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# Letter, L.C. Stevens to Otis P. Swift, with enclosed reports 'The Role of Soviet Emigration' and 'Additional Note on 'The Role of Soviet Emigration'

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## Summary:

AMCOMLIB Chairman Leslie Stevens provides his European deputy with his views on challenges faced by AMCOMLIB in facilitating a more united Soviet emigration as sponsor Radio Liberation broadcasting.

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January, 1953

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Mr. Otis P. Swift
American Committee for the Liberation of the
Peoples of Russia, Inc.
Augustenstrasse 46
Munich 2, Germany

Dear Swift:

You have often pointed out the necessity of certain fundamental "policy decisions" in order that the work of the American Committee may proceed more smoothly. It seems to me that such decisions flow from a point of view or philosophy, and that a clear understanding of that philosophy is often better than arbitrary "decisions." Enclosed are several copies of the broad point of view which is governing and which I hope you will find useful. The contents of this paper should be part of the intellectual equipment of all those who are required to exercise initiative and judgment in connection with the Committee's enterprises, whether or not those individuals are directly under your control. Although the fact that it is classified is obviously due to the necessity for privacy in some of the thinking involved, you are free to use appropriate portions in any way you see fit.

With kind regards,

Very truly yours,

L. C. Stevens
Chairman

Enclosure

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December, 1952

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# THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET EMIGRATION

L. C. Stevens

The basic question of war or peace necessarily orients all realistic thinking with reference to the liberation of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Most emigrees, when asked under what conditions they believe the liberation will occur, reply that it will come as the result of a war between the Soviet Union and the United States. There are, however, two considerations which are widely admitted by both the emigration and by Americans, and which tend to modify this conclusion; - first, that the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet Union are of such a nature that it will not seek war so long as the Western world is strong and united, and second, that it is not in the interests of the United States itself to seek war as a solution. The day in which the Soviet Union might be able to destroy the United States by atomic attack without corresponding retaliation seems far in the future. Although there is an ever-present danger of war due to the unforeseen incident or miscalculation of reaction to a given act, the chances are high that the present tense relationships between the Soviet Union and a strong, united, resolute West will continue for a long period. In view of the nature of the Bolshevik regime and the consistency of the aims to which it is committed, no accommodation other than a forced one seems possible, and no means of forcing an accommodation which will be other than a temporary easement are now apparent. In view of these considerations, the possibility of the dissolution of the Bolshevik regime occurring under some framework other than general war becomes of major interest.

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There is a widespread belief in the emigration that the Soviet regime carries within it the seeds of its own decay in a more realistic sense than that classic phrase can be applied to the capitalistic world. Self-perpetuating internal tensions, insoluble problems and other problems whose magnitudes are of such an order as to create extraordinary prolonged strains, and foreseeable and unforeseeable crises all work in that direction. Not enough is known about these elements or the ways in which they can be exacerbated by the West (including the emigration) in the future to permit any estimate of when their effects might become critical. The important thing to realize at this point is that there are strong reasons for believing that we are apt to require and to have many years in which to solve the difficult problem of Soviet-American relations.

Nevertheless, no one, at least in the West, can guarantee that there will not be war at any time. It follows that we must play it both ways and wage the cold war on a long term basis while insuring that we are adequately prepared for hot war at any time, and continually take care that our cold war activities do not of themselves unnecessarily precipitate a hot war. At the same time our hot war preparations should not unnecessarily infringe on our cold war capabilities. The liberation struggle has the great merit of working on that Soviet weakness which is the most effective deterrent of war - the lack of loyalty of the Soviet peoples to the Bolshevik regime, and so contributes toward preventing war.

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It is from this point of view that the role of the emigration is herein considered, with particular reference to the interests of the American people as interpreted by the American Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia. The purpose of the discussion that follows is to set forth the philosophy of the American Committee in such a way that those who work in its interests will have some understanding of viewpoints and policies as they are formulated and will be able to support them intelligently and effectively.

It is probable that there are from one to two million former residents of lands that comprise the present Soviet Union who are now living in the Western world. Most of them expect to be assimilated into the Western world, but some live only for the time when the Bolshevik regime will be broken and they can return to their homelands under some form of government which will be less oppressive of individual freedoms. Many of these latter have more or less definite ideas of the governmental structure which they believe would be best for their particular conception of the homeland, and it is these who give significance to the kaleidoscopic variety of emigree political parties.

Those parties and groupings owe their complexity partly to their being a crude reflection of some of the complex problems which must some day be faced, such as the status of the many nationalities which now make up the Soviet Union or to various theories of government ranging from social-democratic to

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constitutional monarchy, and partly to historical events of the comparatively recent past. There are cleavages along many different planes. Some of the nationalities cover the whole spectrum of political theory from left to right, and some hate the Great Russians as such, while others see their eventual salvation in some sort of union or federation with them. Some of the emigres of the First World War regard all later emigres as little better than Bolsheviks, and the emigres of the Second World War are regarded in more than one quarter as nothing but German collaborationists. Some regard any form of socialism as only Bolshevism in disguise, and others believe that only the strongest centralized government can control the people. Prejudice thrives where there are few facilities for determining facts, and the Slavs, who are greatly in the majority and who themselves are split between Great Russians, Byelorussians and Ukrainians, are highly polarized in temperament and thought. Much more than theories are involved, for the blood line has been crossed so often and on such a scale that passion and bitterness are almost normal. Through it all is a dark thread of Semitic revenge and anti-Semitism, and a pervading fear and suspicion that the fingers of the Bolshevik regime are probing everywhere throughout the emigration. Certainly the fact that the emigration has been chaotically divided and at each other's throats for thirty-five years is an agreeable thing to the Kremlin.

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It would be strange if the Kremlin failed to take advantage of one of the basic rules of propaganda, which says to exploit and exacerbate all cleavages within an opponent. The emigre press continually provides excellent propaganda material to this end, and may well relieve the Kremlin of the necessity for doing much in this field other than to sit back and enjoy the spectacle. In addition, the energy and effort expended in the emigre world on internecine strife is so extensive that there seems little reserve left to apply to the common enemy.

One would think that these considerations alone would lead to an armistice in the emigre world. However, something much deeper than petty squabbling is involved. One of the most impressive results of close contact with that world is the deep sincerity with which such divergent views are held and aggressively defended. Although there is much prejudice, it is apt to be backed up by belief which is so genuine that it becomes a sacrifice of principles to yield in even what seems to be minor respects. The issues which are in fact petty, such as whether "Russia" or the "Soviet Union" should be designated as the common enemy, are rooted in fear and mistrust of other legitimate elements of the emigration, and that fear and mistrust is itself not a petty thing.

It follows that any hope for unification of the emigration on the genuine issues on which there are such violent differences is highly unrealistic, at least for the foreseeable future. In two years time only two major points have been found by emigres themselves

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on which there seems to be any hope of agreement, and these two points probably represent the only presently possible basis for collaboration. One of them is the struggle to bring about the liberation from the Bolshevik regime, and the other the principle of self-determination of the peoples now within the Soviet Union as opposed to pre-determination from without. Both of these major points are still full of thorns.

The liberation struggle has many ramifications. Activities which by their nature must take place within the boundaries of the Soviet Union, - agent penetration, organization of resistance movements, distribution of propaganda, subversion in all ways other than by radio broadcasts, in fact all clandestine activities whether within or without communist controlled countries, are unsuitable for accomplishment by any unified emigration whose basis of unification is limited to these two major points. The underlying mutual distrust of the elements that compose the emigration is so strong that those elements could not and should not be brought to assume the security risks involved, particularly where lives are involved, as is often the case. This means that the whole area of clandestine operations, if it in fact exists, must be supported by someone other than the American Committee on a unilateral and piecemeal basis, which sets up powerful forces that tend to keep the emigration divided rather than united. It follows that if any support is given by American interests to clandestine activities,

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some way should be found to insure that those interests are aware of and in complete sympathy with the aims and principles of the American Committee. They should themselves not only make no political commitments that are inconsistent therewith, but should confine their activities strictly to specific ends of a non-political nature.

The area of overt struggle includes overt propaganda by radio and printed means, demonstrations, publicity, education, and a wide field of research and study which extends usefully into post-liberation problems. The difficulties which confront a limitedly-united emigration in even this overt area are formidable and not rapidly to be overcome, but they appear to be soluble with patience and time. The major problem here is likewise tied up with distrust and fear which lead to intrigue, denunciation, and struggles for control, jobs and prestige.

The second major point of "non-predetermination" on which the emigration might possibly be united involves even more serious difficulties. There are strong prejudices within the emigration as to the true nationalistic aspirations of the present Soviet population, particularly in the Ukraine, and this is a subject on which it is well-nigh impossible to obtain genuine factual data. Current confusion as to whether the enemy is Soviet communism or Russian imperialism complicates the situation, while the potential disaffection of the Great Russian people within the Soviet Union

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remains one of the major prizes. Massive population shifts give rise to other problems, such as in the North Caucasus, where there are now probably more Russians than North Caucasians. Until the conditions under which the liberation takes place become much clearer than they are today, it is obviously impossible to visualize the mechanics of a just and equitable self-determination, and this in itself is a strong deterrent against accepting the principle of non-predetermination on the part of certain nationalities who rightly or wrongly feel that they are homogeneous, have consistently in the past made their choice, and are therefore reluctant to compromise the blood they have shed in past struggles for freedom for a dubious future in the name of a loosely united emigration.

No public announcement of the American attitude toward a liberated Russia has been made. There is unanimity in the emigration and among foreign students of the Soviet problem on one somber point, - that whether the liberation occurs as a result of a general war or comes about through the Bolshevik regime disintegrating under other conditions, there will be a period of bloody chaos, a Time of Troubles such as Russia has not yet experienced. It does not seem to be in the interests of the United States to undertake the responsibility for the solution of the problems that will there be involved, or it will almost certainly become involved in a new war in the process. On the other hand, it is obviously not in the interests of the United States to be confronted

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with an eventual solution which will itself lead to further wars or necessity for American intervention. The post-liberation problems are basically the direct responsibility of the Soviet peoples and of those in the emigration who continue to identify themselves with their original homelands. No clear reason is apparent why the United States should make commitments in support of one viewpoint as opposed to another, at least until the conditions surrounding the liberation become more predictable, except for broad generalizations that are consistent with our own traditions, such as in behalf of "democracy" and "freedom for all." "Self-determination" is a broad principle of this nature, and regardless of the degree of responsibility the United States will be willing to assume at a given time in order to guarantee self-determination, it can at least be said that the principle is an acceptable one for Americans.

The overt struggle against Bolshevism does not in itself require a united emigration, desirable as that might be. Research and studies can conceivably be coordinated and the intellectual and other capabilities of the emigration tapped in other ways than through a central organization. It is highly desirable that overt propaganda be conducted by emigres who are not subject to the implication that they are under American control, but even if they were in fact self-supporting, which they are not, the charge of American control will still be made against them.

As far as radio broadcasting is concerned, the content-spectrum which is peculiar to such an effort is increasingly narrow,

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bounded on one side by that for which the American government is willing to take responsibility, and on the other side by what the host government will be unable or unwilling to permit. Although the Voice of America is continually given more freedom and latitude in its content, there will still remain an area in which the possibility of repudiation by government will be desirable. Emigre broadcasting which is in actual fact as independent as it can be without conflicting with fundamental U. S. interests can presumably be brought to a high degree of excellence and effectiveness, and it is clearly a justifiable effort, but in itself it does not demand much more than has already been accomplished in unifying the emigration.

A newspaper or periodical for emigre circulation is necessary for self-preservation alone; it also is a part of the educational process of unification, it is a means of dissemination of the results of research, and it is possible to employ it in whole or in part in propaganda within the Soviet Union. Research in post-liberation problems cannot be expected to be supported in any other way than through support to emigres. This is an area which is not normally developed by existing political parties due to their preoccupation with the acquiring of power rather than with the problems involved in the exercise of that power.

Although the Coordinating Center that has already been established by the American Committee should obviously be expanded

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for propaganda reasons alone, it can still provide a justifiable base for this operation. Its greatest vulnerability lies in the attacks that are made on it by non-participating elements of the emigration, which can give great assistance to Bolshevik attempts to discredit it. It would, perhaps, be easier to bring about a cessation of those attacks than it would to appreciably widen the center, but even without freedom from emigre attack, it can still fulfill a large part of its function in the anti-Bolshevik struggle.

Although the liberation struggle can be carried on with reasonable effectiveness without any broad unification of the Soviet emigration, the post-liberation situation presents an entirely different picture. Regardless of the framework under which the liberation might occur, - whether it were the result of a general war, due to the death of Stalin, or to the dissolution of the Bolshevik regime because of other reasons, - if it should occur in the immediate future, the emigration of today would be a disintegrating factor of unpredictable but possibly considerable importance. Emigre figures, in order to "help" would reach the scene by any means they could, with or without auspices. Since they are already at each other's throats under far less critical circumstances, the immediate possibilities of power would exacerbate their already bitter differences, and they would not only be of little help, but would actually add fuel to the flames. Since their interests would lie in a field in which the United States should assume no responsibilities,

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the inevitable chaos would probably be bloodier and more protracted because of them.

Herein lies what seems to be the principle reason for a major attempt to unite the emigration before the liberation. Although no general political reconciliation seems possible in any reasonable period of time, any cooperative effort on ad hoc problems provides an educational experience in which the emigration is sadly lacking. Present relationships are such that few of the emigre leaders have ever seen or talked with those for whom they have the most bitter hatred. Their knowledge of their rivals is largely confined to polemics in the emigre press and to the sort of rumors, denunciations, and real and suspected intrigues which flourish in the emigration. The sort of arbitration and committee work which is a common technique between divergent interests in the Western world, particularly in England and increasingly so in America, is unknown to them. If they can habitually be brought together on such ad hoc problems as the general direction of a broadcasting station or the meaning of a general congress of the Soviet Communist Party, experience elsewhere has shown that over a reasonable period of time there is an excellent chance that they will gradually acquire an increasing respect for those who do not share their views. An opponent may remain a devil, but he tends to lose his horns and tail, and there is an increasing awareness of a broader community of interests than is at first admitted. There is

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little doubt that this educational process will be slower and more difficult in the case of Slavic peoples than with most others, but there also seems little doubt that if the liberation does not come until after a few years of such cooperation, the results of the process would carry over into the ensuing chaos, which might well be shorter and less bloody as a result.

Even a loosely-united emigration with this background of experience could conceivably be of great value in a war with the Soviet Union by handling some of the problems which are best handled by a government-in-exile. Without such an organization, American problems with civil populations, refugees and deserters, which may well appear in large number, would be enormously complicated. Under conditions of either war or a disintegration of the Bolshevik regime in a framework other than war, the United States will face grave difficulties in its attempts to deal with problems having political implications if it has to deal with emigre factions on a piecemeal and divided basis. Even now, while the cold war is in progress, there is a tendency for emigres to reflect their partisanship into the American scene by way of American politics, which, although probably ultimately controllable, should be minimized in the presence of a united emigration.

From this point of view, the unification of the emigration will have failed unless it embraces all elements except self-seekers, genuine criminals, and elements clearly known to be Bolshevik-controlled.

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All the elements of the overt cold war struggle against Bolshevism, press, radio, and research, are implied in any unification, and the broader the base, the better the results in each case. Fortunately, all these functions can be carried out on a narrower base during the very considerable period of time necessary to achieve the breadth of base which is indicated.

The only factor that brings a unification within the bounds of possibility is the stabilizing effect of American influence. Guarantees of the supporting Americans can compensate to some extent for the universal suspicion and mistrust insofar as the Americans themselves are trusted. In this connection, the sincerity of the Americans seems to be questioned less than their shrewdness, which is perhaps to be expected from those who consider that their own prejudices and fears represent fundamental facts. Also it should be noted that faith in sincerity can easily be destroyed by double-dealing and over-subtlety. The assurances of the American Committee that no one group or faction shall dominate or control a united center are helpful, but American ability to recognize same or to keep from being out-maneuvered can only be demonstrated with the passage of time. At worst, this guarantee, coupled with a continuing repetition of the necessity for broadening the Center to the limits indicated above, provides a consistent basis for American freedom of action in what it will and will not support in the way of a Center. It should be realized that the powerful lever of financial support is of very limited use

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unless it is employed in the interests of sincere and clearly recognizable moral ends.

Although the American Committee cannot of course commit the American government, another useful guarantee bearing on the nationalities problem is one in which the Committee undertakes to do all in its power to bring about post-liberation conditions under which all Soviet peoples will receive a fair deal, without entering into arguments as to the specific means of achieving this as long as the conditions surrounding the liberation and its date are still obscured by the unknown future.

The greatest obstacle to reaching the ultimate aim of a broad unification of the emigration may well lie in the mechanics of power within the structure of the Center. Any such organization requires some sort of structure which involves representation and voting rights. The temper of the emigre political parties is such that they can be expected to use that structure to obtain and maintain power, and such activities can well challenge one of the Committee's basic guarantees. This structure is directly involved in the Center's ability to broaden itself, not only with reference to the inclusion of other political organizations, but of non-political groups and even perhaps individuals. The power structure of the Center can also be expected to come under severe strains on other issues. The American Committee has already expressed concern over this problem, and it is believed to be recognized by the Center

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itself as one whose solution lies in the future. Only time and patience can tell whether or not the Center will be willing and able to devise a functioning mechanism of sufficient flexibility to achieve the breadth of unification which is desired. It is apparent that it will be a slow and painful process, and one which many emigre leaders, although admitting its desirability from many viewpoints, consider impracticable.

It is impossible to set any deadlines for such a process, but, since there seem to be other possible ways of achieving a broadly-united emigration than through the present political parties, the American Committee need not wait forever for results. It should, however, revise its approach toward unification only when it is itself convinced of the ultimate impracticability of the present approach. It is possibly a more difficult approach than others, but if ultimately completely successful, the most desirable. It also is a highly desirable step to have attempted before entering on any alternate course, and in any event, the results and experience obtained in the past two years seem justified.

In any event, as our greatest expert on Soviet affiars points out, the Western world, working through the emigration, will continue to be at a great disadvantage vis-a-vis the Bolshevik party unless an additional element of great importance can be developed. Even though founded on fear, the prestige of the Bolshevik party is enormous. Its disciplined apparat is so

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effective that the results of the efforts of even a cooperative emigration that is motivated as at present seem to have little comparative strength. This seems true for both the struggle against Bolshevism and the post-liberation chaos. It might constitute a particularly bad situation under occupation conditions before Bolshevism had been finally broken, in case war should intervene.

Possibly the most inportant problem that lies ahead is that of building up a comparable prestige within the emigration. The strength of Bolshevism without its evil aspects is badly needed. There are good reasons for believing that this cannot be attained on the mechanistic material basis on which much Western as well as all Bolshevik thinking rests.

Although no method of achieving this strength and prestige is now clear, it should, insofar as it is achievable, lessen the importance of any unification of the emigration broader than that which can be maintained with comparative ease. At least the latter sort of unification is considered necessary, and the ever-present threat of war gives urgency to the development of approaches to the solution of the problems which cannot be handled within the frame-work of approximately the present Center.

It is hoped that the foregoing may provide a proportion and perspective which will be of assistance in solving the many problems with which the American Committee will be confronted,

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particularly in priorities between various sorts of activities which may appear to conflict with political interests.

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ADDITIONAL NOTE ON "THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET EMIGRATION."

The paper entitled "The Role of the Soviet Emigration" sets forth the considerations that govern the nature and breadth of the loose political unification of the Soviet emigration which is one of the objectives of the American Committee for Liberation from Bolshevism. One of the purposes of such a political unification is to provide a genuine emigre organization to serve as sponsor and, insofar as possible, guide for the broadcasting operations of Radio Liberation. The points are made that although the present Coordinating Center should obviously be expanded for propaganda reasons alone, it constitutes a justifiable base for radio broadcasts in its present form, and that there are broad American interests in addition to propaganda which have an important bearing on the ultimate character of the Center which should be supported by the American Committee.

Because of a misinterpretation of the subject paper in some quarters, it appears necessary to state that the American Committee realizes fully the importance of bringing about the downfall of the Bolshevik regime before the other conditions discussed therein can have any application. It continues to believe that long range objectives should not be wholly sacrificed to more immediate problems, and that it is possible, although difficult, to combine the two in the overall national interest. It also believes that the elements involved in its views are of major importance and themselves carry some degree of urgency. In case of war with the U.S.S.R., the United States will be confronted with a liberation problem similar to that which faced the Germans. Rosenberg's policy of dividing Russia was opposed in certain Army quarters by a policy of liberation for all which was essentially that which the American Committee now follows. Both opposing policies were scrapped by Hitler, but

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if the latter had been followed, it might have had a profound effect on the outcome of the war.

Perhaps the intent of the paper in question will be clearer if the first sentence on page 12 is modified to include the following underlined portion:

"Herein lies what seems to be the principal reason for a major attempt to unite the emigration before the liberation, beyond but including a less ambitious attempt to obtain only a reasonable sponsorship for the highly necessary and urgent operation of radio broadcasting.

L. C. STEVENS

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