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PROBLEMS AND PROGRAMS OF THE RUSSIAN ÉMIGRÉS*

Post-revolutionary Russian émigrés at present total a little over three million persons, exclusive of children born in exile, although no estimate of their exact numbers can be made. A large proportion were displaced persons who for political reasons did not return to their homeland after World War II. Only about three percent of them take an active part in émigré political groups, the rank and file being reluctant to join political organizations, preferring instead to participate in local church, educational, and similar groups. However, as a whole they are exceptionally alert to political developments and follow with keen interest the continuous debates and controversies carried on in the large number of Russian-language periodicals and newspapers published outside the Soviet Orbit.

It is not possible to judge the importance of an émigré political group by its size. Some of them that are numerically insignificant exercise an important influence on émigré political thinking through the personal qualities and standing of their leaders. However, the popularity of each group and even of individual leaders fluctuates widely, depending not only on the ideology of the group but also on international developments and the attitude of local authorities toward the Russian problem.

The groups discussed here are organized on a world-wide basis and have branches in most countries where there are centers of Russian emigration. The headquarters of most groups are located either in Western Europe or the U.S. While the groups have aroused outside interest in the countries where they are active, none of them has official governmental backing.

This report surveys their attitudes on the following topics of principal interest in relation to a non-Communist Russia: form of government, role of political parties, civil and religious rights, problems of national minorities, territorial problems, federal versus centralized state, type of economy. Some of the groups have issued formal programs or statements of aims. Others either have no formal published program or state their aims in vague and general terms. Consequently there is some unevenness in the information available

* Based on IR-6593, May 14, 1954, DRS, OIR, Department of State. The original report contains much detail on the programs and aims of the individual groups that has been omitted in the present summary version. Several important studies on the Russian diaspora are listed in the Bibliography, page XX; the list represents a sampling and is not comprehensive.

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in attitudes on specific issues. On foreign policy, armed forces, police power, and other equally important and controversial subjects, the émigré groups and leaders have avoided taking a public stand.

In describing the political attitudes of the groups no evaluation is attempted, nor is any evaluation made of the influence of émigrés in national or international affairs.

I. Political Organizations of the Émigrés

Except for a common opposition to Communism and the Soviet government and hope for an eventual return to a non-Communist Russia, the émigrés have few common aims. They are actually categorized in a broad sense less on their political attitudes than on their length of exile—the "old", the "new", and the "newest".

The "old" émigrés, estimated between one and two million persons, left the USSR between the revolution of 1917 and the outbreak of World War II. Once abroad, the majority of the "old" émigrés revived their former political parties, some of which advocate the restoration of the social and economic order that had existed before the revolution, modified by a land reform and by the principle of "no predetermination," which leaves the question of the future political structure of a non-Communist Russia to a constituent assembly to be elected after liberation.

The "new" émigrés are refugees displaced by the upheaval of World War II. Even after the forcible return of some of these displaced persons, the number still remaining abroad is probably not less than one million. The group is composed of members of all strata of Soviet society. It is poorly unified and has no leadership of importance. The low educational level of most of the people who have gravitated toward this group (not more than 10 percent of them have professional training) and their lack of experience in political affairs have retarded their participation in émigré political activities.

The "newest" émigrés are persons who have escaped from the USSR or Soviet-occupied areas since the end of the war. Although the size of this group is not definitely known, it is estimated that it consists of about 30,000 persons. These émigrés generally remain aloof from the other groups.

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Major Political Organizations

The émigré political groups are so diversified, numerous, and subject to change that it is difficult to penetrate the maze they form. However, there are five major political organizations toward which all groups have a tendency to gravitate, and the discussion here is confined to them: Solidarists (NTS), Socialists, Union of Struggle for Freedom of the Peoples of Russia (SBNR), Liberal Democrats, and Monarchists.

1. National Labor Union or Solidarists. The largest and most active Russian émigré organization is the National Labor Union (NTS), whose members call themselves "Solidarists." Its headquarters are in Frankfurt, West Germany, and it has branches and representatives in other countries where there are Russian émigré centers. The present NTS program combines anti-Bolshevism with nationalism, and advocates a centralized state with some features of a corporate and planned economy. The size of the NTS membership is estimated to range between 500 and 3,000 active members.

2. Russian Socialists. The Russian Socialists in exile have few followers among the mass of émigrés though they have had considerable influence on émigré political thought. Their long-established connection with the leaders of Socialist parties in the West and their important role in postwar efforts to unify Russian democratic groups have helped them to influence émigré political affairs beyond their numbers. They are divided into two major parties: Social-Democrats and Socialist Revolutionaries.

a. Social Democrats. The Social Democrats (the Menshevik segment of the Russian Marxist movement) interpret Marxism in much the same way that West European Social Democratic Parties do. They rejected Lenin's "April Theses" (1917), in which he substituted the soviets for the parliamentary republic traditionally postulated by Marxists as the political form of the proletarian dictatorship. The Mensheviks propose to achieve Marxian socialism gradually by parliamentary methods.

b. Socialist Revolutionaries. The Socialist Revolutionaries are a loose union of several groups of non-Marxian Socialists, the most prominent of which is the Populist (Narodniki) Party of Alexander Kerensky. Their ultimate objective is the establishment of a politically democratic republic with a limited socialist economic base. However, they have never had a consistent program for political action, and the organization has continuously been torn by internal strife and dissension.

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3. Union of Struggle for Freedom of the Peoples of Russia (SBONR). Composed largely of "new" émigré elements, this movement had its roots in a youth organization set up during the war under German auspices and led by the Soviet General Vlasov, who was captured by the Germans in 1941 and in the autumn of 1942 began to collaborate with them. After the war and the temporary disbanding of the group, it was revived under the leadership of the Monarchists (see below), who interpreted the Vlasov movement as a continuation of the "White" movement of 1917-21. In 1948 the movement was re-organized again under its present name and asserted its complete independence from the Monarchists and all "old" Russian émigrés. The present aims of the organization follow the basic principles stated in General Vlasov's "Prague Manifesto" of 1944, and may be summarized as social justice, limitation on the right to possess private property, opposition to restoration of the monarchy, and recognition of the multi-national character of the Russian state. SBONR's headquarters and the center of its activities are in Munich; it also has a considerable following in the U.S.

SBONR has worked out a method of cooperation with the Union of Warriors (War Veterans) of the Liberation Movement (SVOD). At present both organizations are under the same leadership, and the decisions made by SBONR automatically apply to SVOD. SVOD represents the military complement of SBONR, which confines itself to the political area. The two organizations work independently, however.

4. Liberal Democrats. This group consists of the remnants of the Constitutional Democrats ("Cadets") of pre-revolutionary times, sprinkled with ex-Socialists and Russian intellectuals. It is officially named the Union of Struggle for Freedom of Russia, but its members are usually referred to as Liberals or Liberal Democrats. It is under the leadership of Professor Sergei Melgunov, with headquarters in Paris. Although numerically insignificant, the group's members are well educated and exercise some influence on émigré political affairs. Its immediate aims are to create a strong national democratic, anti-Soviet organization, to establish contact with anti-Soviet elements in the USSR, to abolish Communism there, and to establish a democratic form of government through a constituent assembly.

5. Monarchists. Although rapidly dying out, Russian Monarchists still play a considerable role in the political life of the émigré movement, chiefly among the older elements and the military. In the early postwar years (1945-48), they dominated the political activities of the Vlasovites and displaced persons in Germany. The Monarchists have not succeeded in winning over any considerable number of the new émigrés, however, and their influence has steadily declined.

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The Monarchists do not consider themselves a political party but a movement supporting monarchy as a form of government, and they recognize Grand Duke Vladimir Kirilovich as the rightful Tsar of Russia. As a supra-party movement, they have no definite program for organization of a non-Communist Russia, a fact which they consider to be a major advantage over other political groups.

Despite their common agreement on the form of government, the Monarchists are split into three major groups: the Absolute Monarchists, the Constitutional Monarchists with a conservative Vlasovite faction, and the People's Monarchists.

II. The Émigré Programs

The émigré organizations have one aim in common: the formation of a non-Communist Russia, but their programs reflect many divergent views as to what form of state organization should replace the present one. While most organizations have expressed some views on certain major features which should characterize the new state, such as the form of government, the national minorities, civil and religious rights, etc., they have avoided a public stand on a number of such important subjects as foreign policy, police powers, etc.

It is also difficult to determine what, if any, features of the present Soviet state would be retained; that is, what "constants" would be carried over into a non-Communist Russia. A recent example of the disunity of émigré thinking in this regard was a suggestion made by several well-known émigré economists that in the period of transition the collective farms be retained in order to prevent a major economic dislocation that could cause serious food shortages. This evoked violent objections from other émigré elements, not only against the proposal itself, but against the people who had presented it.

Despite such conflicts, the majority of émigrés seem to agree on the retention of some social and economic features of the Soviet state, probably altered to fit new circumstances. Among these, for example, are some type of cooperative organization of farming, along with private ownership, to which the state would render assistance; central governmental control over foreign trade, exploitation of natural resources, and armed forces. They also seem to hold a common view that many prominent features of the present state would be eliminated by various measures; private ownership of important parts of the national economy would be restored; controls over internal trade liberalized; and in general the economy organized to give greater attention to consumers' needs.

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The émigré programs as a whole give only a sketchy notion of the form of organization of a new state. The best that can be done from the information available is to examine the individual programs of the émigré groups on specific subjects without attempting to reach final conclusions. Seven major subjects are examined below.

Form of Government in a Non-Communist Russia

Except for political groups of the extreme right (Absolute Monarchists) and the extreme left (Mensheviks), the Russian political émigrés accept the principle of "no predetermination." In practice this has meant that each group has advocated its own form of government but has agreed to its being approved by a constituent assembly. All groups repudiate the Soviet form of government.

The Solidarists advocate a centralized government. Many students of Russian political movements have interpreted this to mean that the NTS leaders ultimately might attempt to replace the dictatorship of the Soviet Politburo by their own dictatorship in a milder form, with the emphasis on Russian nationalism instead of international Communism. The Russian Socialists unqualifiedly support a parliamentary republic as the desired form. The SBONR aims to unite features of both the Solidarists program and socialism. Composed largely of persons born and raised in the Soviet Union, the group wishes to retain the advantages of a strong centralized government while preventing abuses by limitations over its authority.

The Solidarists hold that supreme power in a "national-labor" state would be exercised by a chief of state, whose authority would be defined by a constitution adopted by a constituent assembly. The chief of state would appoint the head of government, who in turn would appoint his own cabinet, of which he would be chairman. Depending on the final provisions of the constitution, he would be responsible either to the chief of state or to the national legislature. For the legality of its acts, the cabinet would be responsible to a supreme court.

The Socialists advocate a republic based on proportional representation in parliament, government responsible to the elected representatives of political parties, and reintroduction of the "genuine" achievements of the February Revolution (e.g., freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion, and universal suffrage).

The Mensheviks' ultimate goal is establishment of a socialist republic based on the teachings of Marx and Engels. They advocate the union of all workers under the leadership of the industrial proletariat, accepting a parliamentary republic as the political form of the proletarian dictatorship. Although still maintaining

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that the capitalist system is breaking down and that the logical next step in social evolution must be the collective ownership of the means of production, the Social Democrats now favor putting the doctrine of the class struggle and complete collectivization in the background, and emphasizing social reform instead.

The other Socialist group, the Socialist Revolutionaries, subscribes to a democratic republic with a limited socialist economic base. Rejecting Marxism, this group advocates equal representation in the government of all working people, including the intelligentsia and the peasants. It not only rejects the Soviet form of government but opposes proletarian dictatorship or leadership in any form.

The SBONR attempts to unite features of both the Solidarists' and the Socialists' political programs. SBONR accepts the principle of "no predetermination," provided that the rights and freedoms pledged in the February Revolution are guaranteed. It advocates a republic headed by a president and two deputies elected for a four-year term by direct, secret, and universal vote. A candidate would have to receive at least 60 percent of the total votes cast to be elected. The president would form his own cabinet, which would be independent of the legislative body. However, a minister could be dismissed by a three-fifths vote of the parliament.

The Liberal Democrats state their program in general terms. It advocates establishment by a constituent assembly and formation of a government on democratic principles.

Monarchists. The Absolute Monarchists aim at the restoration of a monarchy in Russia as it existed before the revolution of 1905. The conservative Vlasovites (KOV), who reject the SBONR program, advocate a monarchy limited by a constitution, which would be adopted by a constituent assembly. They subscribe to the principle of "no predetermination" and support the general views of the Constitutional Monarchists.

Role of Political Parties. Information on the attitudes of the emigré groups on the role of political parties in a liberated Russia is limited. The Solidarists' program limits partisan political activity to the "right to influence public opinion and government"; in other words, to propaganda activities. Nothing is said specifically about party participation in any branch of the Government. SBONR would outlaw parties of the extreme left (Communists and Anarchists) and the extreme right (fascists and Absolute Monarchists). The Constitutional Monarchists, while not advocating prohibition of parties, proclaim that no class or party privileges should exist. The Absolute Monarchists consider political parties unnecessary, and under their program even if parties were not prohibited their activities would be made minimal.

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Civil Rights and Freedom of Religion. Recognizing the profound changes that have occurred in Russian national life as a result of the revolution and the Communist dictatorship, all major Russian political parties except the Absolute Monarchists have proclaimed their support of civil rights and freedom of religion, within the framework of their respective programs.

The National Minorities. The leading Russian émigré organizations in 1951-53 modified to a considerable extent their stand on the national minorities question to eliminate some of the glaring features which they knew to be in disfavor with unofficial groups in Western countries interested in supporting émigré activities. Their revised views now provide that national minorities should have religious and cultural freedom and some degree of local autonomy. Controversy continues, however, regarding the right of national minorities to assert their independence.

Territorial Problems. All Russian émigré leaders have been careful not to make any definite statements on the future boundaries of a liberated Russia. The émigrés show an increasing apprehension that any future anti-Communist struggle might be transformed into a fight against "Russia" aimed at dismemberment of the USSR. The "Balkanization" of Russia is opposed by the responsible leaders of all the émigré political groups. Even the Socialists, who in principle support the right of national minorities to independence, reject dismemberment of Russia. All groups believe that one of the main problems of the future state would be to preserve and strengthen its independence and territorial integrity.

Federal Versus Centralized State. Judging by their programs, the émigré groups generally favor a strong centralized state. The rights and duties of the national government are always clearly stated; those of local administrations, including "autonomous" territories, are usually described in general and vague terms. The only notable exception is the Liberal Democrats, who advocate a federated state.

Type of Economy

Private Versus Public Ownership. All émigré groups support some government controls over the economy and at least partial public ownership of some industries. With the exception of the small group of Monarchists and Liberal Democrats, the majority believe that a considerable part of the Soviet economic structure would, out of necessity, be retained. Political expediency precludes incorporation of such a blunt statement in any of the political programs of the émigré groups. But evidence of such intentions, while disguised,

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is found in the economic programs of NTS and SBONR. The Socialist program naturally has many economic objectives in common with communism; it advocates gradual socialization of industry, arable land, and natural resources.

Agriculture. The abolition of the compulsory kolkhoz system and transfer of the land to the people are accepted by all leading Russian émigré groups as the cornerstone of agrarian reform in a liberated Russia. All major groups have expressly announced that the restoration of the land to prerevolutionary landlords would be prohibited.

Industry. To achieve the maximum development of the country's industry but to prevent the development of large-scale capitalism, the Solidarist and SBONR programs provide that the state retain in its own hands the principal branches of industry. Other smaller industrial enterprises would be transferred gradually to community and private sectors of the national economy.

The Russian Socialists expect that eventually all means of production would be socialized. They oppose the taking over of big industries in a liberated Russia by private capitalists, domestic or foreign, even during a transition period following liberation. However, enterprises of light industry would be privately owned during the period of transition from controlled capitalism to socialism. The Monarchists, conservative Vlasovites, and the Liberal Democrats advocate traditional capitalism in this sector of the economy, with a minimum of governmental supervision and interference.

Labor Problems. All main groups hold that wage earners should be protected from exploitation by private factory owners and from monopolistic controls over employment by the state. All leading groups accept trade unions. However, some of them would limit labor's right to strike. SBONR, for example, would permit ordinary strikes, but would prohibit general strikes as being political in nature. The Solidarist program says nothing about the right of workers to strike.

III. New Soviet Propaganda Treatment of the Émigrés*

Blanket condemnation of all Russian émigrés residing in the West has now been replaced by the Kremlin with a differentiated attack upon the leaders of anti-Communist émigré organizations

* Based on a report prepared June 25, 1954 by FBIS

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(particularly those of Civil War vintage) who are said to be intimidating and exploiting the unfortunate rank-and-file displaced persons. This tactic of isolating the DP leadership in propaganda complements the recently intensified Soviet efforts to weaken the émigré organizations by kidnapping and assassinating their leaders.

The Soviet announcements on June 12 and 15 of unusually lenient sentences meted out to five "candid" American spies apprehended in the USSR and the accompanying propaganda on American oppression and exploitation of the DP community in Western Germany, together with promises not to punish returnees indicate a serious propaganda effort to encourage Soviet defectors and DP's to abandon the West and return to the homeland. The special effort to promote the defection of DP's working with the West may be grasping for chips to play against the recent defections of MVD agents.

Moscow's propaganda attention to Soviet émigrés has always been extremely low. In recent years, when émigré leaders have been mentioned at all, they have been denounced as "American agents." In 1950 a low-level attack was launched against the forcible detention and "sale" of Soviet DP children by Western and particularly British "child traders" but this was not associated with an appeal to adult DP's nor was it concerned with their plight.

A widely reported sympathetic allusion to Soviet DP's in West Germany within recent times occurred in a Pravda editorial broadcast on June 21, 1953, following the anti-Soviet riots of June 17 in East Germany. In an item ostensibly devoted to a demand for greater vigilance by the Soviet people, Pravda discussed the recruiting of agents by American intelligence from among DP camps "where a considerable number of former POW's and civilians driven away from the USSR by German fascist occupiers during the war are detained by force." American intelligence officers have taken advantage of the plight of these people, the editorial charged, and exert upon them "every means of pressure, deceit, bribery, and blackmail in order to force them to carry out espionage and subversive activities against their country." The editorial distinguished between "direct fascist accomplices" among the émigrés and persons "driven away from the USSR" by the Americans. Though primarily concerned with internal vigilance, the editorial was broadcast 14 times in Western languages (once each to Germany and Austria).

There was, however, no explicit bid to DP's to return and no guarantee of immunity against punishment in the Pravda editorial. A more obvious attempt to isolate émigré leaders from rank-and-file DP's and to encourage the latter to return was contained in the propaganda dealing with the "voluntary" return to the USSR of the

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Ukrainian political émigré Josef Krutij in May, 1954 immediately after the announcement of the execution of the spy Okhrymovich. An article published both in the Ukrainian press and in Pravda described his career as a Ukrainian nationalist, his fight against the Soviet regime during the Civil War, his emigration, and his separatist activities abroad. According to the article, the brutality of the German occupation of the Ukraine and the experience of his nine-year stay abroad after the war convinced him that the Ukrainian leaders "desired power over the Ukrainian peoples, not their freedom."

Krutij makes a distinction between the leaders—Bandera, Melnik, Bogovets, Bolenko—and the rank-and-file Ukrainian émigrés "whom the nationalists try to drag into adventure." In a strong appeal to Ukrainian DP's and émigrés to return, the article concludes that "for every honest Ukrainian who wishes real happiness for his nation and development of its spiritual and material forces there is no common road with those so-called 'leaders and Atamans'; the place for the honest Ukrainian is in the Soviet Ukraine among his own people." Krutij asserts that the return to the USSR of the Russian NTS leader Trushnovich several days earlier had finally convinced him to make the move.

SOFTENING UP THE ÉMIGRÉS*

Russian émigré circles of various political trends (including monarchists) have recently been swept by rumors that the Soviet regime plans a general amnesty which will enable a great majority of Russian émigrés to return to their homeland. The amnesty will be realized in such a way as to persuade the doubtful that this time the Communists are going to keep their word.

Authorities suspect that some of the more recent refugees have fled to the West with the assigned purpose of creating a proper atmosphere among the Russians for the reception of such rumors. In this connection it is interesting to note that some Ukrainians from Galicia who have not heard from their nearest relatives for more than a decade are now beginning to receive communications telling about family affairs and even openly asking for packages, chiefly with clothing.

* Based on material in the files of DRS, OIR, Department of State.

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