



Is History Repeating Itself?

by ALEXANDRA TOLSTOY

"People are rushing with terrible speed and noise . . . toward a precipice. They are not listening to those who want to save them and yet the only thing they have to do is to STOP!"

—Leo Tolstoy

DO we realize that we are on the edge of a precipice? I don't think so. People continue to live as usual, without worrying. But there is an atmosphere of nervousness, unrest among the young people. They want leadership, guidance. They are interested in questions of religion, philosophy, spiritual values. But who is answering them? A boy approached me after a lecture and there was so much sadness in his voice, his handsome face, his wistful, naive, black eyes. "How did you find God? Faith, religion? Can you help me?" I could not understand why prayer was forbidden in the schools. Why, in a free country, is prayer forbidden but pornography is not forbidden on the stands or in bookstores.

Riots, disorders, killing, looting, destruction! One of the main pretexts for those riots is unfairness towards colored people. But will those barbarian methods solve this tremendously important question? Don't the rioters understand that by violence and looting they are playing into the hands of the communists?

Have they forgotten the words of Lenin who promised a world-wide communist revolution? Have they forgotten Khrushchev's promise to bury us? Against whom are we fighting the war with the Vietnam people? Let us stop for a moment and ask ourselves: What is going to happen if we stop fighting? Not only Vietnam and all the small countries, but all of Asia will fall into the hands of communists.

When in 1931 I came to the U.S.A., only Russia was under communist domination. Since then we've lost China, and a number of small countries. In such a short time the communists have made great progress. The prophecy of Lenin that the communists would achieve world power, which sounded Utopian several decades ago, is now becoming a reality, with our help.

I consider it a great sin to discriminate against our fellow men whether their skin is black, brown or yellow. We are all children of God—brothers and sisters. But we must put an end to those, no matter what color they are, who bring violence, hatred, destruction to our country.

I recall how terribly hard it was to bring to the U.S. Russian escapees from Europe. Five, eight, ten years sometimes, those people dragged on a miserable existence in those awful refugee camps without work, hoping and waiting for the time when their human rights would be restored and they would get permission to come to the U.S.A. Those people would not undermine the government of America—on the contrary, they lived in slavery in Soviet Russia—they knew life behind the Iron Curtain, they brought this knowledge to the people of this country and they became loyal citizens. Many scientists and intellectuals started by washing cars or dishes; women with knowledge of several languages worked as maids or cleaners in wealthy American homes.

Poverty? Unemployment? I doubt

if people ever lived as well as they are living now. There cannot be great poverty in a country where there exist workers' compensation, welfare for old people, help for children of unmarried mothers—where there is security throughout the entire social scene.

I don't think people in the United States ever heard of what the people of Russia experienced after the revolution, and may God save them from such an experience. Bread was baked with wheat chaff or ground acorns added to the flour—the peasants said that acorns were nourishing, but the teeth of everyone in our village were as black as charcoal.

Unemployment? Then why are all the papers full of ads about "Help Wanted," and there are no ads of "Help Offered?" I called an employment office asking for workers and said we would pay well and the work was easy. The woman laughed and said she had no one. All the applicants wanted white collar jobs. If people are poor and hungry why don't they work? I came to the States in 1931 when there was real unemployment. So I turned up my sleeves and worked six years on a chicken farm, and I was happy!

"We demand the end of the war. We want to rule our universities!" Why are those slogans so familiar to me? Why am I so worried when I hear them? Because I lived through all of this. I heard those slogans over a half a century ago in the beginning of 1917, when Russia was on the verge of a revolution. Strikes, riots, no one wanted to work, the ruble fell, costs of food and other things went up, crime thrived, religion and churches suddenly lost influence on the people, trains crashed, there were many fires and much looting in big cities. Then, as today, no one considered the situation seriously. Life went on. The "Duma" (Russian Parliament) talked, the rich people enjoyed themselves, the revolutionists were busy preach-

ing socialism, the farmers were plowing. And meanwhile the clouds were gathering over Russia—getting darker, the atmosphere stifling, but people were naively reckless. "Everything will be all right," they said. Then the disaster came. Now for over half a century the Russian people live in slavery.

Do the students, the young people in this country, see the danger? Do they realize they are living in the best country in the world, enjoying freedom, having more food than they can eat, studying in luxurious universities which have all the laboratories, libraries, planetariums, recreation halls and everything they can think of—do they know about the ones behind the Iron Curtain—the ones who have no freedom, not enough food—who walk miles to get to schools and universities?

While the students are rioting in this country young people, poets, writers, scientists are risking their lives struggling against the Soviet regime. Three hundred were condemned to prisons and insane asylums. Do these young rebels sympathize with communism or do they sympathize with those who are risking their lives in the struggle for freedom?

"Let life be deep and not inane," the well known poet Yevtushenko writes. "Great things can never be a falsehood, but people sometimes make them false."

The people of Russia whose thoughts are expressed vividly in their poems, want freedom. What do the rebels in this country want? Dostoevsky in his novel *The Possessed*, gives a picture of a typical communist:

"There is one only thing lacking in this world—obedience," says Verhovensky. "Yearning for education is already an aristocratic wish. Where there is family life or love there is desire for property. We shall kill all desires, we shall spread drunkenness, gossip, denunciations;

we shall create an unheard of corruption; we shall exterminate geniuses in their very childhood. We will bring them all to one denominator. Absolute equality . . . but . . . the slaves must serve their masters with absolute obedience—no individualism.

"Listen," further continues the revolutionist Verhovensky, "I have counted them all: the teachers, blaspheming God with the children, are already ours! The lawyers, who defend an educated murderer, are ours . . . Teenagers, who kill a farmer just for the sake of the sensation, are ours. Judges, acquitting criminals, are ours! Prosecutors trembling

at court for fear they are not liberal enough are ours, ours . . . One or two generations of corruption is now needed: of corruption unheard of before, and vile, when men turn into wicked, cowardly, self-loving and mean wretches—that's what we need! They must also get used to freshly spilled blood . . ."

Dear fellow-countrymen, have you ever read the program of a communist revolution set forth more precisely and accurately than was foreseen by the great genius Dostoevsky nearly a century ago?

See "A Torch in the Darkness" HGN July 1961 and "Leo Tolstoy and Henry George" August 1964.



"The real enemy in Vietnam is the Saigon landlord and his relatives in Paris who are 'gouging every last grain of rice from tenant farmers through rack rent—leaving only a pittance for survival,'" said Harry Pollard at a recent conference in San Francisco, as reported in *The Analyst*, edited by Harlan Trott for the HGS extension in Northern California.

"To the Vietnamese peasant the American ethic is the support of the landlord's right to take his production, Mr. Pollard added. 'If the American retort is that the communists will tax his production away should they win, the peasant will shrug and say he gets it anyway, so what's the difference!'"

From the same source we learn that Henry B. Cramer of San Diego, President of Basic Economic Education, Inc., has tracked down some cases where the state is paying out public funds for sites 20 to 60 times the values listed on the county tax rolls. Local authorities do the landholder a favor by under-assessing land that is to be taxed. Then they turn around and do the landholder a favor by overvaluing the land when it is sold. It's a double standard: value low for tax purposes—high for public purposes.

The Northern California extension has just held a "down to earth" discussion in conjunction with the film "Better Cities." Ted Gwartney, former assessor of Southfield, Michigan, now assistant assessor of Sacramento County, was a speaker. Other headliners in the workshop following the luncheon were Robert Tideman, Executive Vice President of the Northern extension; John Denton, a real estate counsellor; Harry Sublett, candidate for state board of equalization, and Dr. William Filante.

Chicago's City Council Finance Committee has approved creation of a special taxing district for the city, branching out from the loop and replacing the loop L structure. Officials said landowners in the new taxing district favor the proposal to raise \$200 million in property tax revenues. That would be one-third of the total cost.