

**MANAGEMENT GAMING'S LOST OPPORTUNITY: MEDITATIONS
ABOUT THE RUSSIAN EXPERIENCE AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE**

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ABSTRACT

A number of elements have shaped the Russian personality and culture. Many of those elements gave support to the onset and continuance of Communism in the USSR for more than seven decades. Although the USSR was a pioneer in the use of management games the realization of the benefits of business games was frustrated by a number of factors associated with the environment fostered by Communism.

INTRODUCTION

A number of elements laying deep in Russia's history dictated how Communism was operationalized in the USSR, how this form influenced what was taught as well as the way knowledge was disseminated. Despite the great need for the development of native management talent, and the great role management games could have in developing that talent, efforts to instill active learning techniques in higher education in the Ukraine and throughout the Soviet Union met with frustration at every turn.

The Formation of the Russian Mind and Culture

It is believed four forces from Russia's history allowed the Communist revolution to occur, remain in power for so long while simultaneously creating an educational system supportive of Communism's goals and philosophies. Those forces are a tradition of physical and spiritual slavery, the use of brutal and violent means to accomplish desired ends, an intolerance and suspicion of those of unlike mind or disposition and a need for the miraculous with its attendant traits of megalomania and mysticism.

Communism's Grip on the USSR

When Communism was first established after the October 1917 coup d'etat, a diversity of opinion within the Party was respected and encouraged. This lasted only a short time, however, as Lenin began suppressing liberal Communists in 1920 and different factions, or points-of-view, were forbidden in the name of War Communism. These suppressions continued with greater force under Stalin with a number of "show trials" taking place in the 1930s. Suspected "rivals" to Stalin's power and influence were murdered, such as Sergei Kirov, Alexei Rykov, Nikolai Bukharin, Leon Trotsky, Lev Kamenev and Grigori Zinoviev. Many others were convicted of crimes against the state and were banished to prison labor camps.

Thus a totalitarian regime was established and all liberalism, and its intellectuals, were abolished. The USSR's citizens were converted into spiritual slaves who had no right to their own opinions, let alone the freedom to express any opinions that ran counter to the State's position. Practically all people were converted into "man-curts" or men whose antecedents were obliterated from memory thus becoming the reliable and subservient "dogs" of their rulers.

Intolerance, and a fear of "those who were not of us" also was used by Communism to continue its enslavement of the people. This feature is apparent in the insulting, derisive nicknames Russians gave foreigners. A Frenchman was scornfully named "francuzishko", a German "nemchura" and the Japanese "japoshka". In the case of Americans, they were so stupid and idiotic that no single word could describe their ineptitude. Massive amounts of state-controlled

propaganda served the population's megalomania-driven needs. Russian's were told they were the cleverest and strongest people in the world and therefore they could rightfully teach others how they should to live. This megalomania also was evinced in hero worship, the cult of personality and the quest for a miraculous personages such as Lenin and Stalin.

Effects on Higher Education and the Spread of Business Games

For true learning and education to occur an environment of free thinking and experimentation must exist. This was not possible in the USSR. The higher authorities persecuted with great zeal any who had contacts with fellow scientists in non-CMEA countries. All Western radio broadcasts were jammed with a tremendous use of resources to protect the population from "hostile voices".

Candidates for foreign travel were carefully screened by commissions attached to the different committees of Communist Party. They also received strict instructions regarding their behavior and, as a rule, were escorted by a disguised KGB agent. All tourists were to walk in groups of not less than three and they were coached on how to answer "provocative" questions such as the names of their universities and their telephone numbers.

Freedom to publish also did not exist. Many professional "creative unions", such as those for writers, painters, composers, journalists and cinematographers, were instituted by the state. All had to join and no one could create independently of these. The control of all writing efforts was obtained through the censor's office Glavlit. Without a censor's stamp even wedding and anniversary cards could not be printed. Typewriters and Xerox machines were under the control of the KGB to prevent the typing undesirable texts.

The effects of this on the use of management games, as well as creative, liberal teaching, were deleterious. Graduation was assured based on the government's quota system for college trained managers. Students soon learned they would graduate unless some type of political breach or mistake was made. Another outcome was the existence of poorly motivated or stifled faculty.

As a rule faculties became accustomed to giving lectures using the same notes year after year with moderate updates to reflect ideas promulgated by the Communist Party's regular Congresses. These teachers were not in a hurry to learn new ideas and to use the new teaching methods. They also were not exposed to new ideas and new teaching methods.

Conclusion

Looking at the troubles Russia is experiencing now, it is not because Russia lacks talented people but because the Communist regime converted all people into passive and resigned slaves who had to obey implicitly and fulfill each of the Party's directions and instructions. Thus they have been deprived of any initiative and, as a result, there are no stimuli or incentives to invent new devices. All this must be learned anew by the country's youngest generations. With the overthrow of the Communist Party, perhaps this native talent will blossom from the soil of its current turmoil.