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socialism for their purpose at the current stage; the traditional institutions and elites are neutralized (mostly liquidated) and, thus, incapable of offering meaningful resistance; and the population is traumatized sufficiently enough by the memories of earlier horrors to behave submissively. Simply, there is no need for mass terror.

Further, even a faithless Communist has at his disposal an ideology which remains a powerfully effective theory and practice of exercising and maintaining power. One needs no faith to dominate the people. One needs ruthlessness and new institutions originating in a totalitarian ideology. But ruthlessness need not manifest itself in perpetual terror. Its mere specter suffices. It is not a different system. It still remains Communism, simply one of its avatars. The conservatives understand this very well. They are perfectly capable of differentiating various manifestations of Communism, including the "liberal" ones as during the rule of Brezhnev and Gorbachev (as well as certain "liberal" phases of Lenin and Stalin's domination). The conservatives remember, however, that even at its apparently most benign Communism always maintains its totalitarian potential. Thus the system remains Communism, and does not cease to be one as the liberals would like it to.

Within this context, we can name the following phases of Communism. The first is Communism on the way to power; then Communism in power; and, finally, Communism after the loss of power. The phases are dynamic and cyclical.

Communism marching to power manifests itself in two ways. Both aim at the victory of the revolution, but they differ tactically. The first way is to work apparently within the system, even in a parliamentary manner. Thus, evolution leads to revolution. Austro-Marxism before 1914 and Euro-communism of the 1970s come to mind here. The second way is to conduct open revolutionary activities by the vanguard party under charismatic leadership fostering anarchy and terror to radicalize the population through provoking the government to counterterrorist measures. Recent examples are the Lightning Path in Peru, the New People's Army in the Philippines, and the Maoist insurgencies in India and Nepal. Nota bene, in India the Communist rebels operate in about 240 out of its 625 administrative districts. At least in Indian state, the Maoists carry on their revolutionary acts against the Stalinists, who are currently in power due to their parliamentary victory.

In its next phase, Communism in power wields either total power or shares it within a government coalition. In the latter case Communism fluctuates within a legal democratic framework between parliamentary coalition and opposition. At times, however, the road to a coalition can lead through a revolution. This is the case with Nepal. The Maoists conducted a bloody revolutionary struggle, which resulted in a compromise. Once the Maoists won democratic elections, they abolished monarchy and dominated a leftist coalition government. However, the army remained strongly royalist and nationalist and refused to yield to "civilian control," which was a dialectical rouse to take it over. The army's resistance triggered a parliamentary crisis and the Maoists left the coalition government, which now is headed by the Stalinists.

Yet in most instances of Communism in power we deal with a mono-party regime. China, Vietnam, Cuba, Laos, and North Korea are the most classic examples. China and Vietnam have been undergoing their New Economic Policy (NEP) phase, where economic "liberalism" is coupled with soft totalitarianism where state terror occasionally surfaces (e.g., the Tianamen Square massacre). Meanwhile, Cuba, Laos, and North Korea reflect

Communism at the stage of hard totalitarianism. North Korea is the most egregious offender here. But even it has experienced quite a bit of change since the mid-1990s. The great famine brought about by harvest failure and Communist mismanagement served as a catalyst. It created a great deal of internal and external displacement. Refugees and smugglers crossed into China as border control became less stringent on both sides. The smugglers have brought back, among other wares, cell phones and other electronic equipment as well as DVDs and video cassettes. This breached the Communist party's monopoly on internal communications and undermined censorship. Further, some of the refugees make it to the free world, where a few become involved in anti-Communist propaganda activities over the radio waves and, to a much lesser extent, via other, high tech gear. Yet, there are still concentration camps and police terror in North Korea.

These changes illustrate transformation - and not disappearance -- of Communist totalitarianism. To transform means to change a material or a phenomenon without altering its basic nature. This concerns both "parliamentary" and revolutionary Communism. Under certain conditions they can pass to the next phase: Communism after the loss of power, or post-Communism. Post-Communist entities are perhaps best classified according to their geographic location.

Let us consider an interesting example of Communist parties in Western Europe, who have never enjoyed power (except for post-war episodes in France, where the Communists briefly joined a coalition government, and in Luxembourg, where the Communists uniquely won a parliamentary election, an unprecedented feat in the history of the world which went unmatched until the "transformations" of the 1990s). At the moment, we can classify Western European Communist parties as post-Communist (or, as having suffered the loss of power) in a sense that to a large extent they were the creations, extensions, and avatars of the ruling Communist party in the Soviet Union. Because of the implosion of the mother party, they lost power, too. Now, stripped of their mighty foreign sponsorship and, thus, shadows of their former selves, they have continued to operate within the framework of democracy as coalition or opposition. And thus, for example, the Italian Stalinists became a "moderate" party of the "democratic left," while the French Trotskyites - not dependent of Moscow since the late 1920s - bank on radicalism within the parliamentary system.

It is perhaps easier to conceptualize post-Communism outside of Western Europe because in the imperial Soviet sphere the Communist party and the state were identical. The post-Soviet sphere can now be divided into several portions. The first portion of the post-Soviet sphere consists of Central Europe's former Warsaw Pact nations and post-Yugoslavia. Their post-Communists oscillate between opposition and coalition in politics. Nominally, the post-Communists adhere to parliamentary democracy, but they dominate in economy and mass culture (riding with gusto the wave of liberal moral relativism) which allows them to manipulate the system to their advantage.

The second portion of the post-Soviet sphere consists of the western periphery of the former Soviet Union. Here the flavors of post-Communism are much richer than in Central Europe. In Belorussia the post-Communists enjoy a dictatorial monopoly on power. In the Baltics, they are more often than not relegated to the opposition, whereas in Ukraine it is the opposite. In Moldova, Georgia, and Armenia the post-Communists oscillate in power with the ex-post-Communists, or these who, genuinely or not, cut themselves off from their totalitarian past, and other

coalitionists, the nationalists in particular. The weaker the post-Communist grip on economy and culture, the better the chances for democracy.

That also applies in the third portion of the post-Soviet sphere: the southern rim of the former USSR. Here post-Communism is at its most blatant. Freely blending socialism, nationalism, and religion (usually Islam), the post-Communists ruthlessly wield the Marxist tools of power. The so-called "Stans" (Azerbaijan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan) are classical, post-Communist satrapies. They are characterized by various levels of totalitarian control, where Marxist institutions and systemic devices fabulously serve the post-Communists to maintain themselves in power.

In many ways, the satrapies outdid the Muscovite center in the loyalty to the Marxist-Leninist model.

Meanwhile, in the Russian Federations, there are several faces of post-Communism. There are Stalinist post-Communists, imperial post-Communists, and "liberal" ex-post-Communists. Each of these orientations has, in turn, a number of mutations. Generally, the imperial post-Communists have been in power since the implosion of the USSR. Ex-post-Communists briefly enjoyed some political influence as "liberals" in the 1990s but now they are eclipsed. The majority Stalinists indulge in parliamentarism. A minority has chosen a revolutionary path. They have emerged in a confusing array of groups and in alliance with equally repugnant and divided national socialists. Some of these rabid sects fuse to present an ugly National-Bolshevik face. But even the imperial post-Communists in power employ a schizoid combination of the Tsarist tradition, Christian Orthodoxy, nationalism, and Bolshevism to maintain their legitimacy with the Russian population. The social, cultural, economic, and political discourse of Russia continues, tragically, within the Marxian framework which alone allows for such dialectical contortions.

Our next category consists of post-colonial post-Communism. Here we mean Mongolia (an exception from geographical taxonomy) and a few African countries. In recent elections in Mongolia the post-Communists clashed with ex-post-Communists. The latter prevailed. In Africa post-Communism afflicts almost the entire continent, whose tyrants have gladly experimented with Marxism, but in particular the former Soviet colonies of Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola. In Ethiopia a post-Communist junta of nationalist coloring with some religious undertones remains in power (parenthetically, the Marxist regimes of Eritrea and Tigre, former parts of the Abyssinian Empire, are of a similar brand). Since the mid-seventies Mozambique has been ruled by the Marxist FRELIMO, whose permanent leadership unconvincingly claims to have abandoned Communism for social democracy. Post-Communism, as Communism before, is the main method of exercising power within a tribal society, and the (post)Communist party serves as a vehicle for the Shangaan tribe to control the government. Things are similar in Angola, where the ruling post-Communists represent mainly the western tribes, the Mbundu in particular.

It is in a different manner that post-Communism has emerged rampant in the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Neither was a Soviet colony. However, their Communist parties and/or their "national liberation movements" were Soviet satellites and creations. South Africa has just democratically elected its president who harkens from the Communist terror apparatus and rules with the help of the post-Communist party and post-Communist trade unions.

Zimbabwe's president and his tribal post-Communist party enjoyed similar Soviet, North Korean, and East German connections in the nation's secret police. Unlike his South African counterpart, the president of Zimbabwe has ruled as a dictator for several decades notwithstanding a recent and very tenuous power-sharing arrangement with his erstwhile party comrades, now ex-post-Communist coalition members.

The last post-Communist sphere lays in Latin America. Here is the hub of the post-Communist-wanna-bes. They endeavor to emulate totalitarian Cuba. Lately, the post-Communists have won elections in El Salvador and Nicaragua. But Venezuela remains the leading trailblazer of tropical post-Communism. Its comandante has shrewdly taken advantage of the parliamentary approach to ride a wave of populism to power. He maintains himself at the helm through a combination of plebiscitarian democracy, Marxian etatism, and post-Communist institution building, while steadily limiting the rights and freedom of fellow citizens. Simultaneously, the post-Communists-wanna-bes of Venezuela employ both class and race struggles in their quest for total power. They mobilize the indigenous people, traditionally the most destitute portion of the population, against the rest, i.e., against the mestizo and European-descended population. Thus, Venezuela clearly evolves toward Communism.

Recently, the president of Honduras has attempted to implement a Venezuelan option but his ambition was checked by a joint action of the nation's supreme court, parliament, and the army. On the other hand, Bolivia has succeeded in approximating the Venezuelan post-Communist model in the closest way. There the post-Communist-wanna-be leaders democratically introduced through a plebiscite an affirmative action system which favors the indigenous people over the rest. Similar class-cum-race struggles rage in Paraguay, Peru, Mexico, and elsewhere without a clear outcome yet.

At any rate, virtually all Latin American leaders are rather favorably disposed toward Venezuela and Cuba. The social democratic president of Chile has traveled to warm fuzzy Castro. The Brazilian leader Lula has expressed symbolically his admiration of the Communist ideology when he appeared at his own presidential inauguration wearing a button of Lenin in his lapel. Some of it can be understood as pandering to the virulent anti-Yankeeism in Latin America. But much of it reflects cultural permissivism which turns a blind eye to Communist crimes. That blindness dictates that Communism is good for it allegedly makes people equal. Nefarious regimes in the making (or perpetually in power) result to blight the Third World even more.

Meanwhile, in the West, the anti-anti-Communist admirers of Marxist egalitarianism and - by extension - Communist tyrannies everywhere wear ubiquitous Che Guevara T-shirts and attend Parisian fashion shows, where the models dress in the garb of the Soviet secret police. The continuing success of Communism (now in its post-Communist stage) can be further traced back to the lack of reckoning for its crimes. There was no Nuremberg for the atrocities of Communism. The tragedy of crime without punishment is simply galling. And the human drive for equality will continue to express itself in Communism and post-Communism until we have succeeded in changing culture. Then it will no longer be cool to be a Communist. Moreover, it will also become a shame to have been an anti-anti-Communist, an attitude all too many liberals cherish. But they should know better: no justice, no peace.

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