

PSYCHOLOGY

Fear Dominates Russians

Interviews with USSR refugees indicate that even in commonplace situations they lived under a cloak of fear. Mutual understanding is not ruled out by Russian character.

➤ **RUSSIANS ARE** dominated by fear even in handling everyday situations at work and at home. Americans are more concerned with protecting their own personal integrity and freedom. Neither one has more of a dictatorship personality than the other.

Such important differences as these and also a background of similarities of character were revealed by questions asked of Russian refugees in Munich, Germany, and a matched group of Americans. They were judged on the way they sized up commonplace situations involving relations between people and the action they said would be taken.

The study was conducted by Drs. Eugenia Hanfmann and H. Beier as part of a Harvard study of the Soviet Social System.

Nothing was found in the character of either people which would necessarily prevent mutual contact and understanding.

When a situation was described to the individual and he was asked to tell what the outcome would be, the American was likely to view the situation through the eyes of the "hero" of the story. The Russian would more often consider it from the various points of view of all concerned.

If the situation involved a decision whether to act in a friendly way or to be honest and truthful, the Russian was more likely than the American to put friendship first, the American more frequently would sacrifice friendship to personal integrity.

In a situation involving a choice between going along with what the group of fellow workers were doing or sticking out for what the individual thought was right or best, the Russian is also likely to differ from the American.

The American seems to regard giving in to the group as a loss of personal freedom. The Russian does not show the same need to defend his personal integrity against pressure from the group.

It was difficult for the Russians to answer some of the questions because they said such situations simply could not arise in Soviet Russia. Such was the situation in which a foreman felt his workmen were not working as fast as they should. He asked his superior what he should do, but the superior said not to worry, things might take care of themselves.

Characteristic answer was the following: "This is impossible: he must have lost his mind! How could he not worry! He is going to rave, he is going to insist with all his might that the work should go at a different pace. Tomorrow both of us will be in the NKVD."

In general, the Russians were dominated in all situations by fear. Americans showed more rebelliousness.

Results failed to show that either group, Russians or Americans, had more dictator character traits than the other.

Although striking differences between the two peoples showed up, a background of similarities is shaped by the two groups.

"There is no basis for assuming," Dr. Hanfmann, now of Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass., and Dr. Jacob W. Getzels of the University of Chicago conclude in reporting the study to *Psychological Monographs* (Vol. 69, No. 4), "that any understanding between the two nations is made impossible by some crucial difference in the character of the people themselves."

"We may perhaps draw some encouragement," they state, "from the fact that those differentiating characteristics of the Russians that have emerged most clearly in the present study can function to facilitate rather than hinder the establishment of interpersonal contact, in spite of the pressures exercised by the totalitarian state."

Science News Letter, March 19, 1955

GENERAL SCIENCE

Talking Book Helps Blind to Be "Hams"

➤ **NOW IT** will be easier for a blind person to qualify for a license as a radio "ham." The Library of Congress has just made available a talking book edition of "The Radio Amateur's Novice Examination, Questions and Answers." This is a publication of the American Radio Relay League to enable the beginning radio amateur to qualify for a radio license.

The talking books are books read aloud on phonograph records with 20 minutes of reading time on each side of the record. A blind person can borrow the records from the nearest of 28 circulating libraries. He may also borrow a player. In case he lives in a rural region, it is possible to borrow a hand-wind machine. There is no charge for the loan of either the talking books or the players.

Other books of a scientific or semi-scientific nature are also available on the talking book records. These include several books for the general reader on atomic energy and others on astronomy, geology and natural history.

The Library of Congress spends a million dollars a year on the production and servicing of books for the blind. In addition to the popular talking books, the Library publishes books in Braille and Moon type.

A total of more than 44,000 blind persons use these books. By far the largest number of these are talking book readers (or listeners). In one year, the Library distributed 7,500 new talking book players.

Science News Letter, March 19, 1955

PHYSICS

Portable Atomic Reactor Is Tested in Texas

See Front Cover

➤ **THE SECURITY-CLOAKED** portable atomic reactor, developed by Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Corporation, is undergoing tests at Fort Worth, Tex., in an effort to design a plane "propelled by nuclear power."

The device is shown on the front cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER running through one of the tests. It is the first picture of the reactor that has been made public.

As the "hot" reactor hangs near the top of a 70-foot crane, instruments on the tower in the lower left hand corner measure radiation.

The reactor is hoisted up, the company says, to reduce the radiation from the device that bounces off the ground and back to the instruments.

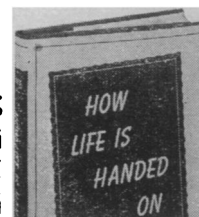
Science News Letter, March 19, 1955

"Explains Things As Parents Wish They Could . . ."

"A wonderful book . . . to explain reproductive systems of man and beast. The style . . . is easy and direct. Illustrations are informative and ample. Explains things as most parents wish they could, and leaves little to the child's imagination."—*Journal of American Medical Assn.*

"The entire process of reproduction, together with the attitudes inculcated by tradition, education, and social standards, is described clearly for children and younger adolescents."—*Science News Letter.*

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