning of 1938, when the purge was largely completed; and he therefore is able to dissociate himself from this aspect of the suppression of Ukrainian party leaders.

It has been argued back and forth in scholarly literature in this

country and in the Ukrainian emigration; and I am not satisfied that there is definite proof that Khrushchev had a major part in that purge. He may have had, but it's hard to demonstrate it.

QUESTION: Doctor, yesterday the newspaper compared the number of engineers that we had produced with the number that Russia had produced. It further inferred that Russia calls a plumber an engineer. Can you comment on this, please?

DR. ARMSTRONG: I think that the figures given are basically accurate. They indicate that at the present time the Russians are producing about twice as many engineers per year as the United States.

Now, I think the engineers which the Soviet Union produces are good engineers in the technical sense. Whether they are as good as ours I am incapable of saying. But they are trained engineers.

We must, however, recognize that the training which the engineer gets in the Soviet Union is a narrow professional type of training. It does not fit him to act as an intelligent citizen. It restricts him pretty much to the type of learning which will be useful in doing a given job.

That means, of course, that the engineers in the Soviet Union are intellectually very narrow. They are deprived of the familiarity with the humanities, with the liberal arts, which we try, in Wisconsin at least, to give to our engineering students. And consequently the dissatisfaction with the rigidity of Communist control, with the narrowness and aridity of Communist ideology, is not very prevalent, according to my experience, among this group.

That is why I believe that the engineers constitute a group which is unlikely to oppose the regime--that plus the fact, of course, that they are a highly privileged group, which wishes to regain the privileges by maintaining the system intact.

QUESTION: Considering the large number of languages that are in use over there in Russia today and the effect of that on maintaining the integrity of all these minority groups, is there any effort being made on the part of Russia to establish a national language there to bring all these people together?

DR. ARMSTRONG: Well, Russian is the national language.

QUESTION: But I mean, teaching it throughout the various areas.

DR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. It is taught. It is a compulsory language in the elementary as well as the higher schools throughout the Soviet Union.

My experience has been that at the higher levels of education, all the really important subjects are taught in Russian. They will tell you that they have classes in Byelorussian or in Usbek, for example; but it's rather hard to find where these classes are going on. When one actually encounters the instruction and the people who are obtaining higher education, they all seem to be working in Russian.

The concessions to the minor languages, therefore, which are real, are designed mainly to act as proof that the Soviet Union is not attempting to force all into a common linguistic mold. But they all are compelled to obtain, at least if they progress beyond elementary education,

a sufficient knowledge of Russian to function in the general society. And anyone who wishes to go on to a career of importance, especially in political work, has to be altogether fluent in the Russian language. It is the Lingua Franca of this whole Soviet system.

QUESTION: Dr. Armstrong, you showed a map on which Cossacks were scattered throughout the southern part of Russia in fairly large numbers, but you said also that they were relatively unimportant in present-day Russia. What accounts for the lack of importance of that group? Are they predominantly rural or urban, or what is their status?

DR. ARMSTRONG: Well, I was referring to the Kazakhs as a Central Asian nationality, traditionally of Moslem affiliation, and they were herdsmen, originally. Now many have gone into factories and many have been settled permanently on farms. But, as a matter of fact, they are submerged in the mass of Ukrainians and Russians who have moved in, as you can see by the cross-hatching on this map--into the more fertile parts of Kazakhstan.

Now, the Cossacks, as we think of them as a separate group with a semi-military type of organization, inhabited primarily this North Caucasus and Don area of the Soviet Union. They too exist and have certain traditions which distinguish them from the surrounding populations, but they are Russian by language and cultural affiliation; and, as far as one can determine, they are pretty well assimilated into the general Soviet population in that southern part of the Soviet Union.

QUESTION: In view of the ambition of the Russians to get into the privileged class, what is going to be the problem of getting the children of these privileged class people out of the privileged class?

DR. ARMSTRONG: That's a very serious problem for the Russian system. We cannot as yet really estimate what the effect of hereditary privilege in the Soviet Union is. Studies by the Harvard interview group, published recently in the book "The Soviet Citizen," by Inkolas and Dower, indicate that there is a great transmission of educational privilege. That is to say, in spite of the fact that the regime tries to recruit people from all levels of society for higher education, in fact those who have been encouraged by their better-educated parents to strive for higher education are those who are more likely to attain it. That is true in this country. It's true in every society, and the Soviet Union offers no exception. The parents of such children will try very hard by hook or crook to get university education for them. And quite a number of scandals in this regard have risen in the Soviet Union.

Khrushchev's recent move to require almost all students to do manual work while they are in high school and in part also in the universities indicates that he is concerned with this problem. And the fact that Khrushchev himself came from very poor peasant parents probably influences him to increase the opportunities for the lower classes in education and to diminish what he considers the free ride for the more privileged children. It's an effort, however, I think, to stem the tide of Soviet progress, which points in the direction of a more stratified

society, in which one's family background will play more and more of a role in increasing the chances of his getting an education, which in turn means the eligibility for higher positions in the society.

That is partly speculative, however, because, given the relatively short length of the Soviet system and the great number of crises which it has undergone, we cannot be entirely sure that such hereditary privilege is going to be firmly established in the system.

QUESTION: I noticed a piece in the paper where the control of travel is going to be somewhat lifted in Russia, in the near future. Going back to your dissertation today, Doctor, how much control was exercised over your travels there? How much freedom did you have?

DR. ARMSTRONG: That's a sad question for me to answer, I'm afraid. In 1956, when the country was just opening up to ordinary American visitors, I was allowed a great deal of freedom. I was assigned no guide to accompany me around the country. I had one in each town. But usually these guides were rather naive young people--students in many cases, who had been brought in just for the purpose of conducting foreigners around; and it was easy to get around them. I could wander around pretty much as I wished. And on the trains and on the airplanes, for example, I was able to move around completely unescorted and talk to people fairly freely. And I had very many interesting conversations with people who were in fact opposed to the regime, who were able to seek me out in the corridor of a train or on a park bench and unburden themselves to me.

Now, in 1958 for me the situation was changed. A very personable but very sharp young lady was assigned to me as soon as I got to Moscow, and she indicated that she was going to take over my travel in the Soviet Union. She accompanied me down to Central Asia and would scarcely let me out of her sight, except at night, and wouldn't even let me eat alone in the restaurants. This, of course, greatly restricted my activities, although she did all she could to facilitate the material progress of my adventure.

The situation may or may not have been peculiar to me. They know, and knew more by that time, of what I was doing. My work had been circulated to some extent in the Soviet Union among those who are entitled to see such things. I had been there before and they knew I was interested in getting into various out-of-the-way corners. That may have influenced them.

The fact that Central Asia is a very touchy area and one which they wish to keep under firm control may also have influenced them to send this young lady along with me. She did not accompany me to Kiev and the Ukraine, where I had been before.

Others who have gone there for the first time, especially students, have not had this experience. They were as free in '58 or '59 as I was in '56, in some cases. Not in all. And so it's very difficult to generalize from one's personal experience. But my own experience was that the situation is getting more rigid, partly because they have been able in the course of three years to find and train guides who know exactly

how to handle the foreign visitor.

QUESTION: Was it also because you were better known on the second visit?

DR. ARMSTRONG: Well, I'm sure that was the case, because I ran into some difficulties. I was arrested once and picked up other bits of information that I wasn't supposed to get; and I'm sure that a red tag was attached to my file.

COL. FLYNN: There are hands up all over the room, but I'm afraid we're going to have to bring this meeting to a close.

Dr. Armstrong, on behalf of the College I want to thank you for coming down from the University of Wisconsin and spending this morning with us.

DR. ARMSTRONG: Thank you very much.

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